
WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Operational Review and Organizational Plan



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SUBMITTED BY
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NEW WEST COMMUNICATIONS



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overview: Why Now... and What's Needed?	3
Background and Methodology	5
Six Big Takeaways	7
Communications Approach	11
Structure	14
Tactics	18
Funding	22
Putting It Into Play: College To Career	24
Appendix A: Messaging Themes and Guideposts	25
Appendix B: Interviews conducted	26
Contact	29

Overview: Why Now... and What's Needed?

During her first six months engaging with Wayne State University's (WSU) community, alumni, and supporters, President Kimberly Andrews Espy has begun crafting a clear vision for the future.

This vision draws from WSU's 156-year history and proven commitment to student success — while positioning the university to power Detroit and generate Michigan's talent pipeline for decades to come. To accomplish this, President Espy has assembled a new leadership team; unveiled the "College to Career" initiative; and reinforced WSU's dedication towards improving social mobility for Michigan students, promoting the health and well-being of urban families and neighborhoods, and fueling regional innovation and business competitiveness.

Inspiring shared action towards these goals and **achieving success will require a modern, efficient, and strategic communication and marketing structure** that is well-aligned with President Espy's vision for the future. Such a structure is necessary for WSU to tell its powerful story to prospective and current students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, community members, elected officials, and potential donors and funders.

But such a structure does not currently exist. As a senior WSU leader with experience at multiple peer institutions said, ***"We are not on top of this in any way."***

This report was developed after a four-month review of Wayne State's Marketing and Communications (MAC) office and related functions across campus. It lays out some specific challenges WSU faces and makes recommendations in four areas to elevate the university's marketing and communications functions. These areas are distinct and interconnected, with effective change in one reliant on effective change in the others.

- **Approach:** Setting the tone from the top to move beyond "scrappy"
- **Structure:** Reorganizing within and beyond MAC
- **Tactics:** Identifying specific on-the-ground approaches
- **Funding:** Supporting new positions and dropping fee-for-service





The primary impetus for this review is clear: As WSU strategically works toward a stronger future, the university's communications structure must be aligned with that strategy. But the need for a new approach at this particular time goes beyond the needs of a new administration.

There is a pervasive sense among campus leaders, deans, and faculty members that MAC does not communicate effectively with diverse audiences or respond efficiently to the needs and pressures of the moment, although many individual communicators are well-liked and respected. Indeed, the existing approach and structure are misaligned with best practices in higher education communications in several ways — from its newsroom-style mentality to a fee-for-service model that sometimes prioritizes campus “clients” above mission-critical projects.

At the same time, other Michigan universities are expanding their footprints in Detroit as part of this diverse city's resurgence. This trend creates long-term opportunities for partnerships and collaborations. More immediately, though, it highlights the need for WSU to distinguish itself from those high-profile peers and go from being Detroit's “hidden gem” to the city's well-known, enduring treasure.

The arrival of a new president. The shortcomings of an established structure. The challenges of standing out distinctively on the home turf. Collectively, these forces create an imperative for Wayne State to build a new marketing and communications structure today that can support — and generate support *for* — the university's progress and future impact under President Espy's leadership.



Background and Methodology

During the fall of 2023, Wayne State's long-time Vice President of Marketing and Communications and Chief of Staff announced his retirement. President Espy quickly announced the appointment of an interim Senior Vice President of Marketing and Communications. She also launched a search for a Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer who will improve institutional advocacy by overseeing and connecting multiple areas, including the Office of the WSU Board of Governors, Government and Community Affairs (GCA), and MAC.

With that search underway, the President's office also engaged New West Communications to review the structure, work product, challenges, and opportunities in and around Marketing and Communications. New West was charged with identifying ways to elevate the university's current communications structure and ensure that messaging from every corner of the university aligns with Wayne State's campuswide vision and strategy.

New West Communications partner Gary Susswein:

- Reviewed and analyzed marketing and communications materials, including internal communications, external-facing websites, media relations assets, social media content, advertising, and collateral for various offices and colleges.
- Reviewed MAC's organizational charts and budget.
- Visited Wayne State to conduct on-site interviews and understand its culture and values.
- Interviewed more than 50 community members and stakeholders including MAC employees, other campus communicators and collaborators, and senior leaders, such as the president, acting provost, deans, and a member of the Board of Governors.
- Interviewed communications leaders from peer public urban research universities.

