Strategic Communications Plan for College of Agriculture: People, Purpose, Impact

Goals:

Strategically communicate College of Agriculture accomplishments, programs, discoveries and innovations to increase statewide, regional, national and international awareness and reputation and to educate audiences about the role of agriculture and the life sciences in addressing complex global issues.

Partner with Agricultural Research Programs to position and advance College of Agriculture faculty members’ research achievements and reputation.

Partner with Office of Academic Programs to support the recruitment and retention of undergraduate and graduate students.

Partner with Purdue Extension to actively fulfill the College’s land grant mission and to serve the public good by providing research-based educational information, resources and programming to diverse groups across the state and country.

Partner with the Office of International Programs in Agriculture to promote opportunities and accomplishments of faculty, students and staff engaged in international activities.

Enhance statewide awareness about Purdue Extension’s engagement with and impact on Indiana.

Contribute to development and alumni association efforts to build and expand relationships with alumni and other key stakeholders.

Audiences:

Agriculture and food industry leaders
Alumni
Current and prospective donors
Extension audiences
Federal agency partner and other funding organizations (NGOs, foundations, etc.)
Key federal and state government elected and appointed officials
Media
National and international university leaders
Prospective and current students and parents
Prospective and current faculty
Strategies:

Organizational

- Build a department culture based on respect and opportunity
  - Individual professional development plans
  - Opportunities for engagement and leadership
  - Provide training as well as other formal and informal learning opportunities
  - Identify opportunities for cross unit projects that can chart the course for a more integrated department model

- Transform Agricultural Communications’ operational model to one of proactive strategic planning and practice
  - Meet with department and program leaders to determine needs and develop specific recommendations and communication plans as required
  - Develop and utilize strategic templates to provide consistent structure to communications planning process

- Implement a customer service model to build productive partnerships within the College
  - Cultivate College wide communicators group that shares and learns from each other and strives to work together to meet strategic communication goals
  - Launch a digital asset management system to provide access to images and videos to college communicators
  - Implement a project management system to provide clear department access, project initiation, consistent communication and adherence to schedules and deadlines

- Seek out and adopt progressive communications strategies and tactics to engage and to provide educational resources to audiences
  - Keep informed and trained in technology that will distinguish communication efforts as it makes them more influential and effective
  - Challenge all department members to take risks and to break the creative mold in identifying methods to expand the College’s reputation and impact

- Utilize strategic, compelling storytelling and powerful images and videos in all facets of communication efforts
  - Work with College photographer to build a diverse and bold photo database that can be used for the wide range of College communication needs
  - Expand the creative use of video and images in social media

- Establish and communicate annual themes and priorities
  - Obtain input from College leaders to determine annual priorities that will be reflected in such efforts as web and social media strategies, magazine story selection; and media planning.

- Develop and maintain a robust network of freelancers that can be hired to meet College needs that are beyond the scope of the department’s availability or capabilities
Media Relations

- Utilize themes adopted by each respective area to communicate impact of Teaching, Research and Extension

- Build relationships with statewide, regional, national and freelance reporters who focus on agriculture, agribusiness, life sciences, food, technology and related issues
  - Meet with broadcast and print reporters in Indiana’s major media markets to build relationships and to provide resources
  - Network with major mainstream science/environmental/agricultural/business reporters
  - Identify freelance reporters for mainstream and specialized media and develop and implement targeted exclusive pitch strategies

- Assemble core College of Agriculture team of faculty and Extension educator experts who can address major mainstream issues in a wide variety of forums
  - Identify core experts
  - Provide media training at the level needed for each member
  - Develop comprehensive and individual strategies for promoting experts to mainstream and agriculture media
  - Be proactive in pitching individual experts in response to breaking news
  - Create web resource pages that include photos and b-roll video for each expert
  - Train and equip faculty experts to create or build their social media presence

- Assemble and provide media training to a team of EDEN communication specialists and Extension educators who can respond and provide talking points for disaster preparedness and response

- Develop and offer media training modules that can be offered to on and off campus faculty and staff members

- Measure and communicate media coverage College wide to increase engagement, awareness of opportunities and understanding of impact

- Integrate social media in all media planning
  - Identify bloggers with whom to connect and communicate

Recruitment

- Collaborate with Office of Academic Programs to produce an annual production schedule for College wide marketing communication efforts

- Collaborate with Office of Academic Programs to develop and execute an email strategy that engages prospective students from interest through enrollment
  - Work with Office of Academic Programs, Admissions and Marketing & Media to build and implement strategy that will identify prospective students’ interests and provide them with specific, relevant information and contact with departments
• Consulting with Office of Academic Programs, develop and implement department level communication recommendations
  - Work with departments to integrate their recruitment efforts with College wide plan

• Work with OAP to develop and implement a social media plan to engage prospective and current students as well as prospective and current parents

• Partner with Office of Multicultural Programs and OAP to assist in recruiting and building awareness with prospective under represented students, their families and teachers

New College Magazine
• Create new print format and interactive web presence for the College magazine that will reach key audiences with stories that showcase College’s distinctive strengths and global impact and provide a timely method for communicating key College news and updates

