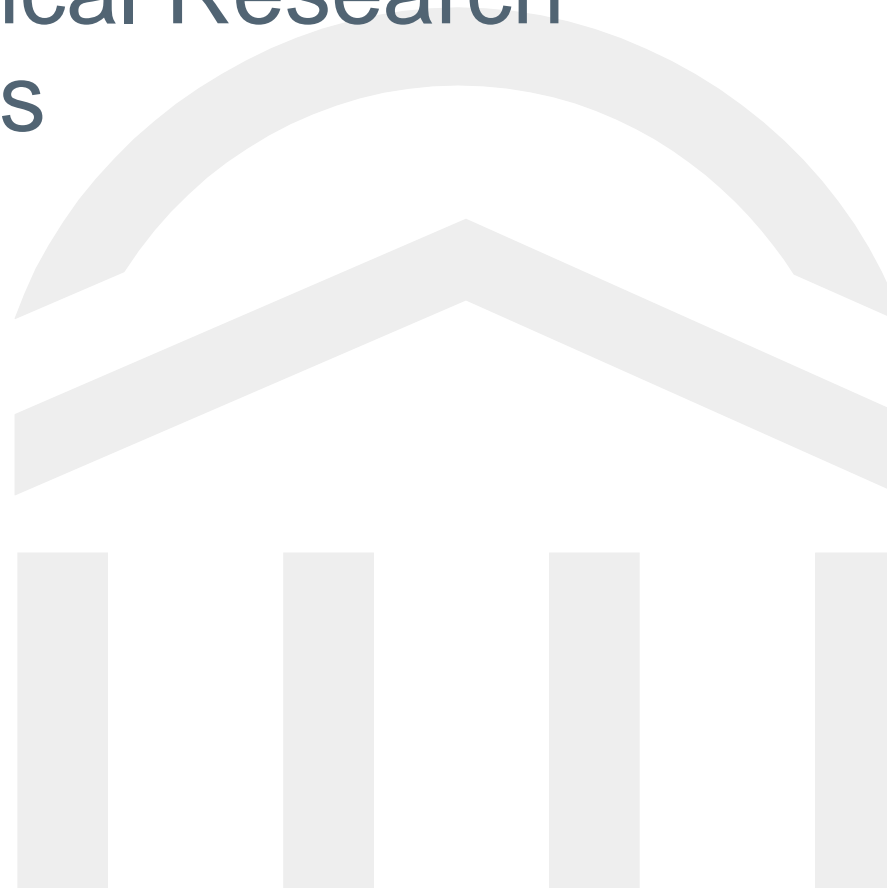




Education  
Advisory  
Board

Advancement Forum

# Integrated Marketing and Branding Strategies of Technological Research Universities



Custom Research Brief

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# Advancement Forum

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# 1) Executive Overview

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## Key Observations

**Most profiled institutions seek to centralize marketing and communications activities to achieve campus-wide integration.** Four profiled institutions maintain or have recently transitioned to a centralized office to integrate campus-wide marketing and communications activities across platforms and units; one institution's marketing function remains decentralized. Contacts envision an ideal end-state that consists of a central office that employs public and media relations officers, marketing managers with unit-specific portfolios (or "news beats"), and a creative services and media production team. Institutions struggle to realize this vision for two reasons: either the institution lacks sufficient personnel to staff such an office (and lack the leadership support to secure more FTEs), or the staff have historically belonged to academic and administrative units across campus.

**Integrated marketing messages support the institutional strategic plan.** Coordination of marketing and communications materials (e.g., press releases, website) through a single office ensures each piece of marketing collateral aligns with and reinforces institutional goals, aspirations, or vision as outlined in its strategic plan. Fundraising campaigns typically align with strategic plan components as well, both in priorities and in themed messaging.

**Brand discovery, deliberation, and articulation processes typically precede a deliberate integration of marketing activities.** All profiled institutions recently engaged in a branding exploration process in which they, in consultation with an external firm, evaluated their current brand reputation and recognition before new brand development. Institutions seek to create a consistent, campus-wide brand that will serve many purposes: attraction of prospective students and faculty; distinction from peers and competitors; and generation of respect from policymakers and grant reviewers at science funding agencies.

**Vice presidents of marketing and communications at profiled institutions with centralized marketing and communications offices report to the vice president of enrollment management or advancement.** Offices that report through enrollment management appear to promote greater institutional integration because they manage external advertisement activities of admissions units, which typically reach a broad audience.

**Assign marketing managers to specific administrative or academic units.** Assignments foster one-on-one relationships between the central office, which employs the manager, and the respective unit. These marketing managers may physically reside in the main unit they serve or the central office. Marketing managers collaborate with unit representatives to determine appropriate advertisement purchases, train communications-oriented unit staff, and write or review all press releases.

**Administrative or academic units at most profiled institutions make advertising purchases instead of a central marketing office.** Central funds often purchase large-scale advertisements that target general audiences, such as airport banners or highway billboards; unit funds support small marketing activities, such as an academic program brochure.

