

Communications and Marketing Committee

Communications and Marketing Project

2017 Plan of Work¹

Background:

The Communications and Marketing Project (CMP) is a coordinated and targeted educational effort to increase awareness of the value of Land-grant University agricultural and related programs, Agricultural Experiment Stations (AES) and Cooperative Extension Services (CES). More specifically it supports the creation of unified messages and targeted educational efforts to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of the impacts and outcomes of federal funding through competitive grants and capacity lines to the state agricultural experiment stations and Cooperative Extension services. The stakeholders of this effort are our state citizens, community leaders, opinion makers and institutional allies, with close connections to identified congressional decision makers.

Two consulting firms, kglobal and Cornerstone Government Affairs, are contracted to lead this effort. These firms assist to identify key targets (thematic areas of interest to stakeholders) and develop appropriate corresponding strategies to focus communication and education efforts. kglobal then implements targeted media strategies utilizing Land-grant University and stakeholder assets. These strategies include traditional media, the use of grassroots engagement and grass-tops advocacy, and digital and social media approaches (Agriculture is America website [<http://agisamerica.org/>], Twitter, Facebook and YouTube).

The CMP is supported by three sections of the APLU Board on Agriculture (BAA): Administrative Heads (AHS), Cooperative Extension (CES) and Experiment Station (ESS). The annual CMP budget, \$400,000 is equally shared by AHS, CES and ESS.

The Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) oversees and guides the CMP. The CMC is policy-making body that oversees the development, implementation and effectiveness of the targeted educational efforts, including coordination with the APLU Board on Agriculture Assembly, kglobal and Cornerstone Government Affairs. The CMC has a standing Plan of Work Committee which prepares an annual statement of work that articulates clear and focused goals and strategies for the coming year.

Goals:

In 2017, the CMC will focus on leveraging and activating communities through the following goals:

1. Provide clear guidance and oversight of the CMP.
2. Achieve unified system messaging.
3. Effectively engage institutional communications specialists to achieve a unified system message.

¹ The original Plan of Work was adopted October 1, 2016 by the Communications and Marketing Project and later updated in January 2016.

Strategies for goal implementation:

Below we outline the strategies for achieving the 2017 goals. The CMC recognizes that communications efforts constantly evolve to respond to changing external conditions. The specific strategies identified below allow for modification of communication efforts.

Goal 1: Provide clear guidance and oversight of the CMP.

- A. Structure CMC meetings to insure timely provision of information to kglobal on:
 - a. Institutional developments and accomplishments
 - b. Impacts and outcomes that could be promoted
 - c. Unique relationships with media, members of Congress or Congressional staff
 - d. The internal politics of the system
- B. Regularly review and evaluate results and metrics of kglobal educational, communication and marketing efforts presented in quarterly kglobal reports:
 - a. Provide feedback to kglobal
 - b. Provide updates to deans and directors
 - c. Solicit Cornerstone to assist in evaluating the effectiveness of kglobal efforts
 - d. Utilize qualitative and quantitative metrics
 - e. Commission kglobal, on an as needed basis, to conduct periodic message testing surveys to gauge overall effectiveness of the project
- C. Monitor kglobal's implementation of the Scope of Work
- D. Advise kglobal on activities described in the Scope of Work that could be accomplished with additional budget.

Goal 2: Achieve unified system messaging.

- A. The CMC will coordinate with the BAA and its committees including the Budget and Advocacy Committee (BAC) and the Committee on Legislation and Policy (CLP). While the system's educational and advocacy efforts are separate, it is critical that the system messaging is unified and coordinated.
- B. The CMP will focus efforts in 2017 on the BAA initiatives of *Water, Healthy Food Systems and Infrastructure*.
- C. The CMC will monitor the BAA Process for Advancing New Budget Initiatives to identify potential new initiatives.
- D. The CMC will communicate regularly with deans, administrators, and directors, their assistants, communications specialists and government affairs specialists on the activities of the communications and marketing project

Goal 3: Effectively engage institutional communications specialists.

- A. In cooperation with the Regional Executive Directors/Administrators, annually survey institutions to insure that kglobal has a current database of institutional points of contact

including: deans, administrators, and directors, their assistants, communications specialists and government affairs specialists.

- B. Identify strategies to fully engage communicators in the CMP.
- C. Collaborate with kglobal to develop guidelines for what information is needed from institutional communication specialists and how that information should be formatted.
- D. Collaborate with kglobal and Cornerstone to develop learning sessions about the CMP at annual meetings (e.g, CARET/AHS; New Deans/Directors/Administrators Orientations programs; ESS/CES; ACE; APLU; etc.)