TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: President Sabah Randhawa by Donna Gibbs, V.P. for University Relations & Marketing

DATE: February 11, 2021

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
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AND MARKETING

Following is a summary of activities undertaken across the University Relations & Marketing division since the last Board of Trustees update. A couple of items of note:

CASE Awards Sweep

WWU was again recognized, among more than 30 institutions in District VIII, in the 2021 Best of CASE (Council for Advancement and Support of Education) Awards. We received eight CASE awards including a Grand Gold and three Gold awards:

Grand Gold:
Fall Anthem Video for Student Recruitment Videos

Gold:
Window magazine for Magazines on a Shoestring and for General Interest Magazines
New Student Orientation for Communications Pivot

Silver:
The Great Goatlift for Feature Writing
Gaia for Digital Magazines
Mongolian Eagle Hunter for Individual Photographs
Get Your Hands Wet for Student Recruitment Videos

Digital Marketing to Support Student Recruitment

We continue to focus our efforts on both in-state and out-of-state digital ad campaigns designed to raise general “top-of-the-funnel” awareness of WWU among prospective students.

On January 4, we launched a campaign focused on financial aid resources and offering help to families who often struggle with the daunting process of applying for aid. Importantly, we join colleagues statewide in focusing attention on the nationally recognized Washington College Grant, one of the most progressive college aid programs in the nation. I’m pleased to report that we’ve seen a 49% year-over-year increase in FAFSA and WASFA filings between Jan 1-Jan 22 ahead of the priority application deadline on January 31.

Last year in the first 22 days of January we had 1,737 aid applications, and this year in that same first 22 days we’ve had 2,595. Interestingly, prior to the start of the campaign, our aid applications we’re running slightly behind last year’s rate (about 2%), in keeping with national trends that we’re seeing on lower aid applications due to the pandemic.

In addition, we added a calendaring app to our marketing landing pages that allows prospective students and families to easily schedule an appointment with a financial aid counselor, and the anecdotal evidence there too is that the campaign is working; in the first 22 days of the campaign, we recorded 116 clicks on the calendar link and 41 resulting appointments. We don’t know how that compares to last year, since we’ve never tracked Financial Aid engagement in this way, but we’re taking it as another encouraging sign, and we’ve already begun working on a follow up financial aid focused advertising campaign for next year.
Complicating our digital recruitment efforts are significant changes to Facebook’s ad platform in order to comply with Apple’s new regulations included in the latest version of iOS14 rolling out in the coming days. Apple’s policy will prohibit certain data collection and sharing unless people opt into tracking on iOS 14 devices via a new prompt. As more people opt out of tracking on iOS14 devices, ad personalization and performance reporting will be limited for both app and web conversion events. This includes changing the default conversion attribution window from 28-day click and 1-day view to 7-day click and 1-day view. **This will result in a decrease of reported conversions for Facebook and Instagram campaigns.** Our early estimates show that this could result in as much as a 25-50% decline in reported conversions. It is important to note that our advertising will still be working and those conversions will still be happening; we’ll just have more limited reporting for them.

In addition to attribution window changes, Facebook will now be limiting advertisers to eight conversion/optimization events per domain. This means that all departments who advertise on behalf of our institution will now need to be using and tracking the same conversion events. Another reason why moving toward a more centralized and coordinated approach to institutional marketing is so important.

**University Communications**

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

- Support for Western’s Incident Command Structure (ICS), Student Health Center, Admissions, University Residences, and other campus offices for messaging, response to inquiries, media response and other communications requests.

- Assisted with important messages to campus on issues such as the decision that classes during Spring and Summer quarters will be mostly remote. See: https://westerntoday.wwu.edu/news/wwu-spring-and-summer-classes-to-be-mostly-remote.

• Provided updates on many pandemic response measures, such as the COVID student badge system. See: https://westerntoday.wwu.edu/news/covid-student-badge-system-to-be-turned-off-from-dec-11-to-jan-4

• Along with campus colleagues in WebTech and Western’s new COVID coordinator, UComm continued to work on updating and streamlining the navigation and page structure for all the university’s COVID-19 websites.