**Most profiled institutions utilize metrics to evaluate the success of individual campaigns and advertisement purchases, but concede that comprehensive assessment of institutional brand recognition and reputation requires a larger multi-method study and the assistance of external consultants.** Contacts track web traffic sources, page views, campus visits by prospective students, alumni participation in events, and more. For example, **Institution C** increased applications to two specific programs by 30 percent after employment of targeted marketing activities for those programs.

## 2) Integrated Marketing Resources

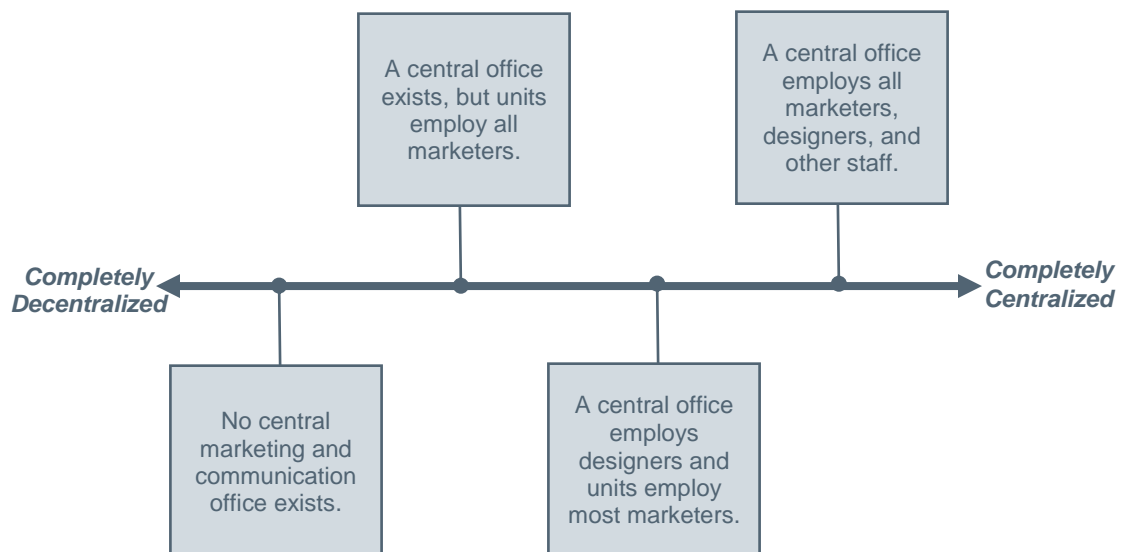
### Marketing Office Structure

#### ***Most Profiled Institutions Centralize Marketing and Communications Activities to Achieve Campus-wide Integration***

Contacts report that central marketing and communications offices have only sought to integrate marketing and communications activities across platforms and units over the past five years. Administrators at **Institution E** deliberately reduced and eliminated unit-level marketing positions and hired new marketing managers in the centralized office to integrate and standardize marketing and communications activities across campus.

The level of centralization across marketing and communication offices at profiled institutions varies from an almost completely decentralized office to completely centralized. The almost completely decentralized office employs two staff members that manage online news reporting and maintain visual identity guidelines, while the most centralized office employs all marketing and communications staff across the institutions including designers, social media experts, and others. Many profiled institutions with centralized structures rely on unit-level administrative staff to maintain their divisions' websites.

#### **Level of Centralization across Marketing and Communications Office and Administrative or Academic Units**



#### ***Marketing and Communications Offices' Reporting Structures Drive Prioritized Activities and Responsibilities***

Vice presidents of marketing and communications at profiled institutions with centralized offices report to the vice president of enrollment management or the vice president of advancement. Offices that report to enrollment management tend to be responsible for more marketing and communications activities, such as admissions marketing that target a broad audience of prospective students.



## Most Common Marketing and Communications Activities<sup>1</sup>

According to a 2010 survey of 138 mid-sized institutions by Lipman Hearne and the Council for Advancement and Support of Education about higher education marketing spending, surveyed institutions selected marketing and communications activities in which they invested in FY 2009-2010. The following activities were the most common, regardless of offices' reporting structures, ordered from most to least common:

- Recruitment events
- Print advertising
- Admissions print materials
- Alumni magazine
- Ecommunication with alumni
- Facebook
- Media relations
- Digital advertising
- Twitter
- Radio advertising
- Monitor social media
- Manage YouTube
- Flash/stream video
- Community relations
- Crisis communications
- Market research
- Annual report
- Institutional website
- Government relations
- Alumni portal
- Word-of-mouth marketing
- Billboard advertising
- Develop integrated marketing plan

