



End of Year Report
President's Marketing and Communication
Advisory Committee
2015-2016 Academic Year

Committee Membership

Timothy Walsh, Associate Vice President for College Relations, Chair

Bonnie Durand, Chief of Staff, President's Office

Susanne Bair, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Ex Officio

Erin Alonzo, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management

Jerod Dahlgren, Public Relations Director

Tom Koller, Senior Associate Athletics Director

Christine Lai, Associate Professor, Business/Marketing Department

Seth Oyer, Assistant Professor, Communications Department

Kevin Railey, Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Deborah Silverman, Communications Department

Carmela Thompson, Director, Admissions

Kevin Williams, Earth Sciences/Science Ed

Robert Wood, Professor, Design Department

Danny Velez, Associate Vice President, Student Success

Undergraduate Student Representative

The President's Marketing and Communication Advisory Committee met four times in 2015-16: October 9, January 28, May 2, and June 16

2015-16 Charge:

The President's Marketing and Communication Advisory Committee will develop recommendations to enhance or facilitate Buffalo State College's communication/marketing messages or broaden the range of messaging to prospective students or others that influence the college choices of current students.

OVERVIEW OF COMMITTEE'S WORK:

- Review of 2014-15 End of Year Committee Report
- College Relations Goals review for 2015-16
- Marketing budget breakdown for academic year
- Discussion of Fall 2015 safety incidents and the related communication
- Building campus "brand identity" strategies to align and coincide with new Buffalo State Strategic Plan
- Mid-year marketing measurements and statistics update from College Relations marketing plan/strategies
- Parent communication updates
- High school guidance counselor communication updates
- Spring 2016 marketing activities update
- Social media overview
- Marketing channels/budget discussion
- Planning, people, student-centric, execution – building relationships
- Buffalo State's website and social media presence
- Marketing and recruitment initiatives to improve student yield - Recommendations
- New marketing initiatives, strategies and budgets for consideration – Recommendations

Sub Committee Work and Focus Discussions 2015-16:

Developed and initiated during the Committee's previous two academic years, the committee moved from sub committee work of planning and development to more executable strategies in communication within the following focus areas:

- Parent Communication
- High School Admissions Counselors Communication

In addition, each committee meeting included updates from College Relations regarding 15-16 goals, marketing plans and strategies currently taking place on behalf of Buffalo State:

- College Relations Marketing Updates, Plan, Strategies/Actions, and Measurement

Along with established sub committee discussion and campus marketing initiatives, the group discussed opportunities and recommendations to increase Buffalo State's marketing and communication presence and influencing opportunities via:

- Digital video marketing content – for web, social media, Admissions and campus-wide presentations, and television ads
- Enhanced Buffalo State brand presence on and surrounding campus through effective signage
- New marketing and recruitment programming opportunities to improve student yield
- Recommendations for new marketing initiatives, campaigns, and proposed cost considerations

Parent Communication:

Parents are increasingly involved in a student's decision on where they attend college, continuing through their years as students enrolled at Buffalo State. The ability to engage parents in parallel to the

prospective and enrolled students through impactful and important information is essential. They continue to be key influencers that affect both recruitment and retention statistics.

After two years of feedback and planning, along with the establishment of the college's New Student and Family Programs Office, under the Student Affairs Division, a fresh approach to programming along with new departmental leadership has enabled campus to begin this communication outreach and encourage parent engagement.

Accomplishments Related to Parent Communication:

- A set of 4,000 plus parents were communicated to via email during the fall 2015 period of safety-related events on and surrounding campus. The president's blog/email update provided a form of personal communication directed toward parents of enrolled students.
- The college's first set of parent-focused electronic newsletters were released beginning in July, about one month prior to the Fall 2016 Orientation Week (52% open rate).
- Mailing list of 12,000 plus emails of first time freshmen parents received two eNewsletters - featuring a variety of information including events, programs, and important dates and offices - two weeks apart leading up to orientation and the beginning of the semester.
- The College Relations Office and New Student and Family Programs Office worked together to coordinate content, messaging, design, and distribution.
- The NSFP Office has committed to continuing on-going communication and engagement opportunities concerning the parent population throughout the academic year.