Throughout the process, New West's Susswein, who was formerly the Chief Communications Officer at The University of Texas at Austin, met regularly with President Espy and interim Senior Associate Vice President Carolyn Berry. He also met periodically with interim Provost Laurie Lauzon Clabo and Chief Financial Officer Bethany Gielczyk, to discuss findings, review feedback, and clarify issues.

The goal of this review was not to dictate specific daily tactics but to offer strategic guidance and top-level tactics that will empower President Espy, the new Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer and the next Senior Assistant Vice President for Marketing and Communications, to effectively promote, elevate, and protect WSU's reputation in the short, medium, and long term.

As a result, New West has identified potential changes to the university's **Communications Approach, Structure, Tactics, and Funding** that will help advance WSU's long-term interests and presidential priorities.



Six Big Takeaways

New West’s review of marketing and communications across WSU yielded dozens of observations, ideas, and potential approaches that informed the recommendations in this report. A half-dozen key findings came up consistently and embody both the challenges and opportunities that Wayne State faces. They are important to highlight individually.

1. Going Forward, the President Must Reinforce Priorities and Introduce Consistent Messaging Themes and Guideposts

From deans to rank-and-file communicators, many in the WSU community say they have not previously understood presidential communications priorities — or even the president’s level of commitment to consistent messaging. This history has translated into communicators feeling disempowered to say “no” to any college, unit, or office, with a request that might be off-message. It has led to deans feeling uncertain about when their colleges should take the lead on announcements and initiatives and when the university should do so.

Moving forward, the President, through the Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer, should proactively reinforce a set of themes that underlie all central Marketing and Communications efforts and filter to schools/colleges, divisions, and offices. Specific messages and channels should be identified that align with these themes and resonate with diverse audiences. Suggested themes include:

- We are the talent pipeline for Michigan’s evolving workforce.
- We are essential to Detroit, a city on the rise.
- We drive social mobility and improve lives.
- We are public R1 with local impact — powered by a world-class faculty.
- We improve urban health and communities.
- We fuel regional innovation, entrepreneurship, and business competitiveness.

“We operate like 20 different universities. Some of that is the culture of higher ed. Some of that is utter frustration with central communications and marketing,” — a WSU dean

2. Crisis Communications Can't Always Dominate

When crises arise, they too often consume virtually every senior member of Marketing and Communications, and other members of university leadership, and keep them from focusing on proactive messaging and other priorities. Making matters worse, seemingly routine events — from speeches to facilities issues — are often treated as “crises” that unexpectedly require communicators’ attention at the expense of anything else.

Moving forward, WSU should better document communications protocols before and after crises arise and clearly establish who needs to be involved for different levels of issues.

“If there is a crisis, nothing else is happening,” — a MAC team member

3. Communications Beyond MAC Should Be More Consistent and Better Coordinated

Key administrative units such as the Provost’s office and Enrollment Management don’t have dedicated communicators, which leaves high-level leaders spending hours on nuts-and-bolts communications efforts such as emails and slide decks or looking to MAC to find bandwidth to provide support.

At the same time, there has sometimes been a lack of clarity around the roles of school/college communicators on everything from high-profile announcements about gifts or programs to routine web updates — and uncertainty about communication strategies around graduate-level admissions, which colleges oversee.

Moving forward, communicators should be embedded in key administrative units. Additionally, the roles of college communicators should be more clearly defined and articulated, potentially using a “dotted line” reporting structure to MAC similar to the one in place for college business officers.

“It’s death by PowerPoint around here,” — an associate provost whose office has no communications support

4. Move Beyond a Newsroom Mentality

Marketing and Communications approaches its work like the staff of a legacy news outlet, often looking to fill a daily news hole with new content, writing long-form stories that are frequently structured like press releases, and dedicating more resources to producing print magazines than engaging on social media. Oftentimes, the content that is produced is not directly connected to broader WSU priorities and messaging pillars.

Moving forward, the focus should shift more to serving as brand ambassadors than as in-house journalists. As part of this, Marketing and Communications staff and other communicators must take advantage of training opportunities specifically focused on understanding and reaching diverse audiences.

“Let’s choose a few stories and tell them over and over,” — a senior campus communicator

5. Eliminate the Fee-for-Service Model

The existing agency-client model for MAC to provide certain services creates a disincentive to prioritizing communications efforts.

