TO: Members of the Board of Trustees
FROM: President Sabah Randhawa by Donna Gibbs, V.P. for University Relations and Marketing
DATE: August 21, 2020
SUBJECT: University Relations and Marketing Report
PURPOSE: Information Item

Purpose of Submittal:
A written report is provided on the recent activities of University Relations and Marketing.

Supporting Information:
Report Attached
Our skilled professionals worked on a wide range of online, media relations, social media, video, and graphic design projects, which included:

**Coronavirus Communications**

As the University shifted to online instruction for spring quarter, our office coordinated closely with Western's Incident Command Structure (ICS), Admissions, University Residences, Advancement, and other campus offices for messaging, response to inquiries, media response and other communications requests. These included:

- Assisted with campus-wide messaging from President Randhawa and other campus leaders on a range of topics related to the Coronavirus and the shift of Western’s main Bellingham campus to remote instruction and work from home.

- Worked with WWU ICS Command to send out daily communications via the Western Alert emergency notification system on a wide range of topics. We repurposed this information from those daily messages into updates on the Coronavirus website as well as in Western Today, social media and to respond to media, student, parent, and community inquiries.

- In video and photography, our focus has continued to be on COVID-19 communications, including creating a first-ever online Commencement video composed of 19 separate videos. Some of those videos included editing over 700 video submissions from faculty, staff, and alumni to create a cohesive whole and an interesting lineup of videos for promotion on social channels. We also provided COVID-19 related videos for Admissions, the President's Office, and other campus offices.

- In publications, we're preparing to print our summer edition of Window Magazine, which will include stories from our online-only edition of Window released earlier this spring. We've also vastly increased our communication with families during the COVID-19 response, sending families around a dozen Family Connection Newsletters special editions with breaking news. Families have appreciated the extra communication - these special editions have been generating open rates of as much as 60 percent.

- We also continue to work with colleagues in WebTech to maintain and update the COVID-19 site as well as the Spring and Summer Guide sites. Also, we are partnering with colleagues in Admissions to rewrite and revamp the hundreds of individual majors’ pages that remain among the most-visited pages by interested high schoolers and transfer students.

- Our office also responded to numerous media inquiries related to Western and the pandemic, ranging from student media such as the Western Front to local, regional and national media. A few examples included:

- The Seattle Times and other media ran stories following a message from President Randhawa to campus on university plans to teach classes in hybrid format this fall: [https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/western-washington-university-expects-to-teach-classes-in-hybrid-format-this-fall-some-online-learning-some-in-person-lectures-but-no-](https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/education/western-washington-university-expects-to-teach-classes-in-hybrid-format-this-fall-some-online-learning-some-in-person-lectures-but-no-)

University Communications graphic designers also provided a range of support, including virtual Commencement materials; Viking Advisor class schedules; Academic Advising PowerPoint files, Zoom meetings preflight with design students for the Bellingham Review; website work for Career Services; WWU Family Calendar; New Student Handbook; New Family Handbook; and LGBTQ+ Western – Virtual Gatherings/Workshops promotion.
METRICS DASHBOARD
MAY - JUNE 2020

WESTERN TODAY
TOTAL SESSIONS
58,102

TOP STORIES
- Coronavirus Update for May 12: Plans for Fall Quarter
- Coronavirus Update for May 1: Distributing CARES Act grants to students
- What does Phase 2 mean for social distancing and safe habits?

SOCIAL MEDIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TWITTER</th>
<th>FACEBOOK</th>
<th>INSTAGRAM</th>
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STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TWITTER</th>
<th>FACEBOOK</th>
<th>INSTAGRAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22,493 Total followers</td>
<td>50,450 Total followers</td>
<td>22,532 Total followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-230 New followers</td>
<td>442 New followers</td>
<td>471 New followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1% % gained</td>
<td>0.9% % gained</td>
<td>2.1% % gained</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>541 Engagements</td>
<td>26,979 Engagements</td>
<td>34,573 Engagements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FAMILY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Edition and Date</th>
<th>Number Sent</th>
<th>Percent Opened</th>
<th>Top Clicks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May edition</td>
<td>11,745</td>
<td>41 percent</td>
<td>CARES grant, commencement, dates and deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News on fall quarter</td>
<td>11,741</td>
<td>43 percent</td>
<td>Video message from Sahab</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News on fall quarter Q and A</td>
<td>11,715</td>
<td>39 percent</td>
<td>Coronavirus information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June edition</td>
<td>11,734</td>
<td>27 percent</td>
<td>Commencement info, Sahab's video statement of solidarity and action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We also sent two special editions with commencement news to families of graduating students, each with open rates of about 49 percent.
MEDIA STORIES

TOP STORIES

- The next victim of the coronavirus? American exceptionalism (The Washington Post)
- Increased Hawaii Seismic Activity Not Considered a Danger (US News)
- Trump takes step that could expand his trade war, targeting the way other countries treat U.S. tech firms (The Washington Post)

CREATIVE SERVICES

GRAPHIC DESIGN

PHOTO & VIDEO

FEATURING

- This has been a very busy summer for us as we prepare to take many of the in-person events normally held during the summer online. Our key projects have been New Student and Family Orientation, revamping our virtual visual tours of campus, producing a video to help with the capital campaign, and pre-production for the upcoming Fall marketing campaign.
- Continued photo coverage of spot news events and area shots for social media in Instagram and Facebook, orcas in Bellingham Bay, cougar in Whatcom Falls Park
- Video coverage for sights and sounds project at Bellingham local sites, Clark’s Point, Whatcom Falls Park,
- Mabel file organization and upload batch testing
Community Relations

Notable projects and connections that enhance WWU visibility, improve community access, and increase community-to-university partnerships.

