

Western Carolina University

Office of Communications
and Public Relations

Administrative Program Review
Self-Study

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Executive Summary

Office of Communications and Public Relations

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION: Through external and internal channels, the office uses the full range of print, electronic, and emerging media and collaborates with other units of the university to deliver creative, compelling, personalized communications in order to share university messages to stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, taxpayers, and political and community leaders. The unit has undergone numerous changes in organizational structure over the years. A 2013 restructuring that dissolved the Division of Advancement and External Affairs resulted in the relocation of the unit under the Chief of Staff and the reassignment of Design/Creative Services to help create a separate Marketing Office.

ALIGNMENT WITH WCU MISSION, VISION, VALUES: Much of the unit's work relates directly to "Strategic Direction No. 6: Garner Support for the Vision" in the "2020 Vision" strategic plan, which states: "WCU's continued emergence as an ambitious institution of higher education dedicated to the economic and community development of Western North Carolina depends on the development and cultivation of consistent and robust funding sources and an ongoing communications strategy designed to ensure that internal and external stakeholders are consistently informed about the University and its progress in achieving strategic goals."

DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM: Nearly every office on campus uses the office's services at some point during the academic year. The unit's writers produce more than 500 news releases in an average year, its photographers shoot between 600 and 700 assignments (more than 30,000 images), and its one-person video shop produces about 30 video projects annually. The office produces 32 issues of the faculty/staff newsletter every year and three editions of the university magazine, which reaches 61,000 readers in print and additional readers online.

QUALITY: In addition to the output of work and success in placing stories in the region's news media, the unit assesses its product through anecdotal feedback, reader surveys, Google News and Google Analytics. A recently added Campaign Monitor distribution system will provide additional analytics for some of the unit's products. The unit has received numerous awards from external groups for its work.

COST EFFECTIVENESS: The office operates on a minimal budget and continues to deal with the budgetary implications of the 2013 restructuring that led to separate offices for Comm/PR and for Marketing.

OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS: The identification of sufficient resources is, as always, critical. In addition, the unit must have a continuing focus on setting the right priorities to maximize existing resources to meet goals and objectives.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PROCESS: To be honest, the initial reaction to this process was one of “oh, great, another check-the-box exercise that decreases time on task and the unit’s ability to get the work done.” But now, having nearly completed the self-review process, the unit agrees there is value in taking time to pause, assess the work, look at priorities, and re-evaluate activities based on priorities and the changing needs of the various clients we serve – both internally and externally. The process has made members of this unit realize the value of what the office provides to the university and its constituencies, appreciate the totality of its work, and understand that priorities will need to be adjusted going forward.

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE UNIT

1. State the primary purpose and key functions of the unit.

As spelled out in its mission statement, the Office of Communications and Public Relations promotes and supports Western Carolina University in its efforts to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in the region, state, and nation. Through external and internal channels, the office uses the full range of print, electronic, and emerging media and collaborates with other units of the university to deliver creative, compelling, personalized communications in order to share university messages to stakeholders including students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, taxpayers, and political and community leaders. Furthermore, as described in its vision statement, in its role of protector of the university's most important attribute – its public image – the office endeavors to be acclaimed by its on-campus colleagues for providing excellent customer service and recognized as a national leader in the implementation of creative, clear, consistent, and compelling communications projects. In its work, the office stresses the following core values: high quality, accuracy, clarity, integrity, timeliness, accountability, flexibility, and creativity.