Offices such as GCA, which have vital and specialized functions, feel isolated in their communications. Top university leaders who set and implement policies feel like “clients” who are being managed. And business offices spend time shuffling university funds in the fee-for-service model between units without adding any overall value to operations.

Moving forward, this model should be eliminated, and resources should be aligned with functional responsibilities and focused on core priorities.

“We needed a fact sheet updated for the president to use — and we had to pay to have it updated (by our own university colleagues),” a director who works closely with the President’s office.

6. Explore a New Content Management System (CMS)

WSU stands out and should be lauded for its consistency in web design and architecture across units. However, this consistency is achieved by centralizing web development functions and using an internally developed “home grown” content management system (CMS) that a very limited number of employees know how to code and manage. This creates bottlenecks in web updates and prevents individual offices from outsourcing or hiring staff with expertise in Drupal, WordPress, or other CMS platforms.

Moving forward, WSU should explore transitioning to a more standard platform, such as WordPress or Drupal. Planning such a transition will require time, financial investment, and detailed planning with IT experts that is beyond the scope of this review.

“Website is your #1 Marketing Tool — and it needs a lot of work!” — RNL Consultants’ 2022 report



Communications Approach

After more than a decade with the same leadership, MAC has developed a “way of doing things” that does not reflect modern best practices or respond to the current needs of the university. Many individual employees are well-regarded and highly valued, but collectively **“there is a sense that this is ‘good enough,’”** one senior leader said. **“People are satisfied with mediocrity.”**

Elevating WSU’s marketing and communications begins by recognizing and deliberately shifting past practices and structure. This will take time and must be aligned with best practices around communications, diversity, and inclusion.

Communications chiefs at multiple peer or sister institutions, from Virginia Commonwealth University and Georgia State to the University of Pittsburgh and Grand Valley State University, spoke about making similar adjustments under new leadership to reflect who they are — and where they want to be in order to succeed.

Prioritize from the top – and convey that campuswide

As President Espy and the University Leadership Council articulate their goals and action plans for Wayne State’s future, they should also make clear how these translate into the messaging themes, detailed above, that must be ingrained in campus outreach.

None of these themes radically depart from the stories that Wayne State has been telling until now. But campus communicators and leaders consistently expressed a desire to hear them laid out, reinforced and deemed a priority “from the top” in a coherent manner that is consistent over time.

President Espy should also look for regular opportunities to speak about her vision for WSU's success with the media, from *Crain's*, the *Detroit Free Press*, the *Michigan Chronicle*, and WJR locally to *Inside Higher Ed* and the *Chronicle of Higher Education* nationally.

Let your role in Detroit shine

Wayne State's contributions to its city and connections with its community are vital to its identity and success. But there is also a sense that WSU's messaging has taken these connections for granted, even as the University of Michigan and Michigan State start to tell their own Detroit stories more clearly.

Communications and marketing efforts must double down on emphasizing WSU's historical and ongoing value to this vibrant and diverse city — as well the value that the city provides to the university. The interconnectedness of the city and university sets us apart. It benefits us all.

Move from “Warrior Scruppy” to being truly “Warrior Strong”

WSU's key stakeholders appreciate that Wayne State is a “scrappy” place where students, faculty, and staff think creatively, work hard, and find ways to get the job done despite obstacles.

But that approach often means communicators are spread too thin or taking on roles that extend beyond communications. It means positions are often built around an employee's interests or relationships instead of the university's needs. (Nothing embodies “scrappy” more than a creative director dropping everything to serve as a project manager during a crisis or an associate marketing director splitting her days between posting on social media and reviewing licensing requests.)

Additional resources and positions — together with clearer protocols and priorities — will help communicators tell the Wayne State story more effectively than by always “doing more with less.” If the message to the world is “Warrior Strong,” then the approach to getting that message out should also be “Warrior Strong.”

Shift from a newsroom mentality to brand extension

Marketing and Communications must be driven by the desire to elevate the brand of a great university.

This is best done by telling WSU's most important stories, repeating a core set of priorities, and leaning into clear messaging pillars to different audiences across multiple channels. In the modern higher education landscape, it is no longer effective for communicators to "cover" the campus community like a news outlet by developing fresh daily content that is sometimes only loosely tied to the university's strategy and leadership's vision.