## Marketing and Communications Offices at Profiled Institutions

	Institution (Structure Type)	Role and Responsibilities	Customers and Stakeholders	Target Audience
Reports to Advancement	Institution A (Centralized)	Media relations, website, publications, advancement	Academic units	Campus community, people critical to future success (e.g., legislators, funding agencies like NIH, NSF, DOE), peer institutions
	Institution D (Centralized)	Media relations, website, student recruitment, all press releases social media, all photography and videography	Administrative and academic units	16 to 18 year-old high school students and their parents
Reports to Enrollment Management	Institution C (Centralized)	Media relations, social media, advancement, alumni magazine, website, creative services, student recruitment	Administrative and academic units	Prospective students, campus community (e.g., students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents of students)
	Institution E (Centralized)	Public relations, alumni magazine, research magazine, internal communications, marketing programs, analytics metrics, university bookstore, events office, website, all press releases	Administrative and academic units	Prospective, undergraduate, and graduate students
Reports to President's Chief of Staff	Institution B (Decentralized)	Media relations, social media, newsroom	Administrative units: alumni association, athletics, admissions, arts, advancement	Broad audiences (e.g., separate admissions office markets to all prospective undergraduate students)

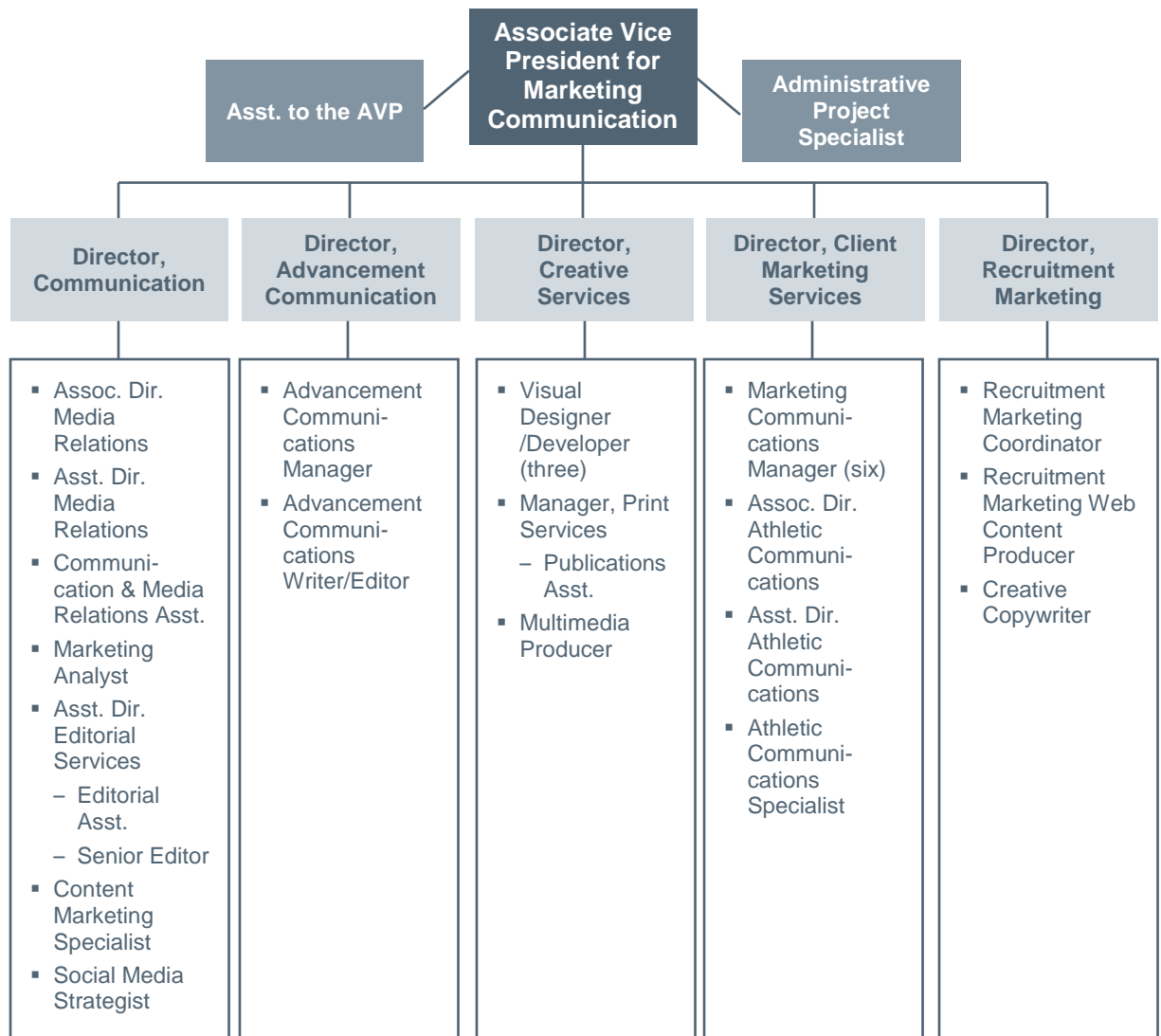
1) Lipman Hearne/CASE Marketing Spending Report at Colleges and Universities. (2010). <<http://www.lipmanhearne.com/keyinsights.aspx>>