2. List the top 3-5 goals/priorities of the unit.

1. Continue implementation of strategies and tactics in the Integrated Marketing and Communications Plan. Working with the University Marketing and other stakeholders, the office in late 2015 completed an Integrated Marketing and Communications Plan designed to help fulfil the university's strategic priorities as outlined by the "2020 Vision" strategic plan.
2. Improve *The Magazine of Western Carolina University* as the primary tool for keeping the alumni and donor base informed about important university developments and accomplishments. This would include the establishment of an advisory board to help guide content and direction; conducting more regular reader surveys; setting and keeping a regular production schedule; examining a more robust digital presence; and ensuring adequate funding.
3. Work with the newly created marketing and communications committee of the WCU Board of Visitors on ways to use the board (a team of advocates and ambassadors on behalf of the university) to help better inform key constituencies about WCU.
4. Develop a communications plan to guide strategies for the upcoming comprehensive fundraising campaign, including setting guidelines and protocols to be used for announcing gifts to the university during the campaign, currently in its silent, or "leadership," phase.

5. Revise the university's crisis communications plan, working closely with the recently hired emergency manager.

3. Summarize the history of this unit on campus.

This unit traces its lineage back to 1966, when veteran journalist Doug Reed arrived at WCU to establish a professional public information/media relations program separate from the institution's existing public relations/publicity functions. Reed guided what was then called the Office of Public Information for 30 years, until retiring in 1996. During Reed's tenure, the office, from a home base on the fourth floor of the H.F. Robinson Administration Building, grew in terms of staffing in order to meet the demands of an expanding university, with larger numbers of students, faculty, staff, programs, and degrees – all needing help with promotion and communication strategies. Writers, editors, and a photographer were added to the staff to help tell WCU's stories through OPI's News Services subunit. (The current director of the office often has opined that WCU is both blessed and cursed by a dearth of media outlets in its immediate service area. On the one hand, some scandalous activities that would have made front-page news have gone unreported over the years; on the other hand, it requires a great deal of effort to get the media to pay attention to stories out of WCU). Because of a lack of graphic designers and photographers in the rural Cullowhee area combined with the distance between WCU and printers in Atlanta, Charlotte and Knoxville, Reed added a Publications subunit to oversee the creation of printed materials to provide information about the university. Developing publications in-house provided enhanced quality control and proved more cost-effective than outsourcing. When the Liston B. Ramsey Regional Activity Center was built in 1986, it contained space for a television production studio to fall under the OPI umbrella. Equipment for that TV studio was never purchased, however, and the space went basically unused for several years until the Publications subunit located there in 1988. In the meantime, Jim Rowell, OPI news bureau director until he became Reed's post-retirement successor in 1996, assumed additional duties for videography. Rowell restructured a vacant communications position in 1999 to create a videographer position that also had basic news-writing responsibility. That position would be abolished in 2009 because of severe campus budget cuts, only to be re-established in 2013 as a fulltime videographer (with no writing duties) in recognition of the growing need for video, including content for a rapidly expanding online presence fueled by social media. While on the topic of online content, OPI added a web manager position in 2000 to oversee a new Web Services subunit. That subunit, later including web content producers, would be relocated to the Division of Information Technology in 2007. OPI underwent another name change in 2003,

becoming the Office of Public Relations under the direction of Leila Tvedt, associate vice chancellor for public relations. OPR continued to consist of a News Services subunit and a Publications subunit, later rebranded as Creative Services and relocated back to the H.F. Robinson Building in 2007.

4. Describe the structure of the unit and how it is situated organizationally within the institution.

The reporting structure for the office has changed numerous times throughout the decades, sometimes reporting directly to the chancellor, sometimes to a vice chancellor for advancement and external affairs. In its current iteration, the office is part of the Office of the Chief of Staff, which is within the Chancellor's Division. Upon the recommendation of an Organizational Structure Review Task Force, the Division of Advancement and External Affairs was dissolved in February 2013, and several units once part of that division now comprise the Office of the Chief of Staff. Through that restructuring, the Creative Services function was carved out and added to the Print Shop and Mail Services to create a separate Office of University Marketing. Today, the rechristened Office of Communications and Public Relations consists of a News Services subunit (three writers/editors) and a Photography and Video Services subunit (an assistant photographer and a videographer), both with their own directors who report to the director of the Office of Communications and Public Relations along with the office's administrative assistant, who also provides support to the Office of University Marketing.