Recognize diverse audiences in a more nuanced way

Campus communicators either talk broadly about telling the Wayne State story "to the world" or bore in narrowly on specific audiences such as prospective students or Detroit community members. Elevating campuswide messaging will require additional training, an across-the-board understanding of different audiences, and recognition of how the themes laid out above can be sensitively applied and framed for varied groups.



Structure

Reinvigorating the communications approach will require President Espy and the new Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer to establish a different mindset and approach. It will also require significant structural changes and rethinking and remodeling the organizational chart of the past decade.

There is, of course, no “one size fits all” communications approach at universities. Each institution has its own needs and history, and every president their own style and priorities. The following recommendations are designed to meet the needs of Wayne State’s campus, stakeholders, and vision under President Espy as she and university leadership seek the cultural shifts detailed above.

In some cases, it means creating new positions that will require outside hires who can bring new perspectives and specialized skills. In other cases, it involves redefining and repurposing existing roles by drawing from existing MAC talent. This must all be done with an eye toward building a talented, diverse team that reflects the community and understands the needs and expectations of a diverse range of audiences.

Reorganizing MAC

Hire a permanent Senior AVP for Marketing and Communications to oversee MAC and ensure all messaging aligns with President Espy’s strategic vision. This person should report directly to the Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer, coordinate closely with the Presidential Communications Director, and have ongoing access to the president and provost.

This person should also serve as a daily liaison to GCA leaders and provide support in developing messaging and collateral for elected officials and local, state, and federal agencies.

Publicly post and conduct open searches for all positions to ensure an open and fair hiring process that yields a talented, diverse team.

Consolidate the multiple verticals in Marketing and Communications into two closely aligned teams that report to two AVP-level positions.

- **Marketing** to include creative services, photography, licensing, digital strategy, content management, and expanded video services.
- **Communications** to focus on media outreach, issues management, crisis communications, and true internal communications.

Embed a Director of Internal Communications in the communications team to work across buckets in MAC and with other schools/colleges and divisions to gather and distribute content internally.

Establish a single content development team, including writers who can develop everything from marketing copy and video scripts to news releases and web content; videographers and photographers; and data analysts who can help drive informed decisions about content strategy. This team must be sensitive to and representative of diverse audiences and viewpoints.

Create a full-time social media team of two to three members to:

- Manage main university channels.
- Listen to and monitor conversations related to WSU.
- Provide templates and toolkits for the many accounts that represent Wayne State.
- Coordinate closely with the Director of Enrollment Management Marketing.
- Coordinate closely with crisis communicators and Provost's office.
- Amplify messages from colleges, offices, and partners.
- Look for new avenues to promote the university to multiple audiences.

Develop job functions based on WSU's needs and alignment with President Espy's vision for the future — not the competencies, talents, or relationships of individual staff members, as is frequently done in the current organizational chart.

Harness the university's mission by expanding opportunities for student workers, particularly those who can start as first-year students and then build skills and become valuable contributors until they graduate, and potentially beyond.

Reorganizing Beyond MAC

Embed mid-to-senior level communicators and marketers in key offices whose missions are central to Wayne State operations, similar to what currently exists in the division of Development and Alumni Relations, and establish dotted-line relationships with Marketing and Communications, similar to the relationship between college business officers and the Finance and Business Office leaders. These units include:

