

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
ITEM SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

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

DATE: December 15, 2017

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

**WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY RELATIONS AND
MARKETING**

The following is a briefing on a wide range of online, print, social media, video and graphic design communications and marketing pieces produced since the last Trustees report. In addition, following are a few updates and new projects initiated since the division was reoriented this fall.

- **Bellingham Waterfront District Redevelopment**

Harcourt Development has completed construction on their first project, the adaptive reuse of the iconic Granary Building. In November, construction of the two main streets into the waterfront district – Granary Avenue and Laurel Street – began, while work on Waypoint Park near the Whatcom Waterway is set to begin this month. Construction of new trails and plans for a residential project are expected in the coming year.

- **Western Crossing-Hannegan Road Property**

Over the past several months, Western has completed a survey to ascertain the true useable acreage at the Hannegan Road property and to address environmental issues. The survey produced two areas that would have rendered the bottom property useless. We worked with an environmental engineer to have those areas removed, and we also worked with the city to reevaluate their proposed improvements to the property. Originally, the city wanted a 20-foot border the length of the property facing Hannegan Road; we settled on a 10-foot border on the opposite side of the road. The University also obtained a new appraisal in late September that values the property at \$2,190,000, however, there could still be the possibility of an additional \$150,000 to fund a “mitigation bank” for the 10 acres that sit in a 100-year flood zone. We are working with the City of Bellingham’s Habitat and Restoration Manager to develop a plan to address that. Finally, we selected a new realtor and expect that, with a more realistic appraisal and better marketing, we will have a successful sale of the property.

- **Re-envisioned Video Storytelling**

It’s no secret that Internet video use is increasing exponentially, while traditional television, newspaper, magazine and radio audiences are shrinking. Media consumers are increasingly looking for their content to be delivered in ways that offer convenience and flexibility. The combination of less time spent on traditional television across most generations and channel fragmentation leading to more content options, has caused us to rethink how we engage in video storytelling. Since 2015, this division has produced approximately 50 Western Window TV segments in a 30-minute, magazine-style production and distributed that content across 12 community-access stations, KVOS-TV and on Comcast cable channel 26. The limited viewership in return for the effort expended on a commercial TV quality program makes it unsustainable in an era when people of all ages are more interested in shareable, 3-5 minute “snackable content.”

In tandem with this, Video Services and University Communications have been dealing with growing demand for video production services on campus: In 2009-10, we fielded 77 video production requests; last year, that number had ballooned to 330, with 380 projected for this year.

Our goal, then, is to accelerate and modernize our video production efforts by producing shorter, punchier pieces that can be repurposed and shared on multiple social channels and online platforms.

- **Unified Brand Strategy**

One of the greatest marketing challenges that Western faces is its highly decentralized approach to programmatic marketing efforts in Admissions, Advancement and Extended Education that lack cohesion and coordination.

Western undertook a branding initiative beginning in 2009 that resulted in a new singular graphic and topline identity, but since that time, other trends have developed in higher education: the emergence of online education, the acceleration of targeted digital advertising, and sweeping changes in student demographics. And even though the overall demand for distance education has begun to slow, we now have a situation in which student enrollment nationwide is generally trending down (though, thankfully, not at Western!), supply is up, and there is greater competition than ever before.

Western must now build the bridge between brand and direct marketing, including strong strategy that goes far beyond the visual identity inherent within a logo, a tagline or brand guidelines—we need to understand our myriad audiences (especially those that are more diverse than ever before), understand new channels of message delivery, and understand the challenges we’re facing and how to mitigate them. This strategy is multi-tiered and much more in-depth than overarching brand expression. “Brand-direct” efforts both honor and reinforce the brand identity while also changing depending on the audience segment we’re targeting and their position in the decision-making process. This way, efforts can work at both the brand level and the programmatic level, because truly, you can’t have one without the other.

We are engaging DNA, one of Seattle’s top brand strategy and advertising agencies led by Western alumnus Chris Witherspoon, on a project to facilitate three goals:

- **Research Audit and Competitive Analysis:** An objective external audit of existing qualitative and quantitative market research, including alumni and student surveys, perception studies and other secondary sources, combined with a deep dive into the messaging and positioning of key competitive universities.
- **Articulation:** A brand manifesto that gets at our rallying cry, or the greater purpose behind the Western brand, summarizing Western’s distinctive promise and value proposition, and providing a consistent set of copy points and a toolkit that marketers across the institution can use. We will also undertake brand positioning validation with key target audiences (WWU faculty and staff, current and prospective students, alumni and donors, parents, fans and friends) through focus groups.
- **Activation:** Development of a creative brief and a multi-channel brand advertising campaign that, ideally, will debut statewide in Spring 2018.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Our skilled professionals worked on a wide range of online, print, social media, video and graphic design communications and marketing, which included:

