University Relations Team Presentation

Charge: Develop and review options for organizational restructuring including but not limited to further decentralization, consolidation at one campus, or consolidation at Statewide of functions that support improvements in service and cost effectiveness through outsourcing, automation, intercampus collaboration, process standardization, and other means TBD by the team.

Scope: Public affairs, marketing and communications from the system to the unit level (e.g. communication coordinators in colleges, schools programs, etc.).

Goals: Optimize for the best communications possible while aligning with UA priorities and reducing operating costs.

UA Strategic Pathways
January 18, 2017

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Team Members

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Key Stakeholders

- Students
- Faculty
- Staff
- Executive Leadership
- Community

- Employers
- Parents
- Alumni
- Legislators

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Options

Option 1 – Hybrid Decentralization

Option 2 – Centralized at Statewide

Option 3 – Centralized at each University

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Option 1: Hybrid Decentralization

This option would assign communications professionals at each university to serve and support specific colleges, institutes or functional areas. Those staff positions would report directly to a central University Relations office at each campus, with a dotted reporting line to the unit(s) they serve. University Relations and the units would share the financial cost of the positions, via an MOU that would be renegotiated yearly. The central University Relations department at each campus would remain as is and continue to work in coordination with University Relations at Statewide, which also would remain as-is.

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Option 1: Pros and Cons

Pros

- ▶ Unified messaging while retaining department level interests
- ▶ Increased opportunity for collaboration between UR and the units for increased mission focus
- ▶ Bigger spending power and strategic allocation of funds
- ▶ Solidifies communication organizational structure
- ▶ Equity in service

Cons

- ▶ Dual reporting lines would cause confusion and competing allegiances, and tension without working MOUs
- ▶ Not necessarily a cost savings
- ▶ Increased number of experts and fewer generalists
- ▶ Larger University brand integrity is difficult to maintain
- ▶ Potential for stakeholders to be overloaded with competing messaging
- ▶ External stakeholders may find it difficult to know which department UR to contact

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Option 2: Centralized at Statewide

This option would realign the structure of University Relations at UA by consolidating the campus University Relations departments under Statewide University Relations. As part of that consolidation, communications professionals /public information officers currently embedded in colleges, departments institutes and centers at the three campuses would become a part of, and report directly to the campus UR office. Beats or assignments would be established by the campus UR director who would report to the VP/UR at Statewide. The UR departments on each campus would serve their respective campuses but report directly to Statewide.

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Option 2: Pros and Cons

Pros

- Unified messaging to external audiences
- Increased reputation with the legislature – one voice asking for one thing
- Opportunity to reduce cost
- Perception of unity within the institution
- Improved quality of product
- Standardization would increase transparency (i.e. who is communicating)

Cons

- Lack of input/autonomy with individual campuses
- Counter to University culture – this goes against the shared governance model
- Campus leadership would not be part of communication strategy
- Decreased affinity among donors, alumni, community, students, prospective students, and external stakeholders
- Dilute brand integrity
- Less access to communication counsel for campus leadership
- Prioritizes external over internal
- Loss of trust with the communication team at the campus level
- Distance between communication function and the community served

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Option 3: Centralized at each University

This option would create a fully centralized public relations and marketing office at each University with a "beat" structure similar to that found in news and/or public relations and/or marketing/advertising agencies that assigns communications professionals to serve specific units. Communications professionals, including graphic and web design and social media report to central University Relations at each university. UA Public Affairs remains as-is. PR council formalized via new MOU. Each university's/SW UR leads would report to chancellors/President, respectively.

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Option 3: Pros and Cons

Pros

- Increased strategic allocation of marketing funds
- Standard job descriptions, qualifications and hiring practices
- Reduces costs by eliminating redundancy and creating efficiencies
- Creates coordinated messaging and collaboration
- Strengthens campus brands and positioning
- Maintains campus leadership involvement and partnership in communication and marketing

Cons

- Impact on well-functioning units
- Resistance to change due to reduced control, autonomy, and financial resources at the unit level
- Need to prioritize strategy and tactics to match staffing levels
- Potential for blame shifting when programs experience difficulty
- Less support and engagement from unit leaders
- Units that hired their own UR staff prior to this change may be unhappy if the reorganization results in less attention to their department

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Other Opportunities for Change

▶ Standard job descriptions for communication officers across the system

▶ Joint initiatives for professional development across the system

▶ Centralized training and onboarding for all University communicators as well as training for specific leadership levels (e.g. deans, etc.)

▶ Communications professionals on hiring committees for communications professionals

▶ Each university MAU develop (and publish) a list of staff expertise

▶ Create core policies at the statewide level that are administered to all MAUs

▶ Strict press release guidelines

▶ Mandate that press releases are only issued by centralized office

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Other Opportunities for Change Continued

▶ Tag press releases with student and academic centered messages (include student centered messages in press releases)

▶ Media requests are vetted by a centralized office

▶ Post summit team briefings to PR leadership

▶ Standard (and preferred) qualifications for every job that involves communication

▶ Identify redundancy and eliminate it

▶ Pull account codes to find out what we are spending right now

▶ Identify what a university of our size should be spending in relation to our peers

▶ Measure ROI

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Further Analysis Needed

1. How do outreach/project-specific communication professionals fit into this model?

2. How do we maintain unity with advancement and increase integration?

3. What do we do with the non-communications workload reallocation created by changing split positions?

4. Would campus leadership (President's Cabinet) be involved in communication strategy or decision making?

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Q&A

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