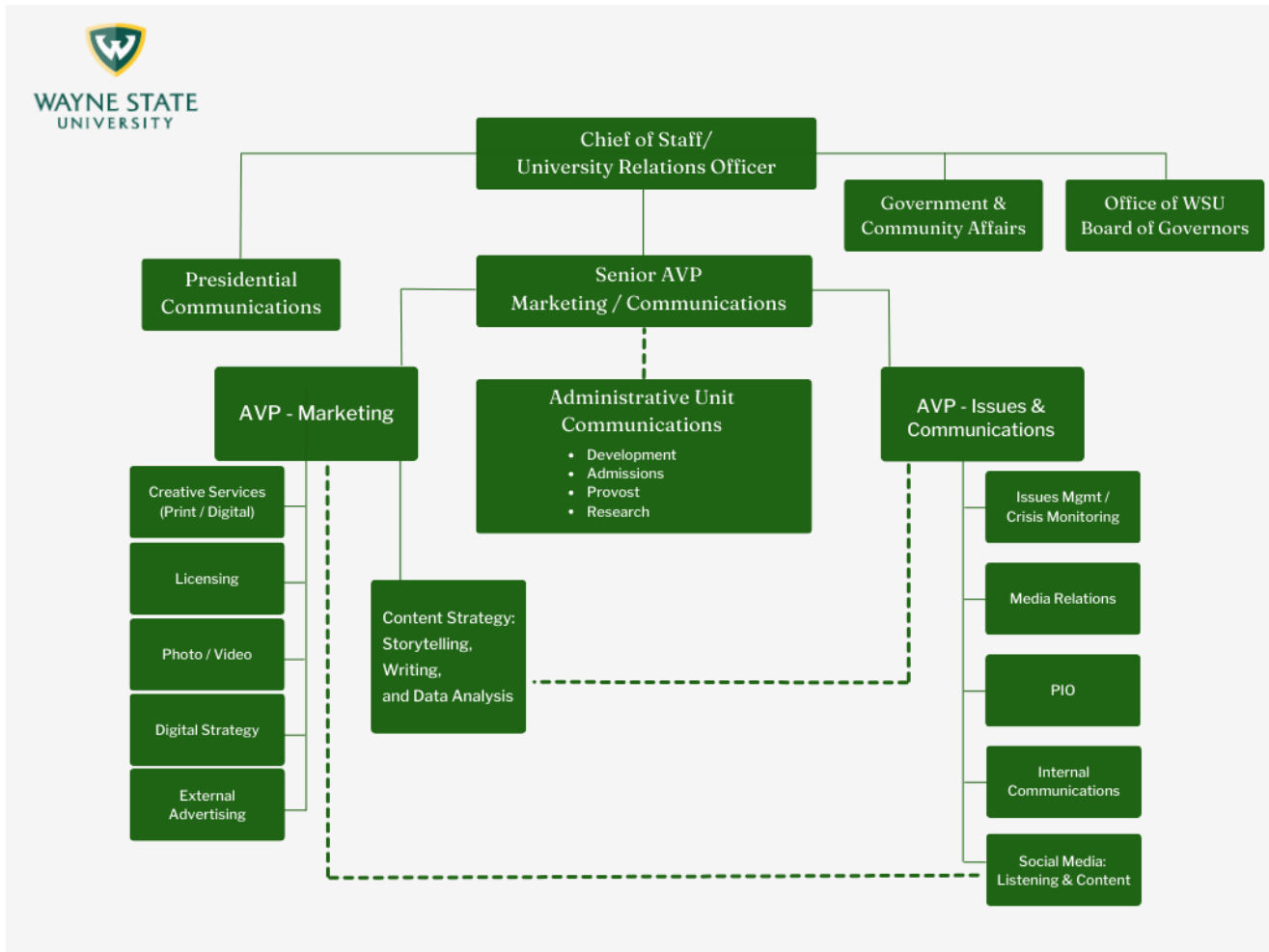
- Provost's office
- Admissions and Enrollment Management
- Research (This relationship appears to already exist but can be more explicitly integrated more explicitly into the proposed system.)

The Director of Marketing for Admissions and Enrollment Management should have prior experience in enrollment management marketing. Reporting to the new Vice Provost for Enrollment Management and coordinating closely with Carnegie, this person should oversee all marketing around undergraduate admissions. They should also serve as a strategic partner in EM marketing for master's and certificate programs and collaborate with all graduate programs, which will continue to manage their own marketing in alignment with WSU themes, priorities, and messaging.

The Director of Communications in the Provost's office should support the specific communication needs of the provost and their senior staff, oversee universitywide faculty communications, and manage academic-related communications to students. Over time, the office can also consider adding an entry-level communications position to support these broad needs.

Create a consistent, campuswide model for college communicators in which they support the communications needs of deans; lead targeted messaging to their college's students, staff, and faculty; and identify on-message stories that can be developed in close coordination with Marketing and Communications.

Proposed Marketing and Communications Organization Chart





Tactics

As Wayne State seeks to reframe its communications approach infrastructure, it can also take specific tactical steps to improve marketing and communications.

Some potential tactics will become apparent only once the new approach has been established, the new Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer has fully onboarded, and a new team is in place. But others are already evident.