Our office also provided emergency communications response, including messaging to campus and the media, as a windstorm dropped trees on Fairhaven residence hall. See: https://www.bellinghamherald.com/news/weather-news/article248470155.html

Western’s faculty experts also continued to receive notable media coverage, including:

• The Spokesman-Review quoted Western Political Science Professor Todd Donovan on the Capitol riot. See: https://www.spokesman.com/stories/2021/jan/06/experts-weve-never-seen-this-either/

• Smithsonian Magazine highlighted Western’s Living Snow project, led by Robin Kodner, associate professor of Biology. See: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/innovation/24-ways-to-turn-outdoor-passions-citizen-science-180976637/

• A story in science publication EurekaAlert highlighted research by Alia Khan, assistant professor of Environmental Studies, on red and green snow algae in the Antarctic Peninsula. See: https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2021-01/uoca-rag011121.php

• In Publications, Editor Mary Gallagher completed the Winter edition of Window magazine, which included a crossword puzzle by alumnus Damon Gulczynski, who crafts crosswords for the New York Times and other publications. We asked readers to solve Gulczynski’s WWU-themed puzzle for a chance to receive goodies from the WWU Alumni Association, and about 250 readers obliged. Many included kind notes and photos showing how much they enjoyed working on the puzzle.

• University Communications graphic designer Chris Baker also provided a range of support, including Illustrations for the WWU Transportation Department for bicycle signs; design and layout for Window magazine; design for a new app “Handshake,” which Career Services will be implementing to replace Viking Career Link; an info graphic for Risk Management, and Winter Career Fair ads.
Social media coordinator Zoe Fraley has continued to work with the Whatcom Health Department, along with Western’s Prevention and Wellness and Associated Students, to share COVID-19 prevention and mental health information on Western’s social media platforms, with a particular focus on messaging about Western’s testing and safe gathering. She also has begun developing an organic social campaign for Western’s graduate programs, using Gala stories and video testimonials to raise awareness about graduate options at Western. She continues to promote campus events such as career fairs, the upcoming HOME month and MLK Day.
Our marketing strategists and creative team focuses on building awareness for Western Washington University’s programs, strengthening Western’s brand, providing tools and strategy assistance for marketing & communications staff embedded in departments across campus and furthering its strategic mission and goals.

**Summary**
University Marketing is engaged in a range of work which includes digital marketing, collateral creation, video and photography, brand management, and marketing planning & project management.

**Digital Marketing**
UM breaks down digital marketing into two main sections, campaign work that is coordinated with a third-party service provider, Carnegie Dartlet and in-house placement of ads. In both cases, the UM team is responsible for strategy, creative creation, asset coordination and budget reconciliation. The difference is based on the placement/routing of the advertising on the various platforms as well as tracking, in which in-house placement means that a member of the UM team works directly on the platforms to launch and track ad performance.

In both cases, part of our digital strategy includes monitoring how people are engaging with the ads and landing pages. The UM team is working with WebTech on setting goals with SiteImprove software to measure our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

**Campaign Digital Marketing**
Beginning September 2020, URM launched an undergraduate digital campaign in partnership with Admissions as the primary enrollment campaign for WWU. This includes display, display retargeting, Snapchat, YouTube, Pay-per-click, Audience Select (list targeting), and Facebook/Instagram advertising which will run for a six to nine-month cycle, depending on platform.

In December 2020, messaging focused on encouraging virtual tours.

*Percentages includes in parenthesis indicate the change from the last report.*

**At-a-Glance (Nov 1 – Dec 31, 2020)**
- Total Impressions = 5,098,030 (↑65%)
- Total Ad Clicks = 8,680 (↑53%)
- Total Conversions (Application or Request for Information (RFI) button clicks) = 1,070 (↓61%)

Carnegie Dartlet attributed the decline in conversions to the conclusion of the time-specific Call to Action (CTA) for the November 1 early consideration date. They believe with the inclusion of the January 30 application and financial aid date, conversions will increase during the month of January.

In addition, Outreach and Continuing Education (OCE) launched a regional graduate campaign in early November, specific to increasing enrollment at WWU’s graduate programs in Everett. This includes display, display retargeting, Facebook/Instagram, LinkedIn and IP targeting of WWU alumni. Advertising will run for a five-month cycle, depending on platform.

**At-a-Glance (Nov 1 – Dec 31, 2020): Regional Undergraduate Campaign**
- Total Impressions = 1,924,331 (↑15%)
· Total Ad Clicks = 2,023 (↑20%)
· Total Conversions (Application or RFI button clicks) = 27 (↑4%)

At-a-Glance (Nov 1 – Dec 31, 2020): Regional Graduate Campaign

· Total Impressions = 1,543,947
· Total Ad Clicks = 2,299
· Total Conversions (Application or RFI button clicks) = 7

In-House Digital Marketing

Currently, in-house placement and tracking of ads is only a service provided to Outreach and Continuing Education (OCE), as a continuation of the marketing team’s services prior to the OCE marketing team’s merge with University Marketing and Relations – forming the University Marketing team.

