

College of Education Communications Office

Mission

The College of Education Communications Office shares inspiring stories and achievements of our faculty, staff, students and alumni via eloquent storytelling to promote compelling connections with College stakeholders.

Vision

The College of Education Communications Office will be a leader in supporting the College's mission, vision and goals through dynamic and compelling storytelling and visuals, shared with internal and external stakeholders through the use of print, web, social media and external media outlets.

Goals

- Work with other units in the College, including Development and Alumni Relations, the Office of Multicultural Programs, the Diversity and Community Enhancement Committee (DCEC), and Recruitment and Retention to support their missions and goals.
- Develop and maintain relationships with other communications professionals within Penn State, and with external media, to help extend the reach of our storytelling.
- Benchmark our website against others within Penn State and other institutions' colleges of education, and use analytics, to inform our redesign process.
- Work with department web editors to keep website information current, accurate and accessible to people with disabilities.

Strategic Plan

1) In view of your unit's history and the evolving nature of your work, what different directions (mixes of themes) are you considering for your future? For each possible direction you identify, please indicate the reasons and your sense of opportunities and challenges.

- *We intend to increase our unit's emphasis on media relations to be able to better share stories externally. To do this, we will:*
 - Create reporters listserves for local, regional and national outlets.
 - Send appropriate stories directly to media via these listserves.
 - Work with News and Media Relations to help populate these lists.
 - Continue to work with The Conversation to connect faculty experts to media.
 - Visit local and regional media to develop and maintain relationships.
- *We intend to become more sophisticated in our use of social media platforms. To do this, we will:*
 - Evaluate social media platforms and the messages conveyed on each platform for effectiveness in achieving unit vision, mission and goals.
 - Develop personas for each platform's audience to better create more meaningful, effective messages for each.
 - Make better use of analytics to continually fine-tune our message content and timing for each platform.
- *We intend to make adjustments to the website to make it more user-friendly and to better integrate it with the look and feel of the overall University web presence. To do this, we will:*
 - Reduce the number of pages within the site, merging some pages and eliminating others to consolidate information in more user-friendly configurations.
 - Replace manually created directory listings with customized directory feeds from main directory.
 - Change front page feature box to better highlight news stories.

2) What is your preferred direction for the future and why?

- *Our unit would like to focus on staff development to better leverage communications tools to tell the College's story. We see two ways to achieve this.*
 - First, we want to continually seek out professional development opportunities that will build our skillsets and educate us on emerging communications tools and methods that we can use to fulfill our unit vision, mission and goals.

- Second, we would like to add a multimedia specialist to our staff, to create visual content that will enable expanded use of online platforms including the website and new social media outlets. We believe with these two actions, we will be better able to develop platform-specific content to reach target audiences. This, in turn will further support the College in achieving its goals.

3) To what degree does consensus exist around the pursuit of this preferred direction within your unit? If there are “minority” positions within your department or unit, what are they and how are you addressing the differences of opinion?

- *This strategic plan was collaboratively developed by all three members of the unit. There is full consensus.*

4) What are the concrete next steps you wish to take?

- *The steps we wish to take, both long-term and short-term, are included in the answers given above.*

5) What are the budget implications?

- *There will be budget implications in much of what we propose. The biggest expense would be a salary for a new employee. Other expenses would include travel for professional development and media visits, and potentially for technical help in refreshing the website.*

6) What does your unit wish to be known for in the future?

- *Our Communications Office wants to be known for being friendly and easy to work with, flexible, collaborative, responsive and helpful. We strive to be known as a unit that delivers quality and excellence in everything it does.*