Crisis Communications

- **The Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer should designate a “crisis czar”** — potentially themselves or the AVP for Communications — and limit MAC’s involvement in crises to the Senior AVP, AVP for Communications, social media manager, and those who work with media. This approach should free up the marketing team and content developers to “run the other way” and focus on proactive messaging when crises arise.
- **Hold monthly “horizon scanning” meetings** where a group of campus leaders and communicators identifies and plans for controversial issues before they arise and shares updates around ongoing concerns.

This group should include representatives of key offices that face public scrutiny and respond to crises, whether it is a senior communicator, AVP, or Vice President. It should recognize how university messaging around sensitive issues may be understood and received by WSU’s diverse array of campus stakeholders and the broader community.

Potential for immediate action:

The Chief of Staff/University Relations Officer can establish this group and develop structures and protocols immediately. The makeup of this group should be different and more senior-level than the current weekly communicators meeting.

- **Empower the AVP for Communications to monitor the daily churn of potential issues** and crises *between* horizon scanning meetings — potentially with support of a dedicated mid-level employee. The AVP should continually keep the “crisis czar” informed while developing statements and responses for crises that are deemed as lower level. This will protect senior leaders’ time from being consumed by issues that are not yet at crisis level.
- **Clearly define different levels of issues and crises** and have a written protocol and checklist for responding to each, whether it threatens public safety or potentially undermines the university’s reputation. Not every crisis can be anticipated, of course, but these definitions and protocols can provide an important starting point to most.
- **Establish an issues-focused web page** where statements, responses and overviews of ongoing issues or recent crises are posted and cataloged, both to provide transparency and save staff time in replying to media queries.
- **Launch WSU Police Department social media channels** as the voice of authority and first provider of information in public safety crises — and provide guidance on best practices to the police public information officer and other department representatives.

Content Management System

- **As a long-term goal, switch content management systems** to a standard product, such as WordPress or Drupal, while maintaining mandatory “best practices” for presentation and web design. This would make it easier for units to fill web development positions with experienced candidates and independently update their websites more easily.
- **Begin this multiphase transition by forming a working group or hiring a digital expert** to perform a detailed needs assessment for the campus's digital properties, including the CMS, faculty profile system, event manager, HTML email, forms, news manager, and digital signage. This assessment should review one-time fees to transfer content into a new CMS, ongoing annual fees for the outsourced CMS, and a realistic timeframe for the campuswide change.

Slow and steady:

Perhaps more than any other recommendation in this report, this needed change around the CMS will require time. The university must conduct a detailed analysis that considers all aspects of WSU's digital presence and aims for steady, phased progress in migration.

Content Development and Distribution

- **Expand video production capabilities** with a focus on high-priority university projects that align with presidential priorities.
- **Focus more on digestible content**, including shareable videos, graphics, and lists, and publish substantially fewer long-form stories
- **Develop nuanced stories, campaigns, and messages** that are sensitive to the needs and expectations of a culturally diverse range of WSU audiences
- **Reuse the best, on-brand content** across multiple channels over time to generate wider audience penetration instead of treating them as “one and done” stories.
- **Overhaul Today@Wayne** with fewer long-form stories, more “quick hit” announcements, clearly defined sections, and all offerings tied directly to messaging pillars and presidential goals.

Magazine Production

- **Refocus the alumni magazine and broaden it into a university advocacy piece.** It should be a twice-yearly publication closely aligned with the presidential vision and long-term Development and GCA goals. The publication must recognize the diverse perspectives of the WSU community, particularly given the many alumni who live and work regionally and serve as community leaders. It should inform former students, community partners, and potential supporters about Wayne State’s current aspirations and accomplishments and publish substantially fewer long-form profiles of specific alumni.
- **Better engage a broad array of community audiences** through modern, high-profile external channels, such as sponsored content in the *Michigan Chronicle*. This should be done while maintaining the Engage email newsletter to reach diverse groups in Detroit and beyond and integrating storytelling into the refocused advocacy-oriented publication described above instead of a standalone Warriors magazine.



Potential for immediate action:

Re-envisioning Wayne State’s approach to magazine production and distribution already has buy-in from senior university leadership. These changes can be implemented immediately as a way to strategically realign and refocus resources, connect with overlapping audiences, and champion the university’s impact and President Espy’s vision for the future.