5. Provide an organizational chart of the unit with every employee identified by title and name. Attach a brief (3-4 bullets) list of the primary duties carried out by each employee on the chart. Also, for each full-time staff member provide a full curriculum vitae or 2-page vitae/resume summary.

See appendices.

6. If applicable, describe the number and contribution of student employees or graduate assistants to the unit's program and services.

The number of student workers has varied greatly over the years. Before the onset of email, the office relied heavily on work-study students to print and duplicate news releases, prepare envelopes, and mail packages of news releases to newspapers and radio and TV stations across the region and state. Now that the unit relies on email for distribution, it no longer needs work-study students. The photography subunit regularly uses one work-study and one nonwork-

study assistant during the academic year for about 10 hours per week each. This year, the videographer also uses about 10 hours of student help per week. An aside, after the videographer position was abolished in 2009, the office attempted to rely on students from related WCU academic programs to help fill the void, only to find that by the time students had the skill level necessary to do the work, they were more interested in finishing senior projects and getting a good grade than in earning minimum wage working for this office. Similarly, the use of student writers has proven to be a mixed bag over the years. A few of those who have come through the office as student writers have done well. The majority, however, have been barely adequate at best, requiring far too much staff time to edit and re-edit their work to ensure it is up to standards and leaving us to realize that sometimes it's just easier to do it ourselves. The situation seems to have worsened in recent years, as students are bringing with them to campus bad writing skills fostered by a social media environment in which good writing seems unnecessary in an era of "LOL" and emoticons. The News Services subunit currently has one unpaid intern, and is exploring ways to better screen potential interns to identify those with the needed skill set. Perhaps additional funding for paid internships would help this matter, and the office may want to consider bringing in students from other institutions with strong programs in writing, photography and videography.

ALIGNMENT WITH WCU MISSION, VISION, VALUES

1. How does the unit mission align with the university mission with specific reference to support the WCU 2020 strategic plan and the academic colleges/schools?

Much of "Strategic Direction No. 6: Garner Support for the Vision" in the "2020 Vision" strategic plan is directly related to the work of the office. The direction states: "WCU's continued emergence as an ambitious institution of higher education dedicated to the economic and community development of Western North Carolina depends on the development and cultivation of consistent and robust funding sources and an ongoing communications strategy designed to ensure that internal and external stakeholders are consistently informed about the University and its progress in achieving strategic goals." Specific initiatives in the Strategic Direction 6 that relate to this office are 6.1.3: "Ensure consistency among vision messages from all internal sources"; 6.2.1: "Develop and implement consistent communications and marketing plans designed to fulfill the University's strategic priorities"; 6.2.2: "ensure the appropriate leadership and organizational structure necessary to develop and implement comprehensive

communication and marketing plans designed to communicate Western Carolina University's strategic vision effectively, concisely, and consistently to all external stakeholders"; 6.3.4: "Develop and implement a comprehensive plan to increase significantly WCU's advocacy efforts among elected officials on behalf of University and system priorities"; and 6.3.6: "Pursue a comprehensive development campaign." In addition, several other initiatives help guide the office's work. These include, from Strategic Direction No. 1: "Fulfill the Educational Needs of our State and Region," 1.1.2 "Develop visionary strategic plans for each of the curricular focus areas through inclusive processes to...position and market WCU as the cultural heart of Western North Carolina in the creative arts"; 1.1.3: "Position WCU as a preferred provider of graduate and professional programs in the greater Asheville-Hendersonville area in fulfillment of its historic commitment to this vital part of the Western North Carolina region"; 1.1.7: "Increase the total number of WCU graduates by 25 percent by 2020 to meet the regional need for an educated work force"; 1.5.4: "Develop and implement a coordinated marketing plan to promote WCU's Cullowhee campus and its programs in Asheville at Biltmore Park as conference destinations"; 1.6.3: "Expand efforts to recruit students in programs associated with the curricular focus areas"; and 1.6.4: "Make the securing of endowed merit and need-based financial aid an institutional fundraising priority." From Strategic Direction No. 2: "Enrich the Total Student Experience," the unit's work supports initiatives 2.3.4: "Include in the University's comprehensive communications plan a focused strategy to celebrate with the institution's internal and external audiences the accomplishments and achievements of students, faculty, and staff"; and 2.3.5: "Ensure that University events are consistently well-advertised to external audiences." Finally, the unit plays a role in Strategic Direction No. 3: "Enhance our External Partnerships," particularly in initiative 3.1.5: "Develop and implement a communications plan that informs Western Carolina University's external community about University resources...such as programs, services, facilities, and faculty/staff expertise that are available to the public."