## Marketing Staff

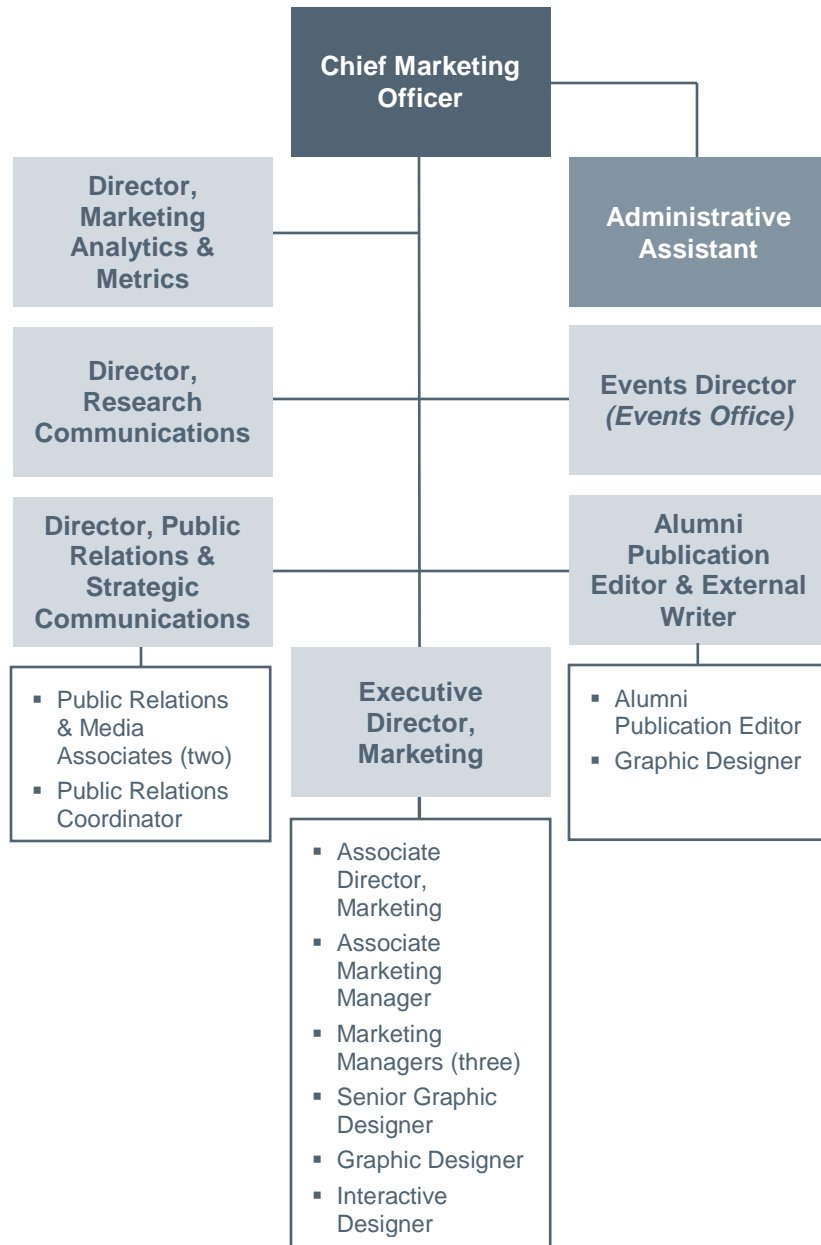
### **Centralized Offices Typically Employ Between 18 and 37 Staff and Collaborate with Departmental Representatives**

Staff at all centralized marketing and communications offices include a vice president of marketing communications or chief marketing officer, director of marketing, director of communications, director of editorial services, marketing managers, web designers, and an administrative assistant. Both **Institution C** and **Institution E** intentionally reorganized their marketing and communications office structure to incorporate advancement and alumni-related communications as well as marketing managers who work one-on-one with specific administrative and academic units.

### **Institution C's Office of Marketing Communications Organizational Chart (37 Headcount)**



**Institution E's Office of Marketing and Communications Organizational Chart (21 Headcount)**



**Assign Marketing Managers to Specific Stakeholder Units**

Most profiled institutions assign marketing managers to specific administrative or academic units to foster a one-on-one relationship between the central marketing and communications office and the respective unit. In a centralized marketing and communications structure, these marketing managers are employed by the central office but may physically reside in the unit they serve.

Contacts explain that effective marketing managers have broad-based marketing experience and should fulfill the following roles:

- Manage marketing planning for their assigned unit
- Generate ideas rather than take orders from units



- Meet frequently and regularly with their units
- Develop marketing plans in collaboration with their units



### The Role of Marketing Managers at *Institution E*

Marketing managers at **Institution E** were hired in the central marketing office about two to three years ago as high-level strategists with M.B.A.'s; they collaborate with administrative and academic units to help them achieve institutional and divisional goals. Although they sometimes take responsibility for a certain unit or product group, marketing managers also facilitate communication between units. They frequently visit units across campus and rarely complete tasks in the central office. Marketing managers collaborate with unit leaders to determine appropriate advertisement purchases and share in the successes and failures of units because their goal is to form strategic partnerships with them instead of serving a consultant-client role.