Funding

Without any formal planning or deliberative decision-making, Wayne State increased spending on marketing activities and communications/marketing staffing by nearly \$3 million in six years: from \$11.1 million in FY 2017 to \$14.0 million in FY 2023, according to budget information provided by the CFO. Notably, MAC staffing paid for by the General Fund actually fell \$122,143 (4%) while staffing costs for other campus communicators in schools/colleges and divisions increased by nearly \$1.8 million (67%).

To successfully implement the changes outlined above — and foster campuswide alignment and confidence in WSU’s marketing and communications efforts — the university must be more strategic in its increased investments. The precise cost of elevating universitywide marketing and communications will be determined by the specific recommendations that WSU embraces, but it will be driven by several factors.

Increasing Personnel

Create new positions or repurpose existing lines into more specialized roles. This realignment should happen as part of the broader plan that makes the Senior Associate Vice President role a permanent position and consolidates the multiple units in Marketing and Communications into two closely aligned teams that report to two AVPs. WSU should create the following new roles (listed in general order of importance):

- Director of Marketing – Enrollment Management and Admissions
- Director of Communications - Provost’s office
- Director of Social Media
- Director of Internal Communications
- Social Media Coordinator
- Content Director
- Issues Management Coordinator

Eliminating Fee-for-Service

Replace the current funding model through which schools/colleges, divisions, departments, and offices pay MAC for video production, design, and other services.

This model fosters an “agency-client” mentality that disincentivizes any focus on university-level priorities. Offices such as GCA, which have vital and specialized functions but limited budgets, feel isolated in their communications. Top university leaders who set and implement policies feel like “clients” who are being managed. And business offices spend time shuffling university funds in the fee-for-service model between units without adding any overall value to university operations.

This shift would require the university to realign approximately **\$400,000** in resource support with MAC’s functions.

Switching Content Management Systems

As a long-term goal, switch content management systems to a more standard product. The full cost of this change will be difficult to assess until the recommended needs assessment is completed (as detailed above), but several data points suggest the possible size of the needed investment. These include.

- **Startup costs:** The Mike Ilitch School of Business is currently spending **\$300,000** with an outside vendor to redesign its website within the current CMS, while the Wayne State Alumni Association received bids for approximately **\$60,000** to redesign its website.
- **Ongoing costs:** Georgia State University spends approximately **\$150,000** a year on cloud hosting and all of the associated WordPress costs.

Standardizing Funding for College Communicators

Realign any central funding for college communications positions from the MAC budget to the schools/colleges. This would not require any additional spending but would provide an accurate picture of the resources that support MAC and create accounting consistency among schools/colleges around their communication efforts.

Potential for immediate action: This change can be made in the next budget cycle.

Putting It Into Play: College To Career



The College to Career initiative unveiled by President Espy in November provides an immediate opportunity for proactive, methodical communications that support the emerging vision for WSU. This communication can also highlight the impactful work of Wayne State’s

outstanding faculty and dedicated staff to supporters and decision-makers.

With specific recommendations expected in the coming months, WSU communicators can leverage external marketing, internal communications, media outreach, thought leadership, and digital channels to engage with alumni, employers, community members, and government leaders.

This effort should be approached as an **ongoing campaign** in which content is produced and repurposed across multiple channels to tell the Wayne State story. The campaign can essentially beta-test some of the themes and ideas laid out in this report in ways that recognize the needs and perspectives of a diverse array of stakeholders.

Identify 8-10 students, alumni, employers, and faculty members whose experiences highlight the goals, spirit, and daily successes of College to Career — potentially some of the Warriors who were featured at the November announcement.

- Building on existing assets, develop their stories into short videos, online stories, and cards that can be regularly shared through all social media channels.
- Feature them regularly in Today@Wayne, the Engage newsletter, and the newly realigned “advocacy-oriented” magazine for alumni and the community, reinforcing the goals and plans for College to Career.

Stagger media interviews for President Espy about the efforts with television and radio stations in Detroit and Lansing throughout the spring, and follow up after the recommendations are issued.

Identify key milestones in the College to Career planning process, including the announcement of recommendations and paths forward.

- Highlight these milestones through direct communications from President Espy to campus and the community.
- Offer “early access” through a Zoom call with key stakeholders.
- Plan multichannel communications around final recommendations, including direct communication to lawmakers and op/eds for Detroit and Lansing newspapers.
- Develop talking points and other collateral and strategies to support ULC members in extending the College to Career brand and message campuswide and connecting the initiative to related storytelling from schools/colleges and divisions.