2. How has the purpose of the unit changed in the past 5 years?

The primary purpose of the unit – to tell the stories of the people and programs of WCU – has not changed dramatically over the past five years. What has changed, however, is the tools used to tell those stories. *The Reporter*, the university's faculty/staff newsletter, has evolved from a biweekly printed publication to an electronic newsletter produced weekly during the academic year (except during breaks and holidays) and twice during the summer session. The university magazine, launched as a quarterly publication in 2005, has downsized to three

editions per year. Because of the cost of printing and mailing, there is discussion of perhaps cutting back to two editions, supplemented by additional online content. In addition, the unit is attempting to find ways to reduce the number of event-oriented news releases that it produces, in order to focus on larger, more strategic stories that assist with student recruitment, fundraising, or legislative advocacy goals. That said, as seen in the previous section about alignment with the strategic plan, that plan does call for ensuring "...that University events are consistently well-advertised to external audiences." Although direct responsibility for university marketing and advertising efforts now resides with the newly created Marketing Office, that unit relies heavily on photography, videography and writing/editing from the Office of Communications and Public Relations. (Similarly, the comm/PR office cannot put out a magazine or provide content for the university website without the help of the designers in the Marketing Office.) In addition, this office also works closely with a newly added social media manager (also in the Marketing Office) to provide written and visual content for university social media channels. In terms of news and media relations, the shifting landscape of the news media industry is having an impact on the work of the unit. Daily newspapers have cut staffs and reduced the number of pages they print, and newspapers that used to be statewide in scope now cover only their specific metropolitan areas. With fewer reporters to cover the region and state, newspapers often rely more on press releases than in the past; however, fewer numbers of pages have increased the competition for that shrinking news hole. Meanwhile, local newspapers, especially in WCU's primary service area, continue to thrive. While the target audience of prospective students does not read newspapers or watch TV news, instead relying on digital content, alumni and donors still consume traditional news media. At least for now, while the Internet and social media have added dramatic new tools to the communications toolbox, the office cannot turn its back on the old, more traditional tools without risking losing touch with an important segment of the university's multifaceted audience – including the segment most likely to make financial contributions. Finally, social media has added a sense of immediacy and participation to the communications puzzle. In that arena, the university does not communicate TO an audience, but communicates WITH an active group of participants, including some who can be quite demanding.

3. How do you expect the purpose to change in the next 5 years?

We do not expect the unit's primary purpose to change dramatically, although we do expect the tools of the trade to continue to evolve. Some tools that are in use now may fade out of favor (Myspace, anyone?), while others currently not even envisioned will be developed. The office

must remain nimble and willing to adapt to the changing communications environment to ensure that the messages of the university are heard and are not lost in an ever-increasing cacophony of information overload. For an example of a specific opportunity, WCQS-FM, the Asheville-based public radio station, is working with the university's academic Communication Department to set up studio space on the Cullowhee campus that could be used by WCQS and other public stations for broadcast-quality interviews of faculty, administrators, and students.