## Marketing Budget

### ***Administrative or Academic Units Make Advertising Buys Instead of Central Marketing Office***

At most profiled institutions, the central marketing and communications office purchases large-scale advertisements that target a general audience, such as airport banners or highway billboards; unit funds tend to pay for small marketing efforts with a targeted audience, such as an academic program brochure. Most advertising buys target prospective students or general audiences that include surrounding communities, peer institutions, and influential stakeholders (e.g., policy-makers, funding agencies).

Contacts report a shift of spending from print to online marketing and communications activities in light of greater online traffic to institutional websites. However, contacts report that print brochures via direct mail are still the most effective way to capture prospective students' parents' attention.

### Large Advertisement Purchases at Profiled Institutions

Institution	Unit Involvement	Frequency and Type of Ad Buy	Audience of Ad Buy
<b>Institution A</b>	Central office allocates budget to divisions within office: media relations, news, editorial, marketing, digital communications, and advancement	Rarely makes ad buys; central unit allocates budget to research publication magazine and earthquake center because both have a national scope that is likely to reach targeted audiences.	Typically general audience, including the campus community (e.g., students, faculty, staff, alumni) and influential stakeholders (e.g., legislators, policy-makers, funding agencies)
<b>Institution D</b>	Central office	Year-round; Large-scale banners at nearby airport, electronic billboards on highway, and other ad buys	16 to 18 year-old high school students and their parents; General brand awareness

**Institution D** buys electronic billboards that rotate and feature images and stories from across all academic units to satisfy units that are not part of advertising buys that promote its STEM-focused branding.

		that support the institution's strategic plan	
	Schools allocate funds from cost recovery dollars to academic units, and the central office helps decide how to spend the money	Occasional; all marketing expenses	16 to 18 year-old high school students and their parents
<b>Institution C</b>	Central office fund that units apply for	Annual; Recruitment-related	Prospective students
	Academic units	Occasional; All other marketing	Typically prospective, undergraduate, and graduate students
<b>Institution E</b>	Academic units work with their assigned marketing manager to determine funds needed from central office to make ad buys	Year-round; All marketing expenses	Typically general audience, including prospective, undergraduate, and graduate students
<b>Institution B</b>	Academic units	Occasional; All marketing expenses	Typically general audience, including prospective, undergraduate, and graduate students
	Central office	Year-round; Large-scale banners at nearby airport	General audience
	Undergraduate Admissions Office and the Graduate School Office	Occasional; All admissions-related marketing	Prospective undergraduate and graduate students

Previous EAB research<sup>2</sup> reveals that similarly sized institutions to those profiled spend up to \$90,000, or 30 percent of their marketing budget, on billboards to promote branding.



### Triaging Requests for Creative Staff Resources with “Creative Zones” at *Institution C*

At **Institution C**, all administrative and academic unit staff who seek funding from the central marketing and communications office for recruitment efforts must complete a project brief that defines the strategy, plan, design, and communication method of the prospective project. Central office staff utilize a creative zone chart that rates each project based on three categories: audience, reach, and shelf-life. Based on these criteria, marketing leadership determines whether (in order from highest-priority to lowest-priority) they will assign the task to a creative services person from the central office, a freelancer, or a student designer.

2) Education Advisory Board. Integrated Marketing Strategies and Resources. (March 2013). <<http://www.eab.com/Research-and-Insights/Academic-Affairs-Forum/Custom/2013/03/Integrated-Marketing-and-Strategic-Resources>>.

