



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

Meeting Minutes

Telephone Conference Call

September 24, 2019

123 Tigert Hall, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL

Time Convened: 2:02 p.m.

Time Adjourned: 2:35 p.m.

Committee and Board members present:

Robert G. Stern (Chair), Leonard Johnson, Daniel T. O'Keefe, Rahul Patel, Marsha D. Powers, Ray G. Thomas, and Anita Zucker

Others present:

Nancy Paton, Vice President for Strategic Communications and Marketing, and other members of the university community.

1.0 Roll Call

Board Staff called the roll and noted those Trustees who were in attendance.

2.0 Call to Order and Welcome

Committee Chair Stern welcomed everyone to the meeting. He expressed that advancement on several fronts would be discussed: including an update of the U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings Communication Plan, and an announcement regarding the brand research/ strategy partner selection and the Assistant Vice President searches. Lastly, a review of the format changes made to the Key Performance Indicators Dashboards will be presented.

3.0 Discussion Items

3.1 U.S. News & World Report Best College Rankings Communication Plan

Chair Stern stated, what a phenomenal accomplishment! Advancing to the No. 7 public university in the nation is amazing and illustrates unstoppable momentum.

A key driver of achieving this ranking was the increase in the university's reputation score from 3.7 to 3.8. Reputation constitutes 20% of the rankings so improvement of this score has a profound impact on the rankings. Chair Stern specified, increasing the reputation score and ranking score was a goal of the committee. He thanked and congratulated everyone for accomplishing this goal.

He then turned the discussion over to Vice President Paton.

Vice President Paton thanked the committee for their support and guidance. She then proceeded to discuss the outcome of the ranking communications plan.

The goals of the 2020 USNWR rankings communications and marketing plan were:

- Position the University of Florida as a national, preeminent university with rising momentum
- Announce the results of the 2020 USNWR Best Public College rankings, while positioning the rising prominence of the university and the state of Florida
- Provide consistent messages for colleges and units to share the narrative of the rankings with their key stakeholders

Vice President Paton stated the university amplified the news of the ranking with a media conference featuring the governor announcing this achievement. Even though US News officially announced the night before, and FSU announced at 12:01am and many schools also released their rankings communications early in the morning, no one told the story better than the UF team.

Social media, content created record reach and engagement. Highlights included the most ever liked Instagram post, shattering the previous record by 7,000 likes. The Strategic Communications and Marketing office generated over 1 million impressions across social channels in the first 24 hours, an incredible achievement. The university's social media blitz targeted every one of the university's institutional social channels, from TikTok to Giphy. Facebook to Twitter and Instagram to LinkedIn. Those who followed UF and had an internet connection, you most likely became aware of the news. US News & World Report retweeted. Even Danny Wuerffel chimed in upon seeing the Governor holding up a football jersey with his college number on it. It was a powerful announcement of videos, photos and GIFs that was shared across the nation.

In earned media, significant coverage was achieved on TV stations throughout the state, including in major markets such as Miami, Tampa/St. Pete and Orlando. This was achieved by providing channels with a video package that the SCM team shot of the news conference and then distributed to affiliates around the state within two hours of the news conference ending. On some stations, the story aired multiple times during different time slots.

On the print and online side, there was impressive coverage, including in the Tampa Bay Times – the largest paper by circulation in the Southeastern United States – as well as in online outlets such as Florida Politics and Sunburn that target important readers in Tallahassee. Newspaper coverage was also amplified by Strategic Communications sending a photo of the Governor with the football jersey to the Associated Press in Miami, which made it available to papers all over Florida.

3.2 Brand Strategy Update

Vice President Paton shared at the last committee meeting the intent to select a firm to partner with the university on one of the most important goals of the strategic communications and marketing plan—building a distinctive national brand. She reported that Simpson and Scarborough have been selected. Simpson Scarborough has extensive and relevant experience working with higher education clients. They have worked with University of Virginia, UC Berkeley, UC Davis, UCLA, Northwestern, University of Oregon, Purdue, and Stanford, to name a few. In their presentation, they demonstrated their expertise in market research, positioning and a successful track record of discovering the unique cultures/attributes/distinctive differentiators that establish a strong brand and market position. Chair Stern stated marketing research is the most important job over the next year for the SCM team.

3.3 Assistant Vice President Searches Update

Vice President Paton announced an offer for the Assistant Vice President of Marketing has been made and she will announce this news soon. Similarly, she plans to announce the new Assistant Vice President of Communications shortly.

3.4 Key Performance Indicators Formatting Update

Chair Stern stated at the last committee meeting, there were a few suggestions made regarding the format of the KPI dashboards. The SCM team values the committee's input, and Vice President Paton walked the committee through the minor changes that were made.

3.5 Pre-Meetings in October and November

Chair Stern stated due to the Board of Governors meeting being at UF in October and the timing our of November meeting, which is two days before Thanksgiving, the call dates for these two committee meetings have been changed. The October Committee call will now be held on October 22 at 2:00 p.m. The November Committee Call will be held on November 18 at 3:00 p.m.

4.0 New Business

None currently.

5.0 Adjourn

Committee Chair Stern adjourned the meeting at 2:35 p.m.