Proposed Marketing/Communications Plan
for New Academic Programs
in the College of Engineering and Computer Science

March 2019

Purpose
To assist departments in achieving wide visibility for new degree programs, and help recruit students to the programs.

Summary
The development and approval of new degree programs creates a need for communicating those programs to targeted audiences to gain visibility and ultimately get prospective students to apply. The type of degree (undergraduate vs graduate) determines how some of those communications will be developed and implemented. Academic departments can work with the college's marketing and communications staff to identify communications goals and strategy; identify target audiences; develop messaging about the program customized to target audiences; and implement the strategy. Micro campaigns can be deployed to test messaging and measure results.

Timeline

Before Board of Trustees Approval:

1) Bring the college marketing team into the process at this step by sharing the degree proposal that will be presented to the BOT. Keep the team informed of key dates.

2) Communicators work with academic departments to identify communications goals and strategy; and target audiences. Academic departments provide pertinent information to the communicators so that targeted messages can be developed. Departments should provide the following information:
- What is the overview of the program?
- When can students register for the program?
- Why are we adding this to our curriculum? What is the rationale?
- Do any other universities offer this? (is it the only program in Florida/ or the U.S.?)
- Why is UCF well positioned to offer this?
- What qualities make this program unique/different from other universities?
- Will there be some hands-on, internship learning experiences?
- What jobs could someone find with this degree?
- Why now?
- What is the workforce demand? Is there a job shortage? What are typical job titles that someone could get or become with this degree?
- This program was designed with input from ( )
- Who is the primary program director at UCF?
- How does one apply?
- Is there an application deadline for ( ) semester?
- Can students enroll part-time?
- Are there any online courses?
- What photo can be used to illustrate this story?

3) From the answers to the questions, communicators work with academic departments to develop strategic messages based on values/wants/needs of targeted audiences.

4) News story is prepared that announces the new degree getting BOT approval. It runs after the vote. (For example, Zenaida Kotala in ORC prepared a news story about the new master's degree in systems engineering that was released to media on March 27, 2019, a few days after BOT approval. She worked with the dean and the department chair for quotes and messaging.)

4) After messages are developed, communicators begin developing marketing collateral/materials *Messages are developed/packaged by communications team for clarity, consistency and compliance with UCF branding standards.

- flyer/brochure about the program.
  Flyer Template:

  – At least a 2 pager
  at least 2 photos
  why would someone want this degree?
  how to apply? Deadline?
  website/for more info link
  featured courses
  pre-requisites
  description of the field
  why UCF is well-positioned to offer this degree; what sets UCF apart?
  online courses?
  hands-on learning opportunities?
- announcement postcard
- draft web page
- content for university pages
- photography
- social media posts
- announcement on college closed circuit TV monitors
- advertising: decide where to advertise; how to reach target audiences; what the budget is; how will results be measured; what the call to action is; what preparations need to be in place for people responding to the ad (who will manage inquiries and what info will be provided to ad respondents)

5) Get focus group feedback on materials. Example: student leaders in Engineering Leadership and Innovation Institute (eli2); a group of alumni interested in reviewing materials (hasn't been formed yet); Advisory Board members who may be interested in reviewing and providing input; etc.

After BOT Approval

1) Academic department develops catalog description.

2) Go live with draft college/department web pages.

3) Communicators develop content for university landing pages based on catalog description (UCF Admissions/ www.ucf.edu/degree and www.ucf.edu/apply-to-ucf)

4) Have new flyers printed/uploaded to web sites; distributed to key audiences.
- CECS students (particular focus on honors students if a grad program; seniors with good GPAs; students involved in research; eli2 students)
- Student organizations
- deans of engineering and computer science colleges in universities in Florida
- Work with UCF Admissions; UCF College of Graduate Studies; other colleges for cross-promoting
- STEM Outreach (STEM@UCF)
- Advisory Board members
- Industry partners
- Professional groups/societies (for example, Florida Engineering Society; Florida High Tech Corridor, etc)

5) Communicators update existing college materials that mention degrees (College and Department web site; Fast Facts; Departmental Graduate Programs flyers; undergraduate programs flyers, etc)

6) News story, working with UCF Communications: identify who will be quoted; tie the new program to an industry workforce need/ national or global trend, etc.   Timing: College or department can publish a news story earlier; UCF Communications will do a news story (with media outreach) only after the catalog listing is published (university website landing page for the degree program is live with content). **The UCF course catalogs are published every year in May.**

7) Release news story: post to College/Department websites; post story to social media channels

8) Promote story in department/college newsletter(s) and publications

9) Email campaign: Send to chairs, directors and deans | **Department must send list of additional contacts, if desired;** Send to alumni and current students; Send to prospective students (Grad Studies can pull lists of SUS students) | **Department must request list from Grad Studies**

10) Start advertising: | **Requires initiation and funding from department**
    a. Social media ads
    b. Conference book ads
    c. Journal ads
    d. web banner ads (related organizations, societies, publications)

Long-term:

1. Faculty should keep pushing at events through handouts, fliers, etc. | **Completed by department**

2. Order promo items and banners | **Completed by department**

3. Enlist related student org(s) to help promote | **Completed by department**