Marketing Key Highlights:

- Enhanced on-campus brand signage program including 60 campus-wide street pole banners, in-building attribute signage (Engagement, Excellence, and Social Responsibility), bus shelter messaging, crest mark branding on 66 vehicles, and large building signage along Rte. 198.
- Bringing campus programs, departments, centers and initiatives under the Buffalo State visual brand identity umbrella, including Performing Arts Center, Anne Frank Project, CDHS, etc.
- Official parent communication strategies were set in motion, including the execution of two eNewsletters to more than 12,000 parents.
- Through the recommendation of the College Relations Office and marketing committee discussion, a full-time videographer position was approved and an alumnus was hired in June to focus on marketing-oriented, Buffalo State story-telling video content.
- Continued, enhanced communication on a consistent basis to more than 4,000 New York State High School Counselors (Admissions messaging and Buffalo State highlights).
- Multiple email communication messages were prepared to integrate into the Admissions Communication Plan to prospective students (15 distinct messages expandable to 88 targeted emails).
- In collaboration with the President's Strategic Enrollment Steering Committee, marketing plans and execution/action items were developed for the new "Roar in Four" and "Bring Them Back to Buffalo State" recruitment programs.

Challenges and Opportunities:

- Need to further develop a "unified campus marketing plan" integrating the plans and strategies of College Relations, Admissions, Creative Media Services, and additional entities that represent Buffalo State.
- Limited dedicated marketing funds for The Graduate School, Transfer student populations, and Metro New York City focus need to be considered when seeking increased applications and improved new student yield.

- Overall state contractual and/or foundation funds available to market and promote Buffalo State to prospective students along with brand/identity campaigns are not maintaining budget levels that compete with competitive colleges and universities, both among SUNYs and private institutions.
- Declining community and 2-year college graduation rates have a deep affect related to potential transfer enrollment at Buffalo State

Executed Marketing and Communication Highlights in 2015-16:

- Coordination and implementation of President's Blog (Tumblr, Twitter, and Facebook- weekly insights and reflections) – Throughout the year
- Transfer Student Opportunities Campaign - July/Aug
- Graduate School Open House Call-to-Action Campaign – Sept
- Undergraduate Open House Call-to-Action Campaign – Sept/Oct
- Continued Buffalo State Identity Campaigns to increase awareness and encourage applications from September through January
- Presentation and coordination of the Buffalo State Visual Identity Program (VIP) Communication Standards and Policies
- Presentation of marketing assessment/ROI reporting
- Recommendations for marketing and recruitment programming to “Improve Yield.”
- Recommendations for new, additional marketing priority initiatives and budget costs
- Coordinated crisis communication plans, messaging, and media relations during several difficult periods in the 15-16 academic year.
- Developed and produced the 2016 Buffalo State Impact Report (Digital and Print Distribution to 65,000 segmented constituents)
- Nearly 320 individual Buffalo State stories researched, written, and distributed to promote the college's people, programs, and activities
- Buffalo State brand awareness and marketing initiatives led to support a 2% increase in first time freshmen applications
- Directed and produced multiple high impact videos relating to student recruitment, brand awareness, and fundraising campaign success.
- Wrote, developed, segmented, and distributed numerous specially designed eblasts to key constituencies, including high school counselors, national college leaders, alumni, impact gift donors, and more.
- Record alumni engagement through 1300 Elmwood magazine (number of class notes submitted per issue has more than tripled since 2012, reaching a high of 174 notes in first issue of 2016).
- Digital 14-15 Annual Report Publication distributed to 50,000+ Buffalo State constituents; 4,000 New York State high school counselors; and presidents, provosts, and admissions deans at 4,000 colleges and universities.
- Assisted senior leadership with PR communication plans, messaging, and media relations following several difficult and unfortunate events.
- Publications team developed and produced 238 print and online publications, reaching 400,000 constituents from prospective students to alumni.
- Placed a story on the front page of the City & Region section of the Buffalo News about the Art Conservation Department's collaboration with the Smithsonian Institution to restore the model USS Enterprise from the original “Star Trek” television series. (Link: <http://www.buffalonews.com/city-region/buffalo-state/buffalo-state-experts-help-with-restoration-of-iconic-star-trek-enterprise-20160222>)
- New and updated Buffalo State websites developed and launched including: “Roar in Four Program,” Bengal Pride Scholarship, Strategic Planning, Giving, and Art Conservation.