DEMAND FOR THE PROGRAM

1. Who are the specific key users/participants of the unit's programs or services?

Nearly every office on campus uses the office's services at some point during the academic year. Services run the gamut from compiling information and photographs for an annual story in the faculty/staff newsletter introducing newcomers to the campus to communications on behalf of University Police seeking the public's help in solving a crime, from stories highlighting faculty research to news showcasing student accomplishments, from announcements of new vice chancellors to magazine features about the importance of STEM education to the region's economy, and from ghost-writing high-level communication from the chancellor and the provost to assisting in the placement of faculty-written opinion pieces in a regional newspaper. The office assists members of the news media when they are on campus for a story and routinely tracks down faculty members for reporters seeking expert voices for their stories, making the external media (ranging from the local *Sylva Herald* to the regional *Asheville Citizen-Times* to the statewide *Raleigh News & Observer* and UNC-TV to the national *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Inside Higher Ed*) key users of unit services. Staff are asked to proofread and copyedit materials for Marketing, Development, Alumni Affairs, Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, Office of the Provost, Chancellor's Office and the Athletics Department.

2. How do you identify and measure demand for the unit's programs or services.

Demand is identified and measured by the number of requests for services received from on-campus customers, number of stories written, number of photographs produced, number of video projects produced, number of requests for inclusion in *The Reporter* newsletter or university magazine, and number of media inquiries answered.

3. List those other units on campus that interact most with this unit. Briefly describe the nature of those interactions.

The College of Fine and Performing Arts -- The music, theater, and art programs of this college, including those that are part of the “Galaxy of Stars” series, present dozens of public events throughout the academic year, with a reduced schedule during the summer. Nearly every one of these cultural arts events receives its own news release as part of the effort to satisfy Strategic Initiative 2.3.5: “Ensure that University events are consistently well-advertised to external audiences.” Additionally, arts and events programming from Student Affairs (such as the ACE Series) and from the Mountain Heritage Center also receives news releases.

Athletics - Although the Athletics Department has its own media relations personnel (primarily for media guides, game advances, and gameday coverage), the department relies heavily on this office’s photography staff for images for its uses, including media guides, game coverage, promotions, and Catamount Club materials. Of the approximately 745 photo shoots completed since May 2015, 120 of them were for athletics.

Office of the Chancellor - The unit assists in the preparation of talking points, campus communications, newspaper op-eds, a regular column in the magazine, and announcements of key hires. It also facilitates media interviews, accompanies the chancellor on media visits, and provides advance preparation for upcoming interviews with the news media.

Office of the Provost - The unit assists in the preparation of talking points, campus communications, and announcements of key hires. It also facilitates media interviews and provides advance preparation for upcoming interviews with the news media, and works with the provost on announcement of schedule changes because of inclement weather.

Student Affairs - The office assists in the preparation of talking points, campus communications, and announcements of key hires made by the Division of Student Affairs; facilitates media interviews with key members of the Student Affairs team; and publicizes events and activities.

Police/Emergency Management - The office works with Police and Emergency Management on campus communications related to emergency and crisis situations, including announcement of schedule changes because of inclement weather.

Marketing - The office’s editors, writers, photographers, and videographer work with the Marketing Office, providing the written and visual content used by Marketing for printed and online promotional materials as well as for use on the university’s social media channels.

External Affairs - The office works with the External Affairs office on communications related to important legislative matters, including the recently approved statewide bond referendum that will provide \$110 million for a replacement science building at WCU.

Development - The office works on projects for the Development Office, including scripting speeches and other communications for last fall's leadership summit to launch the leadership phase of the upcoming fundraising campaign, assisting in production of the regular Chancellor's VIP email, and providing coverage of and media relations for announcement of major gifts.

4. List other units on campus that provide related programs and services.

The Marketing Office also works to provide information about university people, programs, and priorities and to promote brand awareness, understanding and support among students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and other constituencies.

The media relations unit of the Department of Athletics provides related services in communications and public relations, but only within the realm of Catamount sports.

The Division of Educational Outreach has a marketing and communications person on staff who writes news releases and provides communication strategies for that division, working closely with this office in the distribution to news media.

Information Technology provides some video services to faculty and academic departments.

Coulter Faculty Commons provides some videography services to faculty clients.