Notable campaigns included geo-targeting and social lead form campaigns for Professional and Continuing Education (PCE). This involved advertising for individual programs including Business Management, Grant Writing and Build a Better You. In addition, information sessions were promoted on social generating 18,781 impressions and 110 event responses.

The RN-to-BSN program is also receiving additional marketing support from OCE during this transitional year in the form of display advertising, which will run through mid-February 2021.

At-a-Glance (Nov 1 – Dec 31, 2020)

· Total Impressions = 566,980 (↓61%)
· Total Ad Clicks = 1,053 (↓84%)
· Total Conversions (Currently only tracking RFIs and lead form entries for PCE programs) = 223 (↑1615%)

The decrease in impressions and ad clicks are a result of the following factors:

- 19% decrease in ad placement (less ads in market).
- Greater niche targeting for specific programming versus general awareness ads.
- Lead form ads, which were the majority of ads placed, do not produce “clicks” since the goal is to have the user complete a form within the platform. Therefore, results are tracked differently.

These decreases, however, do not represent negative results as greater targeting and switch to lead generation efforts resulted in an outstanding increase in leads which was the goal approved by the represented client.

Collateral Creation (Graphic Design)

In October, the designers collectively worked on 95 projects and produced 355 individual assets.

Notable projects include:

- Organizing brand assets across design/web platforms for ease of access and use
  - Creative Cloud libraries
  - Pattern Lab web components
  - Design Conductor organization
- Digital Ad Campaign (Carnegie-Dartlet)
- SBDC website design
Morse Leadership Institute brand work

**Video and Photography**
Our focus has been on supporting the continuing work of the University, primarily with work on the December, 2020 Commencement as well our student recruitment campaigns and other University virtual events. Approximately 210 human hours were involved in producing Commencement alone. Additionally, we have brought on a full-time temporary videographer position to help us with future backfill, and moved forward with a collaboration tool that will help us save time and money.

**Videography:**
- December Commencement – shoot, edit
- Holiday message – shoot, edit
- Make Waves February Campaign Video
- Gathering footage clips for sharing
- Veteran's Day

**Photography:**
- Field shoots and coverage of the Duwamish River field work in Seattle with Dr. Troy Abel and students
- Continued fall campus shooting and aerial drone photography and videography
- Research and field shooting for Window Magazine at Whatcom creek on Seals and Salmon observations
- Coronavirus support and employee shoots for Window Magazine,
- Downtown and campus spot news and snowy scene photo coverage
- Video library reorganization and continued upload of B-roll campus and area shot lists for future projects and backup shots

**Brand Management**
The creative team works with partners across campus to manage Western Washington University’s brand. This includes development of design elements and assuring adherence to Western’s brand standards.

In November and December, the Creative Team:
- Audited and improved the branded templates and creative assets available in Design Conductor.
- Began the process of auditing and streamlining content on Design System in preparation to reach out to and strategize recruitment/marketing activities with colleges and departments.
- Researched and developed a landing page for international audiences accessible from Western’s home page.
- Researched and began development of additional brand assets:
  - photo treatments
  - standardized gradients
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Community Relations

COLLATERAL CREATION (Graphic Design)

95
Total Projects

355
Individual Assets

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

**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Event**
Community Relations coordinated WWU’s annual Martin Luther King, Jr. event which included more than 1,200 registrants and 800 attendees. This virtual event, held on Monday, Jan. 18, was a first-ever collaboration between WWU, Northwest Indian College, Bellingham Technical College, and Whatcom Community College. The 90-minute event began with an inspirational video and thought-provoking speeches by students from each of Whatcom County’s higher education institutions. The event also featured a keynote address by WWU alumna and New York Times bestselling author, Ijeoma Oluo ('07). Following her address, Oluo answered a wide array of questions from students, faculty, staff and community members from throughout Whatcom County.