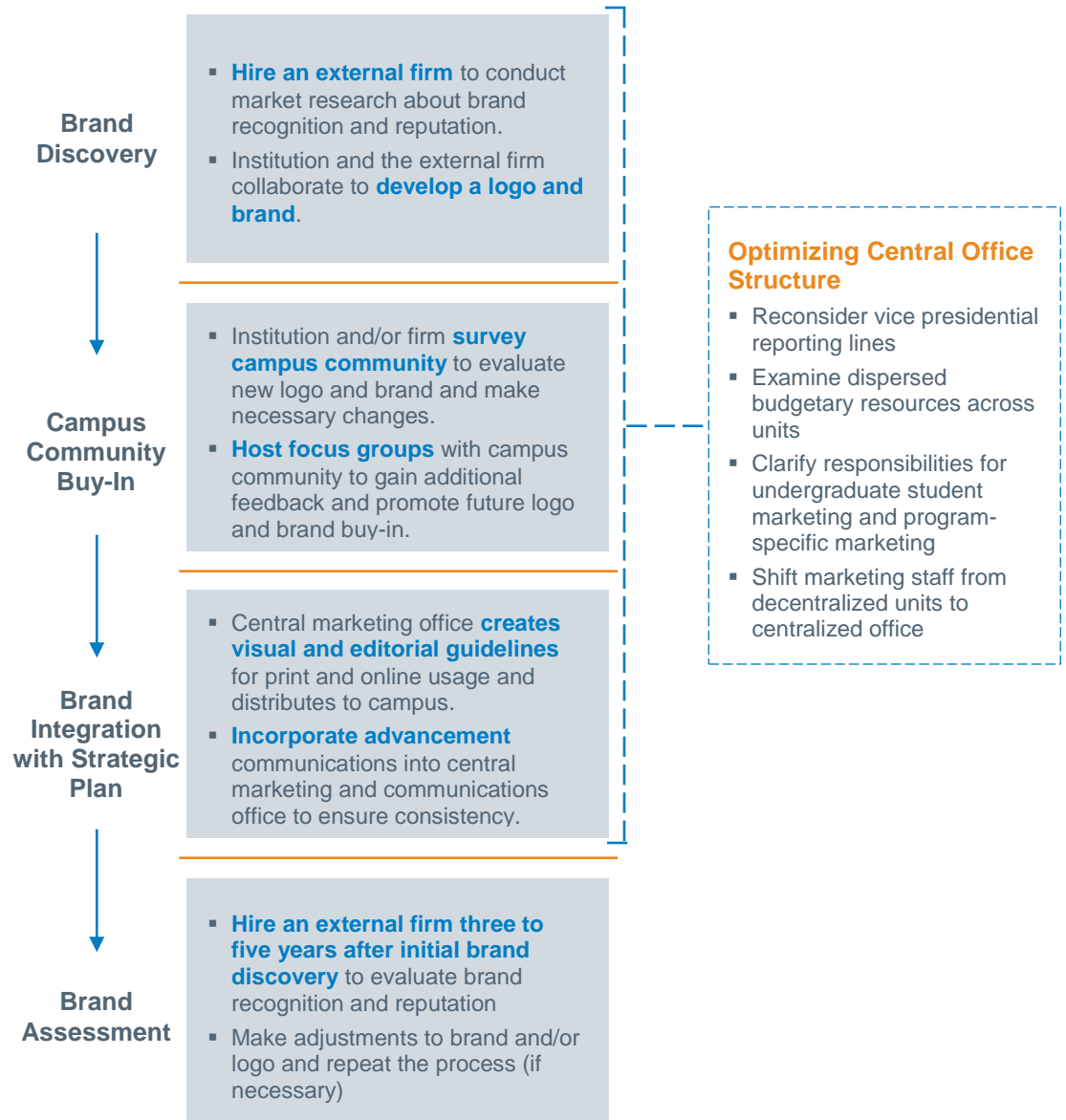
# 3) Integrated Marketing Strategies

## Achieving Integration

### *Initial Brand Exploration Processes Decide Which Themes to Promote Though Integrated Marketing and Communications Activities*

All profiled institutions recently completed a brand discovery process in which they first evaluated their current brand reputation and recognition before development of their new, ideal brand.

### Steps to Achieving Integration of Marketing and Communication Activities





### Brand Definition Processes at *Institution C*

**Institution C** hired an outside marketing firm, *SimpsonScarborough*, and a branding agency, *Mindpower*, to help identify a new brand identity. These firms conducted an alumni opinion study; a series of focus groups with students, faculty, staff, and alumni; and a survey distributed to over 20,000 administrators at other higher education institutions, prospective students, faculty, and staff. They received positive feedback about the overall brand and messaging but negative feedback about the two tested logos. In-house designers then created a new logo and concept-tested it to ensure campus community buy-in.

Meanwhile, the first series of advertisements with new branding were tested through a survey sent to current and prospective students, peers at other higher education institutions, alumni, faculty, and staff. The firms utilized feedback from the survey to further refine the brand and its logo.

In addition to the branding and advertising campaign, *Institution C* updated its logo, color palette, website, and branding-themed microsite.

