

OHIO UNIVERSITY

Office of University Communications and Marketing

“Made Manifest” – A Plan to Implement Vision OHIO: 2007-2012

Oct. 12, 2007

The Office of University Communications and Marketing proposes four major initiatives to help Ohio University achieve the goals of Vision OHIO. The proposed activities are designed to support the University’s goals of:

- recruiting more and better-qualified students,
- attracting and retaining a diverse and talented faculty and staff,
- generating additional financial resources, and
- achieving national prominence.

We welcome comments and questions. Please contact Joe Brennan at 740.593.2200 or brennanj@ohio.edu.

Initiative 1: Strengthen student recruitment marketing

- What:** Develop a new set of materials for recruiting undergraduates (including online and printed pieces). These materials are used in high schools and mailed to prospects.
- When:** Materials will have a 3-year life cycle (2008-2011)
- Why:** Existing materials will reach the end of their life cycle this academic year. The Admissions Office relies on one-time funding for printing and mailing of recruitment materials. This request will provide funds for development of new materials and (as funding allows) the expansion of printing and distribution.
- How:** Collaborative process between UCM and Admissions, with input from Enrollment Management Advisory Committee and other stakeholders. In addition, College of Business marketing faculty and students are assisting with research and planning support. Input will be gathered in winter 2008, with planning and production in the spring and summer. Materials will be ready for the start of the recruiting season in fall 2008.
- How much:** This proposal seeks \$160,000 in the current fiscal year (FY08) to assist with initial creation and production of new materials and \$80,000 per year in the next two years to support ongoing costs, including production and updating.
- Evaluation:** Direct outcome measures will include (a) increased numbers of inquiries generated from the new materials and (b) positive feedback from students, parents and guidance counselors. The indirect impact of the materials can be gauged by increased selectivity, improved yield rate and stronger academic profiles of the incoming freshmen classes.

Initiative 2: Academic Marketing Campaign

- What:** Tell the story of Ohio University’s academic excellence and build the University’s brand to prospective students, parents, guidance counselors, alumni and other influencers.
- When:** Fall 2007 (initial pilot project); to continue in future years if campaign is deemed successful following evaluation this year.

- Where:** Central and southeastern Ohio in Fall 2007; expand to other key markets such as Cleveland, Cincinnati and Pittsburgh in future years, if funding is available.
- Why:** Research indicates that Ohio University is well-regarded by undergraduate applicants, yet perceptions of academic excellence lag behind top competitors.
- How:** Creative materials were developed in Summer 2007 through a highly collaborative process involving input from faculty, staff, students, parents, counselors, admissions staff and campus leaders. Students and faculty helped to edit three new commercials and to perform the music. Television, print, outdoor and online advertising was purchased selectively in the Central and Southeastern Ohio markets.
- How much:** The initial pilot project (“The Promise”) was budgeted at \$378,000 in the current year with one-time funding provided by the Provost/EVP, deans, President’s Office and UCM. This proposal asks for \$325,000 per year for the next four years. These funds will be used for buying advertising space to allow the campaign to run in one major market each year.
- Evaluation:** UCM is currently working with the Scripps Survey Research Center to evaluate the pilot project using a “before and after” design to gauge audience awareness and response to the campaign. Future expenditures will be guided by the results of this research.

Initiative 3: Web Site Assessment and Re-Development Project

- What:** Conduct a comprehensive, institution-wide project to improve the University’s online presence and empower faculty, staff and students to maintain web pages more easily and at lower cost.
- When:** Assessment, planning and development in 2008-09; implementation to begin in 2009-10.
- Why:** Research shows that the World Wide Web is the preferred channel of university information for prospective students and many other stakeholder groups. Feedback from faculty, staff, students and campus leaders reveals significant opportunities to strengthen the online presence, including improving the internal search engine, making it easier for users to navigate the site and projecting a strong brand image online. In addition, stakeholders have expressed the desire to streamline web production and maintenance processes, to empower campus users to more easily manage their pages, and to reduce the time, money and effort currently expended by academic and administrative units on managing their web sites.
- How:** The project will be conducted as a partnership between UCM, the Office of Information Technology and web contributors and users from across the University. The project will begin with an assessment of the current web presence and web production processes and tools, as well as an assessment of the web-related needs of the units. Based on that assessment and the consensus of stakeholders, the project will identify and implement appropriate solutions designed to address the identified needs (e.g., better internal search, shared technologies for authoring and managing web pages, etc.). The goal will not be “centralization” but “empowerment” of the units to better manage their web sites.
- How much:** This proposal asks for funding of a project manager in UCM (target salary \$75,000) to lead this project and serve as a “web guru” to assist units in devising web strategies. In addition, it asks

for funding of \$150,000 to support project costs, which may include web authoring tools, internal search engines or other software and/or hardware needs identified through the assessment and planning process. This investment can be recouped through reduction of the approximately \$500,000 spent per year on outsourced web development.

Evaluation: Research will be conducted to identify the satisfaction of web visitors and contributors, and to measure the costs of web production and maintenance. The data will be gathered both initially and after implementation and compared to measure the effectiveness of the project.

Initiative 4: Build visibility in regional and national news media

What: Help Ohio University achieve national recognition for the expertise and work of its faculty and the achievements of its students by proactively and strategically seeking coverage from selected news media.

When: Implement as soon as funding is available.

Why: Positive news media coverage helps increase awareness and generate favorable opinions among key audiences, including high-ability students and people who influence them, policymakers, alumni and higher education colleagues. The “implied endorsement” from editors helps to enhance our institution’s prestige and visibility.

How: Provide UCM with media relations tools it currently does not have.

How much: \$60,000 per year for four years. Funding will be used for materials to send the media showcasing faculty expertise; subscriptions to online resources to identify and contact editors and reporters; access to online tools track and measure the outcomes of media relations work; travel for faculty/staff to visit media outlets; professional assistance from experts who can open doors for UCM staff in media outlets outside the region; and rental of satellite and studio time to allow faculty experts to be interviewed here in Athens by national broadcast news.

Evaluation: UCM will measure and report its success rate in placing targeted stories about Ohio University’s academic strengths. Metrics include number and nature of coverage earned, number of impressions generated, advertising equivalency value. Data will be tracked over time and comparisons will be made to peers and competitors.