- The Seattle Times ran a story that highlighted a Woodring College program at Highline schools [lauded as a model for training bilingual teachers](#); the [Governor's Office](#) also praised the innovative program. KING 5 TV featured a [Western outreach program assisting communities such as Stanwood](#); and Northwest Public Radio ran a story about Western geologists' research [on earthquake faults in the Northwest](#). The Bellingham Herald ran a story about WWU assistant professor Melissa Rice [interviewing Andy Weir, acclaimed author of "The Martian"](#). The Herald also ran a story about [WWU students helping the victims of the Las Vegas mass shooting](#). And our office responded to numerous media requests following reports of a voyeur near and on campus such as this [King 5 TV story](#).
- **In marketing and social media**, our staff assisted with a number of welcome events and event promotions at the outset of the academic year as well as assisting a number of departments, AS organizations, and programs with marketing and promotion planning for the year ahead, consulting on both social media, outreach and traditional print materials.
- **In publications**, The fall/winter 2017 edition of [Window magazine](#) recently arrived on campus, with stories about the Carver renovation, an award-winning alumni novelist, and the future of journalism as told by WWU journalism alumni. [The WWU Family Connection newsletter](#) also continues to be well received by families and WWU departments alike. Now a monthly publication, the newsletter is a much-improved communications piece for WWU families.
- **In video and photography**, our staff continued to produce the Western Window TV show, although a longer-term review of video and other visual communications is under way with an eye toward expanding access via multiple social media and online channels to enhance viewership and to modernize our visual storytelling capability.
- Our **graphic designers** worked on a wide range of design projects with offices across campus, including fliers, posters, banners and online and social media design work. Some notable examples included: design and layout for Window magazine; design for a Sustainability Action Plan by the Office of Sustainability; branding for the Salish Sea Institute; WWU Quick Facts 2017 for Government Relations; CBE t-shirt design; Career Fair posters, posters for Student Outreach services; WWU Financial Statement 2017; and design assistance for student publications Planet and Klipsun magazines.

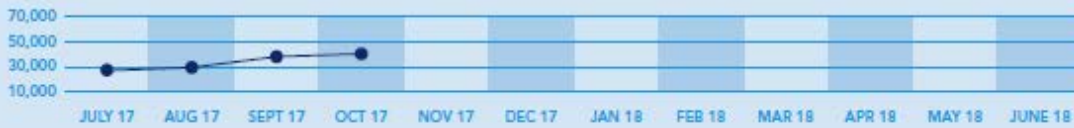
WESTERN TODAY

TOTAL HITS

78,500

TOP STORIES

- WWU students move into residence halls Sept. 2
- WWU grad among those injured in Las Vegas shooting
- US News Rankings Again Shows WWU as the Top Master's-Granting School in the Pacific NW



SOCIAL MEDIA



TOP POSTS OF THE MONTH



STATISTICS AT A GLANCE

20,458
Total followers
393
New followers
0.98%
% gained
2,070
Engagements

46,970
Total followers
511
New followers
0.55%
% gained
13,032
Engagements

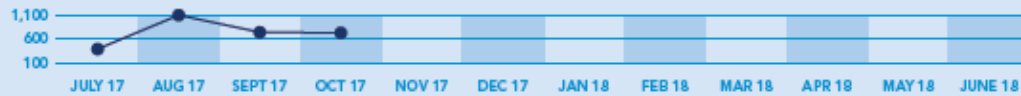
16,109
Total followers
403
New followers
1.31%
% gained
31,843
Engagements

MEDIA STORIES

1,452
Total Stories

TOP STORIES

- Degree Programs Adapt to Put Education More Within Reach (Seattle Times)
- Officials to Decide Fate of Peninsula's Mountain Goats (U.S. News and World Report)
- Being Single Could Help you Live Longer (NY Post)



CREATIVE SERVICES

GRAPHIC DESIGN



77 Total Projects

FEATURING

- Fall Family Weekend promotion
- Government Relations - WWU Quick Facts 2017-18
- Miller Hall Green Roof informational signage
- Motion graphics for salmon habitat restoration video



PHOTO & VIDEO



43 Total Projects

FEATURING

- Paint Bellingham Blue for WWU
- Carver Dedication Ribbon Cutting Ceremony
- Associated Student Info Fair
- WWU Athletics Viking Jam