• Develop mechanisms for measuring impact and answering key questions about the magazine’s role in building the College’s awareness and reputation

• Implement methods for extending magazine stories through diverse communication channels

Web Strategy
• Use web site as a major tool in positioning College of Agriculture as a global leader
  - Conduct high level review of analytics to develop and implement recommendations regarding navigation, wireframe and search engine optimization
  - Develop new design direction
  - Utilize strategic storytelling as the web site’s defining element
  - Create compelling and distinctive photography and video as key site components

• Develop web strategy and timeline that addresses milestones for moving forward on all fronts: design, content, technology and implementation

Digital Media
• Develop and implement social media strategies targeted to engage audiences and generate conversations about the College with a variety of audiences on a wide range of issues

• Develop protocols and expectations for how major news and event coverage can be seamlessly integrated into social and digital media efforts
• Develop video/photography team to meet growing and changing needs of the College such as: providing real-time resources for news and event coverage and utilizing new techniques and approaches
  - Integrate freelance resources into team as needed for capacity or abilities
  - Focus on skill and creative development opportunities

• Create destination YouTube pages
  - Monitor and update YouTube pages
  - Create YouTube specific campaigns as engagement tool
  - Create and market compelling YouTube content for targeted audiences

Public Relations

• Develop marketing plans for the Education Store and Exhibit Services that identify points of integration between the units and the College strategic plan and strategic communications plan

• Update College branding standards to provide a new graphical framework for creating bold and distinctive communications

• Develop communications and utilization plan for updated branding standards

• Develop key messages to be incorporated into College communications and materials

• Maximize all College events as opportunities to engage and to build awareness
  - Develop annual background video that highlights key accomplishments to be used at as appropriate at events
  - Draft annual boilerplate copy to be included in event programs and materials
  - Partner on all major events to evaluate need for audience-specific materials and/or messages

Agricultural Research

• Collaborate with Agricultural Research to develop strategies for communicating impact from research funded through statewide and federal funding

• Work with Agricultural Research to identify annual communication needs and priorities and integrate those findings into an annual communications plan

Purdue Extension

• Work with Extension leadership team to identify key goals to use in developing Extension strategic communications plan

• Partner with Extension leadership, faculty and educators to develop educational materials in diverse formats that will meet the needs of intended audiences
• Create and implement statewide media plan with the goal of connecting educators and specialists with regional media

Outcomes: Year One

Organizational

• Individual professional development plans completed and enabled
• Data asset management system launched college wide
• Project Management System implemented for initiation and tracking of all projects
• Combine AgCommunicators and Social Media groups, schedule regular meetings and establish intranet resources
• Agricultural Communication presentations made to all academic and administrative departments and programs to introduce new procedures and systems and to answer questions and obtain input

Media Relations

• Identify and implement methods to measure media impact
• Establish baselines for future metrics
• Assemble and activate core College of Agriculture team of faculty experts
• Place a minimum of three major national/international stories
• Establish strong working relationships with national, Indianapolis and statewide mainstream science/agriculture and agricultural media
• Develop nimble processes and priorities for fast tracking breaking news response
• Develop powerful, diverse content and drive traffic to College news web page
• Integrate use of video into new pitches and reporting

Recruitment

• Communication recommendations reviewed and approved by OAP and delivered to all academic departments
• Department projects completed
• New email prospect recruitment strategy developed and launched with OAP, Admissions and Marketing & Media
• Pilot reviewed for accomplishments, deficits and recommendations for moving forward

New College Magazine

• New magazine created and launched by end of first quarter of 2017
• Form advisory team that includes alumni association executive director, executive director of development and faculty members
• Create online magazine presence with capacity to email breaking news/interesting stories/video with opportunities for direct engagement

Web

10/14/2016
• Conduct in-depth analytics
• Develop and submit web strategy for approval
• Develop and submit tiered timeline for implementing new navigation, wireframe, design and content protocols
• Develop and implement an intermediate strategy for web site as new designs, content and protocols are being developed

Digital Media
• Establish strategic priorities and goals for engagement
• Develop and begin implementation of YouTube Strategy
• Increase Extension social media engagement by xx%
• Increase Purdue Ag social media engagement by xx%
• Integrate video into social media efforts
• Add and strategically utilize Snapchat account to engage prospective and current students
• Collaborate with Media Relations to provide social media training for interested faculty

Public Relations
• Collaborate with Education Store and Exhibits to complete marketing plans
• Complete updated branding standards and provide briefings and information to AgCommunicators and throughout the College
• Draft and implement use of College key messages in major communications and events

Agricultural Research
• Completion and implementation of first annual communications plan

Purdue Extension
• Strategic communications plan completed and approved
• Statewide media plan approved and implemented
• Message calendar developed and approved
• Conduct thorough review with Extension program leaders of existing educational materials and their impact and the protocol for approval of proposed educational materials
• Collaborate with Extension to identify and incorporate innovative communication methods in developing educational materials and in reaching out to audiences in new ways