## Branding Initiatives

### *Engage External Firm to Evaluate Brand Recognition and Reputation*

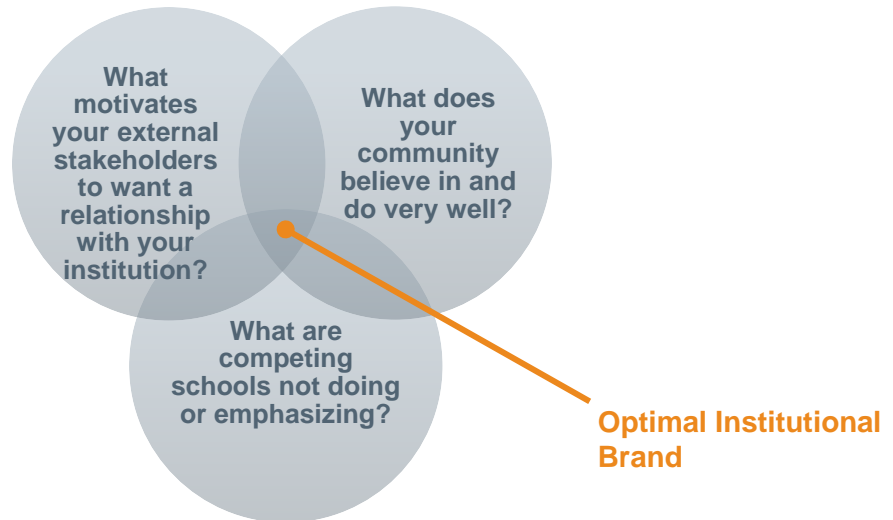
All profiled institutions hired an external firm (e.g., public relations firm, market research firm, or branding firm) to begin the process of re-branding. Three profiled institutions hired regional public relations firms, while contacts at both **Institution C** and **Institution E** report high satisfaction with their engagement of *SimpsonScarborough*, a national marketing research and strategy firm that specializes in higher education. Contacts report that external firms align the visual identity and branding of an institution, which is particularly important before a fundraising campaign. Institutions typically hire external firms for one or more of the following reasons:

- External firms provide an empirical and objective point-of-view.
- Hiring an external firm ensures that branding efforts are one (external) person’s top priority task, and they are not delayed by other tasks that arise internally.
- Institutional faculty and staff may better receive outside criticism and suggestions than internal criticism and avoid internal conflict and politics.

### Brands of Profiled Institutions

Institution	Brand or themes as described by contacts
<b>Institution A</b>	▪ “Every student and faculty member is extraordinary”
<b>Institution B</b>	▪ “Earth, energy, and environment”
<b>Institution C</b>	▪ “Preparing students for their futures with classes, internships, and study abroad”
<b>Institution D</b>	▪ “Creating technology-oriented individuals with a skill set that can be applied to government work, defense contracting, and military-industrial needs”
<b>Institution E</b>	▪ “An institution for world-class problem-solving”

## How to Determine Institutional Brand<sup>3</sup>



### ***Seek Feedback from Campus Community and External Audiences Regarding Brand Definition***

Contacts prioritize feedback collection from campus stakeholders and higher education administrators at other institutions during development of a new institutional brand or logo to ensure accurate portrayal of the institution and eventual adoption of new branding activities.

### **Methods of Feedback Collection on New Brand and/or Logo**

<p><b>Surveys</b> (In-Person or Online)</p>	<p>The central marketing office or an external firm conducts a survey that they distribute to prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators at other higher education institutions, or all of the above to test and receive feedback regarding the new brand and/or logo. Online surveys are typically the least expensive and quickest method of feedback collection.</p>
<p><b>Focus Groups</b> (In-Person or Online)</p>	<p>The central marketing office or an external firm conducts multiple focus groups that consist of about ten members of the target audience (e.g., prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, administrators at other higher education institutions) to test and receive feedback regarding the new brand and/or logo. Focus groups typically last one to one and a half hours.</p>
<p><b>In-Depth Interviews</b></p>	<p>The central marketing office or an external firm conducts in-depth interviews of the target audience (e.g., prospective students, current students, alumni, faculty, staff, or administrators at other higher education institutions) to test and receive feedback regarding the new brand and/or logo. Interviews allow the opportunity to probe into responses, but institutions must be wary of interviewer bias.</p>
<p><b>Cross-Campus Working Groups</b></p>	<p>Two profiled institutions created 20 to 26-member cross-campus, multi-disciplinary groups to provide input on new logo and branding messaging to ensure campus buy-in and utilization. These groups abated faculty and campus community push-back on new advertising once the branding was adopted.</p>

3) SimpsonScarborough: Jeff Papa. "Developing an Informed and Compelling Institutional Brand". GPAC. (April 2012). <<http://simpsonscarborough.com/wp-content/uploads/GPACAC-MOACAC-20121.pdf>>

## Campus-wide Integration and Collaboration

### ***Create Campus-Wide Visual Identity and Editorial Guidelines to Ensure Appropriate Logo and Brand Usage***

In an effort to create uniformity across administrative and academic units, marketing staff at all profiled institutions publish guidelines for how to use the institutional logo, which is available for download from the offices' websites. Unit staff adhere to guidelines on divisional webpages, given that most profiled institutions redesigned their websites at the same time as creation of guidelines. Some guidelines address how the content management system should comply with new visual identity details as well.

Some profiled institutions conduct informational sessions to educate the campus community about new visual identity standards and encourage compliance. The guidelines may also require that the marketing office grant approval to departments and organizations that produce any materials using the institution's name or trademark. Marketing and communications office staff at most profiled institutions write and/or review all press releases from units.

### ***Form Strategic Partnerships between Marketing Managers and Unit Staff to Surface Unit-level Stories***

Marketing managers collaborate individually with designated unit staff to determine appropriate advertisement purchases, train communications-oriented unit staff, and write or review all press releases. These strategic partnerships surface stories from within the units that align with the larger, institution-wide plan. Contacts note that faculty in many departments are excited to collaborate with the marketing office to develop their marketing materials (e.g., websites, program-specific brochures) because they recognize their lack of expertise in advertising. For those who are more reluctant to participate or resist what they perceive as the commercialization of the academy, contacts recommend several strategies to improve institutional buy-in.