FAMILY CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER

- 15,314 email sent
- 27.3 percent opened
- Top stories clicked:
 - Housing: On-campus move-in, Student Outreach Services: Jumpstart, New Student Services/Family Outreach: Western Welcome Week

OCTOBER

- 12,824 email sent
- 23 percent opened
- Top stories clicked:
 - New Student Services/Family Outreach: Fall Family Open House, Financial Aid: Tips for filling out the FAFSA, Photos from Western Welcome Week

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

After receiving feedback from external partners and internal WWU colleagues, The Front Door to Discovery has been changed to Community Relations. We feel that this title better clearly defines the position's role, and since making the change, feedback has been extremely positive. Although the duties of the office remain the same, the new, recognizable title allows for better outreach and partnership results.

The Office of Community Relations **amplifies community connections** by actively engaging with business, government, and non-profit entities. By **providing a centralized connecting point** for the community to access Western and its students and faculty, Community Relations **builds partnerships** that benefit both the university community and the people of Washington while **enhancing the university's reputation**.



Business to Academic Partnerships

With the academic school year underway, many community-to-university projects began. Partnerships included Trayvax, Valley Shine Distilling, Lautenbach Industries, Whatcom Dispute Resolution Center, and Apana. In one example, Valley Shine struggled with condensation forming in their bottles during the bottling process. Community Relations connected them with Engineering and Chemistry faculty and students who are working to find a solution. Another example includes Apana who is working with Facilities Management at Western on the possibility of installing sensors in Western's water systems saving the university water and financial resources. In many cases, Community Relations drives the relationship to ensure an idea comes to fruition. Finally, Community Relations also connects individual business leaders to university resources. Two examples include business owner/angel investor, Michael LaBaw, and artist/teacher Larry Gerber.

Increasing Western's Presence in the Community Creates Opportunities and Builds Rapport

Community Relations plays an important role ensuring that Western is not just visible in the community, but recognized as a key leader by actively serving on various boards, committees, and participating in events. Involvement includes Team Whatcom Economic Development, Domestic Violence Commission Board, Career Services Center Advisory Committee, Mayors Neighborhood Advisory Council, and Western Fall Welcome. The Director of Community Relations also served as the Master of Ceremonies at two community events - Blue Skies for Children Auction and the Annual Chamber of Commerce Awards Dinner. He also facilitated an interview with alumnus Jesse Moore in the WWU Underground Coffeehouse.

Additionally, Community Relations builds partnerships with businesses, community leaders and organizations while working to boost Western's connections and reputation by meeting hundreds of people. Examples include Bellingham City Club, WWU Men's Basketball Tip Off Dinner, Bellingham Green Drinks, Geek Wire Summit, Technology Alliance Group Granary

Building Reception, Whatcom Business Alliance Business Expo, Bellingham Leadership forum, Hibulb Cultural Center Tour, Whatcom Business Alliance Economic Forecast Breakfast, SPIE building dedication, and others.

Partnering Increases Western's Impact

Community Relations is able to serve as Western's key community connector not only by being visible in the community, but by being a trusted WWU resource. Introductions lead to conversations, which lead to partnerships that benefit Western and the community the university serves. New introductions this quarter include organizations like DIRTT, Trails to Taps, Rawganique, Skagit Savings Bank, VSH Accountants, Alcoa, NW Technology, Squalicum High School, Skookum Kids, Kids in Motion, The Inn, Veritas Media Productions, Century Link, World Travel Agency, Whatcom Community College, and many more.

SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

WWU Small Business Development Center: Q3 – 2017 CONTRACT DELIVERABLES

ADVISING	Q3 2017	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Businesses Advised	147	243	249
Advising & Support Hours	593	1731	2344
TRAINING	Q3 2017	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Trainings	1	8	7
Trainees	9	148	69
RESEARCH	Q3 2017	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Research Projects	5	16	33
Support Hours	214	395	454
ADD'L SERVICES	Q3 2017	YTD 2017	YTD 2016
Non-Clients Supported	21	148	109
Student/ Faculty Projects	-	1	5
Student/ Faculty Project Hours	-	202	515

WWU Small Business Development Center: 2017 DEMOGRAPHICS

Top industries: Manufacturing, Health Care, Retail Dealer, Service Establishment

- **Top Areas of counseling:** Marketing/ Sales, Managing a business, Financing/ Capital
- **Active clients' total sales:** \$181M
- **Active clients' total jobs:** 3145