5. Describe the unique contributions of this unit.

Telling the stories of WCU and its people, programs, and priorities requires the combined efforts of the unit's writers, editors, photographers, and videographers working in cooperation with other campus units. For example, a CASE award-winning entry in the "writing for the web" category consisted not only of text written and edited by staff members, but also photography and videography by other staff as well as design supplied by Creative Services. Similarly, the office's award-winning holiday videos are the result of brainstorming sessions involving a team of writers, photographers, and videographers with input and involvement from across campus, ranging from students and faculty in theater, music, and film/TV production to student-athletes and coaches. The university magazine requires collaboration with the chancellor's office, chief of staff, alumni affairs, development, and athletics. Placement of news, images, and video on the website requires collaboration with IT. The unit works with every division at WCU – from

grounds workers for a story about campus landscaping to the faculty members who are making a difference in the lives of students, from students and staff involved in service learning activities that benefit the community to alumni and benefactors providing financial support to deserving students, and from members of the media seeking faculty expertise on important issues to the chancellor and other university officials in support of their advocacy efforts. Because WCU does not operate on a 9-to-5 schedule, much of the unit's work extends into evenings and weekends. For example, the unit is responsible for communicating weather-related schedule changes to campus and the news media, and those decisions typically are made in the wee hours of the morning, involving the provost and public safety. When it comes to the unit's emergency/crisis communication function, staff must be ready to communicate important messages 24/7. A bomb threat at commencement in December 2014 is a good example.

QUALITY

1. How do you identify and measure quality of the unit's programs or services. List the top benchmarks used to assess quality.

Frankly, much of how the office identifies and measures the quality of its services is anecdotal. If clients are not getting messages out to the masses, if stories are going untold, if photographs and video are not available to promote the university, the office will hear about that from dissatisfied constituencies. The unit also receives written and oral feedback from clients. Editors and news directors across the region frequently comment on the professionalism of the unit and its ability to produce ready-to-use news articles and high-quality photography and video. Additionally, the office is able to track how news releases are used by the media through the free Google News search and alert features. The office previously used both a paid newspaper clipping service and a paid online media monitoring service, but those services were canceled as part of the same round of 2008-09 budget cuts that forced the faculty/staff newsletter online and that eliminated a videography position. And subsequent testing of some newer media monitoring services seems to indicate that they are not much better – if any – at finding WCU news than the free Google News search feature. In addition, the office uses Google Analytics to measure readership for stories posted on the university website, the online version of the magazine, and the faculty/staff newsletter. The office recently began using the email marketing system Campaign Monitor to distribute the faculty/staff newsletter, and that system offers more robust analytics, allowing the office to see who opens the email, who clicked on a story, and

what stories are the most popular. The office is investigating Campaign Monitor for distribution of the e-version of its magazine, budget permitting. The office also has conducted surveys of readers of the faculty/staff newsletter and the university magazine.

2. How do you use the results of quality assessments to improve programs and/or services? Provide specific examples.

The office uses the results of analytics and surveys to determine what types of stories are of the most interest to readers, and attempts to select its stories and articles accordingly. For example, a past survey of magazine readers indicated that stories about donors are not very popular and, in fact, can be counterproductive if seen as donor vanity pieces. The office has used that information in shaping fundraising stories that focus on students and other outcomes of the gifts rather than on the individuals or organizations making the contributions. The office continues to produce a printed magazine in large part because of reader surveys indicating a preference for a print product rather than an e-magazine.

3. What were the major accomplishments of the unit in the past five years? Include those directly related to unit functions and/or other contributions related to university goals.

