Building on Excellence

Branding and Marketing Working Group

THE CHARGE: Invest funds to sharpen SDSU’s distinctive profile as a research-intensive public university through coordinated branding, marketing, and targeted communication

BACKGROUND: The Branding and Marketing Working Group has 12 members, including students, faculty, staff, and alumni representatives. The group discussed a variety of ideas and concepts related to both research at San Diego State University, and the bigger picture of branding the university, of which research is a significant part. Some of the ideas discussed for “sharpening the distinctive profile as a research-intensive public university” are subtle changes to the way that we on campus think and talk about research. And some of them are more tangible strategies which may be rolled up into the ongoing branding and marketing efforts of the university.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The group believes strongly that research at SDSU is more than “white lab coats.” How we define research should include more messaging about the following:

- Research is conducted in virtually every department on campus, and every student is touched by or is involved in research in some way
- Our research is hands on and career oriented
- Our research is impactful, in our local community, and around the world
- Undergraduates conduct research side-by-side with top research faculty
- Our research faculty also teach
- Research on campus fosters student success

The group would like to see us better explain, in existing/ongoing storytelling, marketing materials, media relations, etc. these key points.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The ongoing branding and marketing program, which launched in October 2013, includes most of the ideas discussed by the working group. The working group recommended expanding the program to additional media channels to extend the messages about research, as well as other SDSU messages. The group recommendations which were approved in April 2014 include:

- Pandora Radio ($60,000 to appropriately reach all target markets)
- Southwest Airlines Spirit Magazine. The group recommends that, if we pursue more print advertising, it needs to be a long enough/consistent enough campaign to resonate ($50,000)

RECOMMENDATION 3: Current students, faculty, and staff should become more knowledgeable, if not champions, of this research message.

More should be done on campus to promote research centric events, such as the Student Research Symposium and Engineering Day.

- Media Pitches
• Preview stories in SDSU NewsCenter
• Day of social media efforts
• Explore the use of existing marketing opportunities on campus (ie: freeway marquee, digital boards in the Student Union, distribution points for 360 magazine)

The group is supportive of Marcomm’s efforts to expand the campus pole banner program to increase the number of key messages about research, as well as other significant university messaging.

• Working with the Campus Beautification Committee on this effort (Cost TBD)

IMPACT:

As a result of the working group discussions, a more concerted effort has been put toward finding and telling stories of research and discovery in such areas as social science, entrepreneurship and the humanities. The ongoing national branding and marketing program has seen significant success. Following are analytics from Oct. 2013 through Apr. 2014:

• Facebook:
  o 4.82 million unique reach
  o 11,447 ad clicks
• Twitter:
  o 1.93 million impressions
  o 22,645 ad clicks
• YouTube:
  o 185,381 views
• Google AdWords
  o 1.98 million impressions
  o 8,698 website clicks
• Cox Media Local TV:
  o 1.25 million impressions
• Merit Pages:
  o 1,150 Actions
  o 21,362 Impressions

NEXT STEPS:

The Branding and Marketing Working Group will continue to meet once per quarter, serving as a sounding board for ideas and initiatives, and offering input, advice and potentially recommendations for further branding and marketing investment. Some representatives, such as those from Associated Students, may need to be replaced on the working group periodically.