WWU Small Business Development Center: Q4 Highlights

- Hosted “Management Toolkit” training series:
 - Happy Employees – Secrets to Staff Retention
 - The Magic Combination of Support and Accountability
 - The Tricky Team – Supervising Friends or Family
- Published WWU SBDC staff blogs, <https://sbdc.wvu.edu/blog>:
 - Leaders are Readers
 - How to Create a Dynamic and Fun Working Environment
 - How to Stand Out of Direct Mail
 - The Type A’s Guide to Being Okay with Being Okay
 - Simplify your Life with the Power of Pivot Tables
 - Building Your Facilitation Skills
 - The Benefits of Budgeting
 - Seizing Moments that Matter
- Hired a new Business Research and Technical Assistance Manager, Sherri Daymon
- Participated in Bellingham Business Journal interview regarding paid sick leave and minimum wage.
- Met with local, professional service providers in: banking, technology, marketing, videography and business consulting.
- Attended bi-annual Washington SBDC statewide professional development conference in Olympia, WA
- Attended Bellingham/ Whatcom Chamber of Commerce 2017 Business Awards where one of our clients was honored

WWU Small Business Development Center: New Whatcom County Rural Outreach Program – starting January 2018

The Whatcom County Rural Outreach Program will expand and enhance the Western Washington University Small Business Development Center’s (WWU SBDC) current program offerings to the underserved rural area businesses of Whatcom County. The program is fully funded for 2018 by: SBA, City of Blaine and the Northwest Business Development Association fund the program.

All services will be tailored specifically for entrepreneurs and owners of the rural businesses located in Whatcom County, including the communities of Sumas, Nooksack, Lynden, Blaine, Everson, Ferndale and Mt Baker Foothills as well as unincorporated Whatcom County.

Menu of Services Offered:

- One on one confidential business counseling
- Market research and technical assistance
- Workshops
- Proactive On the Job Training Workforce Partnership Program outreach

WASHINGTON CAMPUS COMPACT

Several events were held this fall to support community engagement initiatives at Western and across the state.

- 1) Presidents' Meeting: *Leading in Uncertain Times*. Every day presidents are asked to take a stand on critical issues facing their institution, their institutions, and our global society. On November 16, 2017, presidents and chancellors from across the state convened to discuss questions such as: When do you take a stand and when do you not? How do presidents lead when campuses are exploring such complex issues as equity and inclusion, when there is political divisiveness, and when social media is so prevalent and often unreliable in disseminating accurate information?
- 2) Senior Administrators' Meeting: *Educational Equity in Higher Education*. Fostering equity and inclusion on campuses and in communities is essential to meeting the diverse needs of students and our society. But shifting the culture and changing the systems of higher education to improve educational equity does not happen overnight. How do we facilitate the difficult conversations that are essential to fostering the needed change? How do we balance the need for inclusivity and safety with freedom of expression and debate? What are some strategies to strengthen equity, inclusion, and academic achievement for all students? On November 16, 2017, senior administrators convened to discuss these important issues facing higher education today.
- 3) Charting a Course on the Pathway to Community Engagement. Campus teams from across the country came together to participate in an institute to first assess current levels of community engagement on their campuses and then to develop strategic plans to advance community engagement efforts that support institutional priorities. Dr. Steve VanderStaay, Tim Costello and Eric Alexander from Western participated. This was an event sponsored by the Collaboratory, a company that helps campuses collect and assess community engagement data.
- 4) Associate Director Search. Washington Campus Compact launched a search for an associate director with expertise in educational equity and evaluation. This position will help incorporated educational equity into current and future programs, develop an impact evaluation for the College Access Corps program, and help research new grants to support community engagement and educational equity initiatives.

WEB COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES (WebTech)