- SUNYCUAD Awards for Excellence – Best of Category for Student Recruitment Publications, Individual – Graduate School Travel Brochure; Judges’ Citation – Institutional/Alumni Relations Publications – Buffalo State College 2014-2015 Annual Report

* * * * *

ADDENDUMS INCLUDED WITH 2015-16 END OF YEAR REPORT (attached)

- **Marketing/Recruitment Programming Opportunities to Improve Student Yield:**
- **New Marketing Initiatives and Proposed Costs – Prioritized.**

Respectfully submitted:

For presentation at the September 19, 2016

Timothy Walsh, Chair

ADDENDUM to:
End of Year Report
President's Marketing and Communication
Advisory Committee
2015-2016 Academic Year

Marketing/Recruitment Programming Opportunities to Improve Student Yield:

At the request of president Conway-Turner, the committee was asked to explore and provide options on how various marketing and recruitment programming could support and increase the student yield, further assisting with incoming enrollment of undergraduate students. The challenge is to turn the record number of applicants into students who make Buffalo State their first and right choice. The following options and ideas offer a combination of marketing strategies and Admissions Office initiatives to consider:

ROBUST EMAIL COMMUNICATION PROGRAM TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

(COSTS: human capital time from College Relations and assignment of duties in Admissions to coordinate email integration and distribution within Emas Pro System)

- Upon requested support from Enrollment Management, College Relations has written and provided 18 distinct email messages to be integrated into the Admissions communication plan. The 18 messages are expandable to 88 unique emails segmented by academic major interest. The messages are intended to provide a consistent flow of informative, distinctive communication to prospective students in between direct mail, events, and visits.

ADMISSIONS SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

(COSTS: human capital time from within Admissions. Re-assignment of duties for Admissions staff. Student assistant/ambassador hourly costs)

- Admissions staff member responsible for social media communication (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Blog). Staff member can direct and oversee assistance from student ambassadors to contribute content and respond to questions and comments throughout the social media world. A best practice example includes college admissions social media sites retweeting and liking student Twitter and Facebook posts of students relaying good things about your college. "I've just been accepted to Buff State, Yes!" "I'm going to Nationals with Buff State's Track and Field Team!"
- With an active, updated, informative, and energetic "recruitment-focused Admissions social media presence," Buffalo State's set of official social media sites, managed by College Relations, can also promote these postings, expanding the reach.
- Assigning an Admissions staff member/and students is critical. Social Media is THE key communication vehicle that should be elevated and allocated appropriately with resources of time. Staff is already spending human capital hours on publications, direct mail, email communication, campus visits, information sessions, etc. Social Media is another channel of communication.

HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELOR COMMUNICATION:

(COSTS: eBlast- human capital time, no fee for distribution; Programming costs for on-campus receptions)

- Develop multiple opportunities for campus tours and receptions for WNY, Rochester, Syracuse, Albany, and New York City based counselors (on campus or a series of online video chats, Did You Know Sessions and, topics of interest to HS Counselors).
- More frequent eNewsletters to the 4,000+ counselors throughout New York. Consider securing email contacts and expanding our reach to counselors outside of NY in key markets where we visit.

Examples from Other Institutions:

- <https://www.facebook.com/UNCAAdmissions/>
- <http://admissions.unc.edu/admissions-blog/>

PARALLEL COMMUNICATION TO PROSPECTIVE STUDENT PARENTS

(COSTS: human capital time from New Student and Family Programs Office, Admissions, and College Relations in developing the content and communication plan)

- Electronic Newsletter and email communication directed to and informing parents on the Buffalo State experience, key information, dates, and opportunities for engagement. Note: An initial eNewsletter will be sent to incoming student parents in July- one month prior to orientation activities. The parent communication will occur a minimum of twice per semester. Segmenting will occur for “prospective student parents” in comparison to “freshmen and upper class enrolled student parents.”