Campus Support during COVID-19

During this unprecedented time, Community Relations has pivoted to serve the university where needed while remaining engaged with the community.

- Worked as a Zoom Coordinator for Transitions which is Western’s registration and orientation program for transfer students. Transitions served more than 800 transfer students all in a virtual format.
- Served as commencement speaker via Zoom for Viking Union student employees.
- Assisting the A.S. Virtual Info Fair committee by partnering with local businesses struggling during this pandemic.
- Secured a reduced membership rate with the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce reducing university expenses.
- Assisting with the University Residences Move-in committee by partnering with local businesses and tourism during student move-in.
- Worked with the Spirit Scholarship Committee to select a scholarship recipient among a pool of applicants.

Community Connections and Engagement

- Established four new internships with Ben Kinney Companies, all of which can be performed remotely. (Marketing, Data Management, Hiring, General/Entrepreneurship)
- Established a new internship with the U.S. Census Bureau (Communications)
- Established a new internship with First Federal Bank (Finance)
- Assisting Bellingham’s League of Women voters with new creative efforts to encourage voter registration during the pandemic.
- Continue to provide regular WWU updates to the community through local organizations including Team Whatcom, Mayors Neighborhood Advisory Commission, Tourism Commission, Domestic Violence Commission, Chamber of Commerce, Technology Alliance Group, among others.
Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

SBDC PANDEMIC SUPPORT

The SBDC has taken the lead on technical assistance in Whatcom County, including but not limited to identifying financial tools, understanding new tools and resources made available by local, state, and federal authorities, and coordinating with local lenders to relay the needs of clients.

Observations

Early efforts by the Federal Government to provide pandemic relief through the C.A.R.E.S.

- Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) application process opened in March, failed twice and then was re-established just in time for the program to close, loan turnaround stretched into 12 weeks
- The Paycheck Protection Program loans were not widely available early in the program and the forgiveness guidelines were unclear, discouraging eligible businesses from applying
- SBDC staff were frequently complimented as the only readily available source of reliable assistance

Beneficial programs continue to be available to small business and are being promoted

- EIDL and PPP reopened, and eligibility expanded to Ag and Fishers
- IRS Employee Retention Credits let employers reduce Federal payroll taxes on retained employees
- Employment Security is offering Benefits Charges credits on 2020 payroll to help employers mitigate employer tax rates for 2021
- Employment Security, Labor and Industries and Department of Revenue are offering payment flexibility of up to 90 days to help businesses conserve cash
Washington Campus Contact

Washington Campus Compact has launched the Student Civic Leaders Fellowship program in Washington this summer. Students leaders from across the will be working on critical issues on their campus and in communities. Issues will include housing and food insecurity, mental health, breaking the prison pipeline, opioid addiction, and civic education. Funds will be used for student internships, stipends, or wages. Students will have the opportunity to participate in statewide learning communities and received training on civil discourse and civic education.

Washington Campus Compact has launched the two grant programs: College Access Corps and VISTA to support student success, food insecurity, poverty alleviation, and to provide wrap-around services for underrepresented students in Washington. The grant programs began in August 2020.
Web Communication Technologies (WebTech)

Summary

June through July has been a whirlwind for WebTech. The continued voluntary reductions in force have moved work that was done by individuals in departments to WebTech. WebTech continues to try to support departments. COVID web content demands consistent attention as the operating landscape shifts often. COVID has also placed an emphasis on delivering services effectively via the web.

WebTech has built out and maintains the Safe Start website for employees, the entirely reimagined orientation experience, and the ability to receive your Western ID card remotely at the new Western Card office website. Additionally, as Summer Commencement was postponed WebTech worked with the Registrar to facilitate a process where graduates can still be celebrated virtually.

Beyond that work, WebTech continues to bring departments and offices into the updated brand by migrating or assisting with the migration into the newer version of Drupal. Over the past two months the websites for the following have been migrated:

- Provost
- Teachling
- Employee Arts and Crafts Show
- Human Resources
- Alumni
- Institute for Global Engagement
- College of Science and Engineering and their departments
- Viking Union
- Transportation – Parking and Sustainable Transportation merged

While that work occurred, WebTech revamped the header style of the websites to provide more focus on the imagery and create an enhanced user navigation experience. This coincided with updates to the design system, the email signature generator, and the logo.

Additionally, the focus on remote learning has caused a huge influx in demand for additional tools in Canvas, the university learning management system. One part of the process for adding tools is a review of their accessibility for all users. There have been eight (8) requests over the past two months. Typically, there are two or three per year. The work requires clear communication, a large amount of time collaborating between staff, and many discussions.

WebTech continues to rise to the demands of unfailing kindness. I am doing all that I can to keep morale high, balance the enormous demands, and ensure the work we are doing serves students and employees equitably.
The workload remains consistent with the prior period though the percentage of tickets being resolved has decreased. This is due to many requests coming over the Microsoft Teams platform where individuals can now directly chat with WebTech to resolve minor issues or to query us for answers to questions. All staff report getting many more individual messages than in the prior period. In addition to direct messages, some projects such as orientation have taken place entirely in Teams.

Web Help, our email support method saw 150 support requests between June 1st and July 31st.