The theme and layout of the event was guided by the MLK Advisory Team which consisted of 21 individuals representing each of the four institutions. Departments represented include Associated Students leadership, Student Life, WWU Faculty and Staff of Color Council, Residence Life Inclusion, and other student and staff leaders. This year’s theme, “Awaken the Legacy” was carefully selected by the committee to address Dr. King’s legacy as not just a man with a “dream,” but someone who was a disruptor and a radical who demanded change through uncomfortable conversations and peaceful protest.

In addition to the virtual event, community members were encouraged to participate in one of many virtual and COVID-safe community service opportunities to celebrate the MLK National Day of Service. The effort was coordinated by WWU’s Leadership Advantage program in partnership with the Volunteer Center of Whatcom County.

The recorded Zoom event will be available on WWU’s Martin Luther King, Jr. website through June 2021. [www.wwu.edu/mlk](http://www.wwu.edu/mlk)

**Black History Month**
This February, many departments throughout campus are offering virtual programs, lectures, and performances in honor of Black History Month. Those departments include Music, Art and Art History, Dance, Music, University Residences, Associated Students, KUGS Radio, English, Fairhaven College, Western Libraries, LGBTQ+ Western and others. Community Relations collaborated with those departments and other campus partners including Western’s Web Communication Technologies (WebTech) and University Communications to consolidate and promote more than 25 offerings which can be found at [https://www.wwu.edu/black-history-month](https://www.wwu.edu/black-history-month).

**Combined Fund Drive**
December marked the end of the 2020 Combined Fund Drive, which is Washington State’s workplace giving program. WWU supports the Combined Fund Drive by encouraging faculty and staff to give to local and national nonprofits through one-time gifts or payroll contribution. Due to sensitivities surrounding the uncertainties of COVID-19 in conjunction with the virtual environment, Combined Fund Drive activities and outreach efforts were limited to simple promotion within Western Today.

**Community Connections and Engagement**
Community Relations connected multiple community partners to campus programs including Sehome High School, Trail Blazin’ Productions, Recreation Northwest, Technology Alliance Group, Mt. Baker Foundation, Stateside Student Living, and the City of Bellingham.
Tribal Liaison

PLANNING:

The Governor’s proposed capital budget was released which includes full funding for the proposal request of $4.9 million for a Coast Salish style longhouse in the 2021-2023 Biennium. We are hopeful that full funding for this project stays in the final compromise budget.

The Tribal Liaison has been actively working to seek tribal nations’ support of the longhouse project for Western’s campus. This includes contacting tribal leaders seeking letters of support for submission to the Governor’s Office of Indian Affairs, and a meeting with GOIA Director Craig Bill, who advocated on behalf of the project with Governor Inslee. To date the Swinomish, Lummi, Nooksack, Tulalip, Jamestown S’klallum, and Samish tribes have confirmed support of this project. The Tribal Liaison will be attending the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians conference to request an official resolution in support of the longhouse project at WWU.

EVENTS:

The Tribal Liaison has been appointed to the President’s Advisory Group on Strategic Matters and attended the first meeting on December 1, 2020.

The Tribal Relations Advisory committee continues to meet on a regular basis. The committee gathered in December with a limited agenda, but the best report was the longhouse project. The discussion also included the idea of supporting Native American Student Union students with holiday gift baskets. The spirit of the holiday season was a huge success with the supportive efforts from Woodring College faculty and staff and the Tribal Relations office.

Due to the holiday season and the pandemic crisis there has been limited activity.

ADVISORY FUNCTIONS:

The Tribal Liaison continues to work in support of departments concerning Native American students, staff and faculty at Western. Due to the most recent environment surrounding the pandemic, this work has been focused on retention and financial aid resource building on the behalf of Native students.

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING:

The Tribal liaison has been devoted to building working relationships with tribal leaders and organizations to benefit the support of the Native students, staff and faculty at WWU.

The Tribal Liaison continues to build rapport with Northwest Indian College with monthly meetings as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC)

WWU SBDC BELLINGHAM HIGHLIGHTS
### Businesses Served

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Businesses Served</th>
<th>Total Served Q4 2020</th>
<th>Total Served YTD 2020</th>
<th>Total Served YTD 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Counseling Received</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>323</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research or Student Projects</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBDC Sponsored Training Participant</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>1,169</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information or Resources Provided</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Clients’ Economic Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q4 2020</th>
<th>YTD 2020</th>
<th>YTD 2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital Formation</td>
<td>$188K</td>
<td>$15.8M</td>
<td>$7.3M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Starts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs Created</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Top Industries: Service establishment, accommodation and food services, retail trade
- Top Areas of Counseling: Buy/sell a business, managing a business, start-up assistance
- Rolling 12-Month Clients’ Annualized Sales: $309M
- Rolling 12-Month Jobs Supported: 2,862

### Working Washington Small Business Grant – Round 3

The Washington State Department of Commerce partnered with the Washington Small Business Development Center to provide assistance to businesses having questions or needing help with their applications.