The recent resignations of two mid-level staff writers enabled the office to restructure positions in News Services to accomplish a clear path for career progression within the subunit (with entry, mid- and advanced level positions), keeping with strategic plan initiatives regarding “taking care of our people” and “ensuring leadership succession” (Initiative 4.1.3). The office turned two part-time positions – a web content editor and a videographer – into full-time positions and an 80-percent assistant photographer to a fulltime. Beyond the human resources accomplishments, the office has successfully completed several major projects, including communications related to the appointment of David Belcher as chancellor in 2011 and his introduction to campus and the region; the marching band’s appearance in the Rose Parade in 2011 and Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2014; relocation of Asheville-based programs to Biltmore Park in 2012 and the subsequent expansion of WCU’s engineering program there beginning in fall 2014; academic program prioritization in 2013; the university’s 125th anniversary celebration in 2013-14; a visit from the UNC Board of Governors in 2014 and new UNC president in 2016; the statewide bond referendum that resulted in approval of \$110 million for a new science building at WCU in 2015-16; and two consecutive years as being named top outdoor adventure school in an online poll in 2014 and 2015, with a third year hanging in the balance as this report was being written.

In addition, the amount of work produced is a major accomplishment. The unit's writers produce more than 500 news releases in an average year, its photographers shoot between 600 and 700 assignments (more than 30,000 images), and its one-person video shop produces about 30 video projects annually. The office produces 32 issues of the faculty /staff newsletter every year and three editions of the university magazine, which reaches 61,000 readers in print. In fact, the Office of Admission has requested that the unit greatly increase the number of magazine copies used by that office for open houses, college fairs, and other student recruitment activities. Several units of campus request reprints of sections of the magazine that focus on students, faculty, or programs from those units. In the past five years, the unit has received numerous recognitions from the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, including two awards for its annual holiday video greeting cards and honors for conversion of its print faculty/staff newsletter to an electronic publication, for writing for the web (for an online magazine story supplemented by video content), and for media relations for a joint effort with two other institutions to showcase the impact of public higher education on the region. The office was nominated for WCU's Program of Excellence Award in 2015.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

1. How do you identify and measure cost effectiveness of this unit. List the top benchmarks used to assess cost effectiveness.

The office currently operates on a minimal budget, leaving little opportunity to assess cost effectiveness. In addition, the office continues to deal with the budgetary implications of the 2013 restructuring that led to separate offices for Comm/PR and for Marketing. Prior to the restructuring, the office had a separate magazine budget of \$128,000, plus another \$27,978 in operation expenses. Today, the office's entire budget of \$124,235 (not including salaries/benefits) is less than the magazine budget alone from pre-restructuring. In addition, the office absorbed a \$19,192 cut to its operating budget the year prior to the restructuring, and another \$22,700 was transferred from the operating budget to enable a temporary part-time design position to be made permanent. And the dust continues to settle. During the compilation of information for the itemized spreadsheet for this report (found in the appendices), it was discovered the salaries and benefits for members of the majority of University Marketing staff remain comingled with salaries and benefits in the budget for this unit, and that the Comm/PR

budget continues to pay for some aspects of the Marketing Office's operating budget (such as phone lines and some printing, postage, and shipping).

2. Attach an itemized spreadsheet outlining ALL revenues/resources generated and expenses incurred (including salaries) for the unit for the past three years.

See appendix. Also, please note that the budgets for salaries and benefits include salaries and benefits for staff members in the Creative Services subunit. That subunit was formerly part of the Office of Public Relations but was carved out to help create the new Marketing Office; however, those individuals' salaries and benefits remain coded as part of the Communications and Public Relations budget.

OPPORTUNITY ANALYSIS

1. How can programs or services offered by the unit be enhanced?

The unit should develop a workable strategy for decreasing the number of event-oriented news releases while still ensuring that university events are consistently well-promoted, as called for by Strategic Initiative 2.3.5. The unit needs support at the executive level when it stops doing some of the things it has historically done in order to focus on more strategic, bigger-picture communications projects. Achieving campus buy-in is critical. The unit should continue to emphasize the internally and externally focused goals included in the Integrated Marketing and Communications Plan, which will keep the efforts of the office closely aligned with the university's overall "2020 Vision" strategic plan. In addition, the photography/video unit will be implementing a digital content management system that will organize images so that clients can access photos that they need, toward a more efficient and effective workflow.