RESPOND/EXPLORE ISSUES RELATED TO REVIEWS AND OUR “STUDENT CUSTOMER SERVICE”

(COSTS: human capital time across multiple departments and individuals addressing review issues and items)

- In the social media universe (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and search engine websites such as Google, Bing, Yelp, individuals are expressing their positives and negatives about the institution on a daily basis. College Relations monitors the key social media sites and provides feedback to the appropriate personnel on campus.
- A continuous communication stream needs to flow from office to office in order to explore and address items that shine negative light on Buffalo State’s brand reputation.

Review Examples:

Google.com:

[https://www.google.com/search?site=&source=hp&q=Buffalo+State&oq=Buffalo+State&gs_l=hp.3..35i39l2j0i131j0l6j5.1698.3477.0.3852.14.14.0.0.0.98.1028.14.14.0....0...1c.1.64.hp..0.13.966.0..0i67j0i20j0i131i67.dceyyWuFlzl#lrd=0x89d31327fce8c3c1:0x3f6ea2cc3829a3c9,1,](https://www.google.com/search?site=&source=hp&q=Buffalo+State&oq=Buffalo+State&gs_l=hp.3..35i39l2j0i131j0l6j5.1698.3477.0.3852.14.14.0.0.0.98.1028.14.14.0....0...1c.1.64.hp..0.13.966.0..0i67j0i20j0i131i67.dceyyWuFlzl#lrd=0x89d31327fce8c3c1:0x3f6ea2cc3829a3c9,1)

Facebook.com Reviews:

<https://www.facebook.com/BuffaloStateCollege/reviews/>

Yelp.com:

http://www.yelp.com/biz/buffalo-state-college-state-university-of-new-york-buffalo?utm_campaign=yelp_feed&utm_medium=feed_v2&utm_source=bing

Niche.com

<https://colleges.niche.com/suny-buffalo-state-college/>

ENHANCING THE CAMPUS TOUR AND VISIT EXPERIENCE:

(COSTS: Consultant fees, student assistant/ambassador hourly costs)

- Consider an audit and/or expert evaluation of the tour experience for prospective students and their parents. How can this critical component of personal recruitment be tooled to showcase Buffalo State in its best light, where the campus atmosphere, people, and programs shine?

Related Items on Campus Tours:

- https://www.welcometocollege.com/workshops_and_audit
- http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/middlestates/content/docs/7_5_4_CampusVisitExecSummary_Stockton.pdf
- http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/19/education/19college.html?_r=0

VIDEO STORYTELLING BY STUDENTS AND FACULTY

(COSTS: human capital time from College Relations and Creative Media Services)

- With the upcoming hire of a marketing communication videographer, the development of multiple student, faculty, programs, and campus culture related video content is a necessary tool in expressing the Buffalo State experience through authentic perspectives and visually rich vignettes. This important hire is expected to develop, create, and execute producing multiple videos each week that will be integrated into the marketing communication and recruitment mix of websites, emails to prospective students, group presentations (Pre-Campus Tour Information Sessions, Open Houses, and High School Visits), social media channels (Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter), and mass media outlets (TV ad spots).

* * * * *

ADDENDUM to:
End of Year Report
President's Marketing and Communication
Advisory Committee
2015-2016 Academic Year

New Marketing Initiatives and Proposed Costs - Prioritized:

NOTE: The following proposed marketing initiatives and draft budgets represent *new* opportunities. The College Relations strategic marketing budget and plan currently spends approximately \$200,000 per year to support undergraduate admissions recruitment efforts, Graduate School promotion, and Buffalo State's overall brand identity awareness, with nearly 75% earmarked for assisting with recruitment efforts.

