Messaging Strategy Development

COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES
February 2016

To support college messaging and recruitment efforts, ASC Communications Services has engaged Ologie, a local marketing agency with national reach, to develop a strategic messaging platform to identify key messages and stories to differentiate the College of Arts and Sciences and our areas/units.

Project

The fundamental purpose of this project is to define the messaging platform for the college, articulating the college story as well as providing messaging direction for Arts and Sciences schools, departments, and programs. This messaging will be designed for all communications needs, but with particular focus on improving traditional undergraduate admissions yield.

The deliverable will be a messaging toolkit and training session open to all in the college.

Project Overview

Kickoff: Jan. 12

Phase 1: Discovery (January-March)
- Focus groups in process
- Survey in design – to be delivered internally, throughout departments
- Workshop with ASC Project Team

Phase 2: Strategy (April-mid May)
- Leveraging the output from the collaborative working session, draft the messaging strategy for the college that articulates what the college offers and why it matters. Create a system that starts with core messaging for the college and expands into group messaging for the schools and departments that fall into similar categories. For example, this may include the humanities, visual and performing arts, languages, social and behavior sciences, and natural and mathematical sciences. In addition, Ologie will deliver a toolkit, or messaging template, to assist with companion messaging to be developed at the department, school level.
• Develop a presentation and guidance tool to share the work and leverage throughout the college. This presentation will introduce the messaging strategy and demonstrate how to use the platform to craft messaging.

• Identify and prioritize new yield tactics (or other communications tactics) to be explored and developed. Illustrate how the tactics work together to maximize yield, stopping short of actual tactical design/creative. This will provide a roadmap of activities the college could pursue next.

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FAQ

Is this a project to “brand” the college?
No. This project will not result in a tag line, logos, or a creative campaign. The college’s brand is the university’s brand.

This project is to develop foundational messaging for the college. As a young college in a competitive landscape, we see a need to develop our identity and messaging strategy so that we are advocating for an arts and sciences education in a way that is compelling and distinctive on campus, in our community and beyond.

Is this a campaign?
No. This project will not deliver a comprehensive communications plan or creative materials. It will develop a messaging platform for consistency, but not homogeneity, across the college with room for distinction and customization for each area and unit.

In the future, there is a possibility for a more comprehensive communications plan and creative campaign but they are not planned for at this time. Once the foundational messaging has been delivered and the toolkit has been rolled out to our internal community, ASC Communications liaisons will be working with each department and school that is interested in building unit-level messaging.

Is this for recruitment?
One driver for this project is to improve messaging for recruitment, specifically yield, to identify ways that we can stand out from the competition. As a liberal arts college, our competition is nearly every university in the nation – we want to craft a clear and compelling story that everyone can leverage to define who we are and what we offer.

How is this project being funded?
The scope of this project is purposefully defined to leverage our funds as efficiently as possible and to deliver tools that are useful for every level of the college – it is not just to deliver “college-level” messaging. ASC Communications utilized the build of their year’s marketing budget with
the belief that creating compelling yield messaging is more of an investment in future returns than an expense. As a centralized office, ASC Communications looks to leverage its small marketing budget in ways that can have a broader impact for all units in the college and to create tools for all to use.

About Ologie
ASC Communications Services has engaged Ologie, a Columbus, Ohio, a creative higher-ed marketing agency that does highly-recognized and respected work on the national level. The managing partner is an alumnus of our design program.

ASC Project Team
Libby Eckhardt, Chief Communications Officer
Patrice Dickerson, Assistant Dean, Recruitment and Diversity Services
Kevin Leonardi, Sr. Director, Marketing and Communications
Karin Samoviski, Creative Director
Chinwe Okpalaoka, Director, Undergraduate Recruitment and Diversity
Alesia Howard, Recruitment Marketing Manager