

Communications and Marketing Committee Meeting

Minutes

September 8, 2020, 4:00-5:00 PM EDT

In attendance: Mark Rieger (Chair), Steve Loring (Past Chair), Karla Trautman (Incoming Chair), Elizabeth Gregory North, Jean-Francois Meullenet, Faith Peppers, Cynda Clary, Glynda Becker-Fenter, Doug Steele, Caron Gala, Rick Rhodes, David Leibovitz, Ryan McConaghy (FTP), Ryan Taylor (FTP), Emilie Carinha (FTP), Kate Jahries (FTP)

1. Forbes/Tate Partners (Ryan McConaghy, Ryan Taylor, Emilie Carinha, Kate Jahries)
 - a. Walkthrough of draft strategic plan (attached)
 - Assessment phase completed (outreach, audit of assets and previous work)
 - Presence in every county in the USA is a strength
 - Online presence through AgIsAmerica and institutional communications is an opportunity
 - Demonstration of ROI to policymakers and stakeholders is key
 - Audiences
 - Decisionmakers
 - Amplifiers
 - Messengers (Multiple example statements are provided to illustrate how specific language and message frames can be used to drive home the “one ask” – here’s the value that LGUs deliver.)
 - Internal Roles, Responsibilities, and Communications
 - Policy Board of Directors should set and communicate policy priorities.
 - Buy-in from LGU Communicators and greater APLU Communications is essential.
 - Tactics
 - The communications and marketing project should have enough tools at its disposal to get the results sought.
 - Tactics range from organic social media to earned media engagement, to “tentpole” pushes.
 - Goal: manageable, yet consistent cadence of media activity (examples of daily, monthly, quarterly pushes are enclosed.)
 - Post regularly. Create posts – don’t just retweet them – of institutional highlights.
 - Earned media – press releases, feature articles, letters to the editor, reporter notes (create brand recognition with reporters/outlets, pitch ideas directly to reporters.)
 - Member engagement and advocacy – fly-ins (virtual included), conferences, reports (e.g. Seeding our Success)
 - b. Questions and feedback from the CMC
 - From Faith Peppers

Thank you for elevating the role of the LGU communicators and recognizing their vital role. That will make a big difference in the program's success. I really appreciate that.

- From Rick Rhodes
One of our challenges was reaching internal audiences and system buy in. What strategies do we, the CMC need to undertake to socialize the roadmap and secure buy-in?
 - Structure and roles/responsibilities can help with buy-in. We need to be comfortable asking groups for what they are responsible for in the plan, collaboration and accountability is essential. Need to take feedback from across the BAA and keep communications channels alive.
 - Somewhat frequent regular check-ins are essential. (e.g. monthly meeting with biweekly email)
- From Jean-Francois Meullenet
How would the LGU communicators be specifically engaged in the program direction?
 - It's a two-way street – perhaps hold regular calls with administrators and communicators to discuss messaging and strategies
- From Elizabeth Gregory North
For the LGU Communicators, I would recommend a monthly Zoom check-in with the Communications Heads or their designees.
- From Doug Steele
Is there a clear role for APS in this plan?
 - The education mission is not clearly reflected in the plan, the work appears to be siloed into AES and CES. One bullet about undergraduate stories reads like an afterthought.
 - Bringing hope and opportunity to future generations that are positively impacted by our 1862 1890 and 1994 institutions – this is not necessarily captured in the plan.
 - Deans agree that student success is the heart of what we all do. In this context, particularly graduate students, who are our primary researchers.
 - Is there an overall statement that we can make about how the Land-grant system, through its partnership of Research-Extension-Teaching, provides something unique, prepares us for the future?
 - **FTP will find a way to tie these ideas, particularly “tying our competitiveness with preparing for the future” into the plan.**
- From Doug Steele
Need to continually reinforce that we are identifying the process to develop a strategic communications plan that would be more targeted, have specific objectives and bring a broader voice to the BAA advocacy process.
- From Faith Peppers
You will find clues to how to make messages resonate about the academic programs in the wording of federal grants, scholarships, and funding lines that

support graduate, undergraduate and workforce preparation. Do those lines need a funding boost or are they missing a critical need? That's a good framework to look at.

- c. Follow-up steps
 - **FTP will incorporate changes based on today's feedback into a final document and work on socializing in advance of a rollout in late October / November.**
 - **CMC members are encouraged to submit questions and feedback to FTP directly. Feedback on this draft will be accepted until Monday, September 14.**
2. APLU and partners input (Doug)
 - a. Policy Board of Directors meeting at APLU Annual Meeting, November 12, 3:30 pm – 5:30 pm Eastern

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm Eastern.

DRAFT