Incorporate College to Career logo into presidential communications.



Appendix A: Messaging themes & guideposts

- We are the talent pipeline for Michigan's evolving workforce.
- We are essential to Detroit, a city on the rise.
- We drive social mobility and improve lives.
- We are public R1 with local impact — powered by a world-class faculty.
- We improve urban health and communities.
- We fuel regional innovation, entrepreneurship, and business competitiveness.



Appendix B: Interviews conducted

Board of Governors

- Terri Lynn Land

University Leadership

- Kimberly Andrews Espy, President
- Laurie Lauzon Clabo, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Bethany Gielczyk, Interim Senior Vice President for Business Affairs, Treasurer, and Chief Financial Officer
- Michael Wright, Vice President, Marketing and Communications and Chief of Staff
- David Ripple, Vice President, Development and Alumni Affairs
- Ahmad Ezzeddine, Vice President, Academic Student Affairs and Global Engagement
- Brian Cummings, Dean, Eugene Applebaum College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- Ali Abolmaali, Dean, College of Engineering
- Wael Sakr, Dean, School of Medicine
- Hasan Elahi, Dean, College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts
- Amanda Bryant-Friedrich, Dean, Graduate School
- Donyale Padgett, Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer
- Boris Baltés, Senior Associate Provost, Faculty Affairs
- Linda Beale, President, Academic Senate and Professor of Tax Law

Marketing and Communications Team Members

- Carolyn Berry, Interim Senior Associate Vice President
- Art Lionas, Director, Media Content
- Nick DeNardis, Senior Director, Digital Communications
- Christa Raju, Director, Publications and Design
- Matt Lockwood, Associate Vice President, University Communications
- Darrell Dawsey, Associate Director, Community Communications
- Brittani Hobbs, Associate Director, Marketing and Communications Strategist
- Katheryn Kutil, Public Information Officer

School & College Faculty leaders and experts

- Jenn Wareham, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Claudio Verani, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Jeffrey Stoltman, Associate Professor of Marketing, Mike Ilitch School of Business
- Matthew Seeger, Distinguished Professor, College of Fine, Performing and Communication Arts

Other Campus Communicators

- Steven Townsend, Director, Marketing and Communications, School of Medicine
- Tom Gorman, Associate Director, Marketing, Engineering
- Alex Bienkowski, Associate Director, Marketing and Communications, Nursing
- Mari Ellis, Associate Director, Marketing, Business
- Nick Mattar, Associate Director, Marketing, Graduate School
- Brian Escamilla, Senior Director, Development Communications
- Heather Marks, Associate Director, Student Life Marketing
- Jeff Weiss, Senior Associate Athletics Director/Media Relations
- Julie O'Connor, Director of Research Communications
- Carol Baldwin, Marketing Coordinator, Academic Student Affairs and Global Engagement
- Jessica Archer, Associate Director of Marketing and Communications, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
- Mel Mills, Senior Digital Strategist, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Campus administrators

- Darryl Gardner, Assistant Vice President, Student Success
- Huajing Maske, Assistant Vice President, International Partnerships
- Arthurine Turner, Senior Director, Business Affairs
- Ericka Matthews-Jackson, Senior Director, Undergraduate Admissions
- Cathy Kay, Senior Director, Financial Aid
- Katie Rawlings, Director, Student Service Center
- Kelli Dixon, Director, Office of International Students and Scholars
- Michael Quattro, Director, Educational Outreach and Transfer Initiatives
- Rebecca Journigan, Director of Operations, Academic Student Affairs and Global Engagement
- Stacie Clayton, Director of Community Affairs
- Dave Greco, Director of State Relations
- Doug Messina, Director of Federal Affairs
- Darin Ellis, Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Associate Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness
- Chanay Peterson, Executive Assistant and Chief of Staff to the Provost

Higher education communicators

- Kelsey Anderson, Assistant Vice President, Carnegie
- Shawn Lindsey, Associate Vice Chancellor/Associate Vice President, Media Relations, University of Houston
- Rachel Richelieu, Vice Chancellor for Communications and Marketing, University of Pittsburgh
- Stacie Behler, Vice President & Chief Public Relations and Communications Officer & Secretary to the Board of Trustees, Grand Valley State University
- Andrea Anne Jones, Vice President Public Relations and Marketing Communications, Georgia State University
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