2. How do the activities of other units advance or hinder the effectiveness of your unit?

The unit is hindered by "news writing by committee," by a lack of understanding on the part of faculty members who write for an audience of professionals or peers rather than a general audience, and by faculty and administrators who do not understand that AP style is not the same as APA or MLA. In the wake of the dissolution of the Division of Advancement and External Affairs, the unit experiences a persistent lack of institutional understanding about the differing – yet sometimes overlapping – areas of responsibility for the now separate Comm/PR and Marketing offices. Many offices on campus that have need for news, photography, and video services often do not have communications or promotions at the top of their priority list,

and the result is frequent last-minute requests for help. That hurts work flow, decreases the effectiveness of the unit, and makes setting priorities and meeting mainstream media deadlines more difficult. Better communication between Marketing and Comm/PR would help; sometimes clients have worked weeks or months ahead of time on a brochure or poster, but don't contact Comm/PR until a few days prior to activity. In addition, the unit is dealing with the continued use of all-campus emails despite an effort to include announcements in a new section of *The Reporter*. A new portal with content feature for faculty and staff and for students provides an opportunity to remedy this.

3. What programs and services offered by the unit are redundant or outside the scope of the unit's primary purpose?

None that the members of this unit could determine.

4. What are similar units at peer or aspirant institutions doing that this unit would like to do or should be doing?

This unit would like to produce more robust video stories. Currently, the unit produces a limited number of high-quality, high-profile videos, but the demand for more and more video content, especially online and via social media, necessitates the ability to produce a larger quantity of video projects without a significant decrease in quality. Some institutions have the resources to allow them to conduct a meaningful and regular video production effort specifically directed at capturing the student experience at their institutions, for the purpose of posting on the university website to enhance new student recruitment. This unit has yet to take advantage of that opportunity but would like to focus on that area. Also, some institutions are able to more frequently distribute their faculty/staff newsletters, which would help alleviate all-campus email/spam. Some institutions have a large enough staff to be able to assign staff writers to cover individual colleges and units in a "beat system," and some have staffs that work solely on the university magazine.

5. What additional cost-savings could be achieved in this unit?

The unit recently began allowing other campus units to share the cost of pages in the university magazine for messages those units wanted in front of readers but that did not justify being the subject of an article. Similarly, the unit could begin charging units on campus for services when assisting on projects that do not rank as high priorities based on the Integrated Marketing and Communication Plan and "2020 Vision" Strategic Plan.

6. What external funding opportunities exist that could be pursued by this unit?

The unit has considered exploring outside advertising for magazine, although its nonprofit mailing rates would be at risk. It is possible that a dues-paying “alumni and friends association” could provide supplementary funding for the magazine. Currently, membership in the Alumni Association is free. And a few years back, a prospective donor was seriously considering creating an endowment fund for the magazine when budget cuts threatened to force the publication to become an online-only magazine. Although that idea failed to materialize, perhaps there are other readers of means who would like to contribute to the magazine.

7. What would it take to make the program exemplary?

Perusing the files for this review, we came across a time-yellowed piece of paper with a typewritten list of suggestions from Lillian Hirt, a 1950’s-era “director of publicity,” seeking larger work space, more personnel, and a budget, among other items. “It is not possible to plan adequately for emergencies or special needs on this basis, and it is less economical in the long run,” Mrs. Hirt wrote. Although the office and the institution have changed greatly over the decades, some things remain constant in the effort to become exemplary – staff, budget, and resources. An adequate budget for magazine production is critical. Additional staff to focus on internal communications would improve communication to faculty and staff. Additional funding for at least a part-time video assistant would enable the unit to keep pace with video production demands. As always, the key is more resources, but, in lieu of that happening, a continuing focus on setting the right priorities to maximize the efforts of the staff and the resources that the unit does have would go a long way to helping in the quest for “exemplary.”