### CARES Act Assistance

The SBDC has provided education and advising on best use of CARES act stimulus funding since the first relief bill was passed. In 2020, we directly assisted on the following loan packages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Type</th>
<th>Total Amount Approved</th>
<th>Number of Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program (SBA)</td>
<td>$7,870,402</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (SBA)</td>
<td>$3,452,700</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner Investment</td>
<td>$1,390,983</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Capital</td>
<td>$1,133,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venture Capital</td>
<td>$1,100,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBA Loan</td>
<td>$422,017</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial (Bank) Loan</td>
<td>$418,000</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>$15,811,102</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Outreach

- COVID-19 Economic Resilience Team Whatcom Meeting
- Community Reinvestment Act coordination meeting
Washington Campus Contact

**Statewide Winter Service Symposium for Student Civic Fellows**
Washington Campus Compact will facilitate a virtual Winter Service Symposium for student civic fellows from across Washington state on February 13, 2021. Washington Campus Compact is partnering with Seattle City Club to hold the event titled, “Dialogue Across Differences.” Over 100 student civic fellows working on service projects in the areas of food/housing insecurity, mental health support, breaking the prison pipeline, addressing the opioid epidemic, and civic education will participate. They will learn how to work collaboratively with people who think differently than they do to address issues of common interest. Elected officials will be invited to participate.

**Food Security for Western Students**
With funding from the College Support Services grant program, Washington Campus Compact is able to purchase pop-up meals for Western students experiencing food insecurity through June 2021. Food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, will be available to students on a weekly basis. Meals will be prepared and distributed by Aramark.

**Campus Civic Leaders and Engagement Corps**
Washington Campus Compact recently submitted a $1,575,395 grant proposal to support programs across Washington and Idaho to mobilize students to address critical issues on their campuses and in their communities. Goals include: improving K-16 educational engagement for underrepresented students, increasing access to medical/mental health services for students and community members, increasing food security for students and community members, and reducing catastrophic fires through environmental stewardship initiatives. If funded, programs will start August 2021.

**Legislative Agenda**
Washington Campus Compact is working with legislators to continue funding for the Student Civic Leaders initiative. Funding will support student civic leaders from across the state to address critical issues on their campuses and in their communities. Focus areas will include K-16 educational success, housing and food insecurity, medical/mental health, civic education, and environmental stewardship initiatives.

**Summary**
Typically, December and early January are a chance to catch up. 2020 threw that out the window! We released updated sites for Western’s [Attorney General](#), [Graduate School](#), [Fairhaven](#).
College, Disability Access Center (DAC), Advising Office, Western’s Summer Session, and the Social Justice Equity Committee.

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) asked WebTech to assist in updating a hazardous waste pick-up web application which was previously developed by an EHS staff member no longer with Western. It has been updated to run on modern code, support single sign on, hardened against security vulnerabilities, and migrated to a supported server.

Site launches and upgrades always have a significant focus on improving the digital accessibility and we are pleased that the Disability Access Center is now markedly improved and consistent with other popular pages across the Western domain. We worked with the DAC as well to create an interactive video caption decision tree, to help staff and faculty at Western determine the best way to get their video or live event captioned.

A new version of our content editor accessibility training was released in early January. It provides more in-depth exercises, shares the why behind the how of making content accessible, and uses Western examples rather than generic ones. Initial response to the training has been positive.

In collaboration with the marketing team WebTech built a real-time dashboard for analyzing the impact of changes to Make Waves campaign marketing landing pages. This dashboard is allowing data driven changes to the layouts and text of landing pages to increase the conversion goals of the campaign.

**WebTech Workload**

There was a small decrease in the number of tickets filed, which is consistent with much of the university being on break and holiday. Holidays for WebTech staff contributed to a large increase in tickets being created but not resolved between December 14th and January 6th, with that trend reversing as all staff resumed normal hours.

Even though much of the university was on break, those involved with websites stayed busy.
Web Help, the email support channel, saw sustained heavy traffic, 320 emails since the start of December.