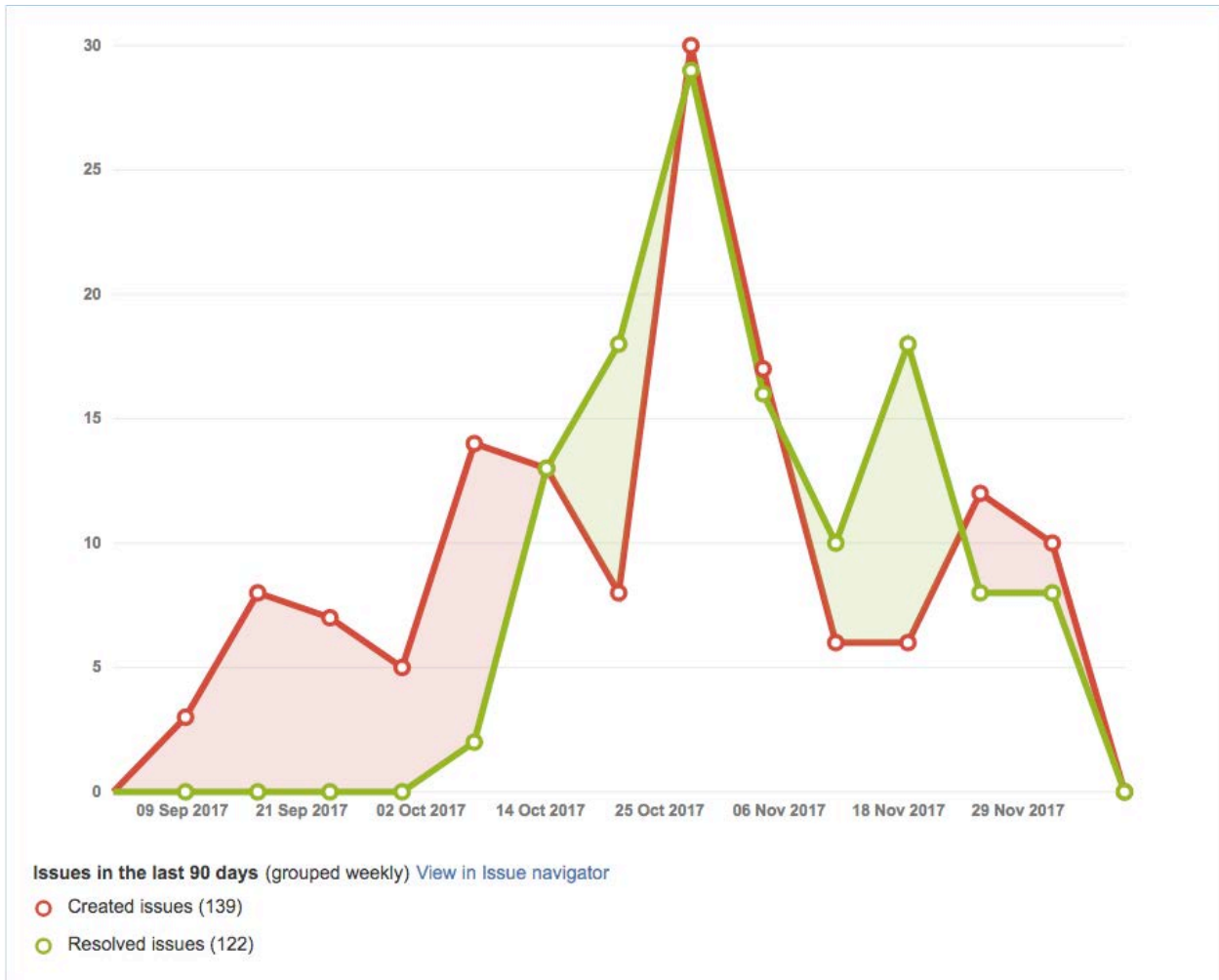
The bulk of fall term was focused on releasing projects that began in early summer as well as working through and developing a plan for the next phase of the Office for Civil Rights (OCR) voluntary agreement over digital accessibility. Our work on migrating search from the existing Google search appliance to the new product [Thunderstone](#) is going well. By the end of December, we are scheduled to have the final component developed and can then begin converting existing sites to the new appliance well before the April deadline.

We worked hard and in close collaboration with the campus community to develop and release the new [Western Events calendar](#). This calendar replaces a system that was being paid for but not well maintained and allows WWU to continue migrating from the EMS room scheduling system to 25Live. Currently the calendar aggregates events from the Associated Students, Athletics, Western Today, Registrar, New Student Services and Family Outreach, the College of Fine and Performing Arts, Fairhaven College, as well as allowing Western students and staff to submit events to the global calendar.

The [SMATE program](#) received a much-needed update to their website positioning frequently requested resources on the front page.

WebTech has 11 projects currently in various phases of development and 28 projects that are in our queue to begin. Throughout the fall term we have been focused on addressing the requests for help/improvements/changes that had been in existence for a long period of time. The team developed solutions for 32 long standing tickets and have another 11 nearly wrapped up. This has all been done with a smaller than average student workforce. Admissions has hired a web developer and we are working with her to transition WebTech to more of a support role rather than the primary executors of work.

Wrapping up fall term will see WebTech solidifying key positions with permanent personnel. Additionally, the accessibility remediation work will begin to accelerate entering into January when OCR receives our completed audit of all websites at Western and our plan to address any deficiencies found.



The request queue outstripped what we could resolve through much of the past two months. WebTech continues to look for further efficiencies and work strategies to keep campus moving smoothly through the digital realm.