1). Campus Building Signage (STAC, Back of Moore/Rte 198)- (\$18,000) x 3 messages and install - **\$54,000**

Campus Brand Signage Updates (Street Pole Banners, Bus Shelters, Indoor Posters) - **\$15,500**

Full building height signage with messages and Buffalo State branding provides a needed compliment to the campus' institutional signage presence. Banners that are well positioned for traffic on Rte 198, Elmwood, and Grant Streets further establishes our position as an anchor in the community, offering a welcoming feel throughout and surrounding campus.

2). Buffalostate.edu Web Support (Consulting Website Audit, SEO Enhancement, Campus Mapping,) - **\$29,000**

- Website Technical Audit – Full site – *Approved by President's Cabinet* - (\$20,000)
- Search Engine Optimization (SEO) Enhancement (\$15,000)
- [CampusBird](#) Interactive Campus Map and Virtual Tour (\$14,000)

Buffalo State's web presence is the most visible communication vehicle for all of campus. A budget for audits, technical upgrades, an enhanced SEO are essential to campus constituents and web visitors. The current budget to support web contractual initiatives and equipment/technology is below \$50,000

3). Electronic Communication (eBlasts, eNewsletters, freelance content writing) - **\$10,000**

There has been a significant increase in requests from across campus for custom digital communication including eBlasts, eNewsletters, and video messaging. Areas including Admissions, Graduate School, New Student and Family Programs, President's Office, and Development are all seeking to increase efforts. Budget will assist with production, writing, and potential travel expenses.

4). Markets Outside WNY/NYC (i.e. - Roch, Syr, Albany) Undergrad Recruitment Test Campaigns - \$90,000

Decision Point: Admissions alignment with their top two regions where recruiting strategies (campus visits, direct mail, email, information sessions, counselor communication, graduation success) may be

most effective. What goals, application increases, yield, etc. are planned for region? Social media, mobile marketing, radio, cable TV will be utilized.

5). Graduate School Dedicated Marketing Fall/Spring - \$80,000

Facebook/Twitter Ads: Target Zips and Demo Criteria	(\$10,000)
Radio Buys in Buffalo and Rochester Markets	(\$40,000)
Cable Television Buys in Buffalo and Rochester Markets	(\$15,000)
Search Engine Marketing (SEM) Ads:	(\$15,000)

Currently, the Graduate School spends less than \$10,000 in publication support materials for programming and call-to-action events including fall open house, spring information sessions, and drop-in, online chat events. The proposed \$80,000 advertising/marketing campaigns will provide needed brand awareness and program specific promotion during peak fall and spring timeframes to assist with applications and yield. Over the past few years, College Relations has dedicated a small portion of the \$200,000 marketing budget to generate awareness and participants in two to three events each year with SEM, Facebook, Radio, and Outdoor ads.

6). Transfer Student Specific – WNY and NYC - \$67,000

Facebook/Twitter Ads: Target Zips and Demo Criteria	(\$15,000)
Cable Television Buy: Buffalo, NYC/Long Island	(\$30,000)
Community College Student Newspaper Campaigns	(\$12,000)
YouTube & Mobile Ads: Target Zips and Demo Criteria	(\$10,000)

In addition to the Graduate School, Buffalo State’s transfer student applications and enrollment have been on the decline. Currently, a small portion of the overall marketing expenditures is dedicated toward the transfer market. This usually occurs as a late request when enrollment numbers are low. A focused campaign reaching the community college population through social media criteria, on-campus ads and video/TV will provide an enhanced presence for Buffalo State.

7). Undergraduate Specific – NYC Metro Region - \$95,000

Facebook/Twitter Ads: Target Zips and Demo Criteria	(\$35,000)
YouTube & Mobile Ads: Target Zips and Demo Criteria	(\$20,000)
Cable Television Buy: Utilize NYC students/alums	(\$35,000)
NYC visit leave behind for students (t-shirts, gear)	(\$5,000)

• Total for all new initiatives	\$460,500
• Less Approved Funds	(\$74,000)
• TOTAL FOR ALL NEW PROPOSED INITIATIVES:	\$386,500