### **Strategies to Engage Units in Integrated Marketing Initiatives<sup>4</sup>**

#### **Offer Successful Examples of Unit Collaborations**

The completion of exemplary projects on behalf of one or two large departments such as admissions or advancement motivates others to seek out the services of the marketing offices to receive similar products. Collaboration with and training of staff in units foster one-on-one relationships with central marketing and communications office staff.

#### **Present Data on Marketing Outcomes**

Faculty respond best to data and research during presentations of services by the central marketing office. They recommend including metrics gathered from Google Analytics, detailing changes in web site usage, and citing scholarly journals during discussions with department representatives.

#### **Initiate Change from a Top Administrator**

At **Institution D**, the president led efforts to implement an integrated marketing strategy. The president's authority, vision, and ability to articulate the benefits of integrated marketing strategies facilitated campus-wide acceptance.

4) Adapted from Education Advisory Board. *Integrated Marketing Strategies and Resources*. (March 2013).

Profiled institutions that do not formally incorporate advancement into their structure invite the director of advancement to these meetings to foster collaboration and consistency of all marketing and communications activities.

## ***Centralized Marketing Office Staff Should Meet Monthly to Discuss Current Projects***

Due to the large size of centralized marketing and communications offices, staff may not have the opportunity to formally collaborate on projects. To combat this issue, two profiled institutions host monthly meetings that bring the entire office together to discuss current projects and facilitate cross-team working relationships:

- The associate vice president for marketing communications at **Institution C** coordinates monthly meetings that bring the 37-member office together to intentionally collaborate on story leads and campus news.
- The decentralized marketing and communications office at **Institution B** coordinates every other month meetings between the alumni association, athletics, admissions, advancement, and others to discuss current projects.

## **Marketing Content**

### ***Integrated Marketing Messages Support Institutional Strategic Plans***

Coordination of all marketing materials through a single office ensures that each piece of marketing collateral aligns with institutional goals outline in its strategic plan. Although some profiled institutions allow administrative and academic units to manage their own websites, published messages must align with the institution's standards, strategic plan, and brand.

Contacts suggest that campus stakeholders discuss re-branding and creation of a new institution-wide strategic plan at the same time to ensure integration of marketing and communications plans into larger institutional goals. Institutions leverage this brand to foster a particular aspiration or objective that is a component of their strategic plan:

- ***Institution C's branding seeks to widen visibility and name recognition among its prospective student audience*** amidst national scrutiny on the cost of college and declining demographic trends in their typical enrollment markets. Their previous logo was easily confused with the city sharing the institution's name rather than the institution itself.
- ***Institution D's new branding signals greater institutional focus on close relationships with government, military, and defense contracting sectors***; in particular, they hope to increase science research funding and better advertise to prospective students interested in science, space, and defense. This rebranding effort pivoted away from previous messaging on a holistic liberal arts education.
- ***Institution A hopes to generate government support and raise their profile specifically in the regional community*** (who often mistake the institution for a member of the public state system). They also hope to better penetrate the mindshare of east coast-based scientists and thought leaders at foundations and science funding agencies.

### ***Align Institutional Brand with Advancement Campaigns and Materials***

Regardless of whether advancement is formally within the marketing and communications office structure, contacts report that true integrated branding and message infrastructures must include or collaborate with advancement communications activities (e.g., alumni magazine).

Contacts not only prioritize alignment of the institutional brand with the larger strategic plan but also with short-term advancement campaigns. For example, at **Institution B**, the campaign tagline “building the future” naturally fits in with their themes: earth, energy, environment.



**Inform Advancement Communications with Broader Institutional Considerations at *Institution C***

At **Institution C**, where the marketing and communications office recently incorporated advancement into the unit structure, the associate vice president for marketing communications is copied on all email previews of advancement-related messages to alumni and parents of students. This practice is time-consuming yet very useful when crises occur; for example, advancement had planned to send a fundraising email to parents of current students, but upon review of the email, the vice president for marketing communications thought to include a formal statement about the recent death of two students which might be on parents’ minds.

## 4) Marketing Assessment

### Metrics

***Collect Metrics Related to Individual Marketing Activities***

Most profiled institutions utilize metrics to evaluate the success of individual campaigns and advertisement buys. Contacts suggest utilization of technology tools that measures advertising return on investment, such as *Google Analytics* and *Meltwater*. Google Analytics generates statistics about a website's traffic and traffic sources, while Meltwater searches online news sources for keywords of relevance or name mentions.

**Common Marketing and Communications-Related Metrics<sup>5</sup>**

Type	Metrics
Web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Traffic sources (e.g., Google, direct, Bing, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Top pages on institutional website</li> <li>▪ Page views</li> <li>▪ Unique visitors</li> <li>▪ New vs. repeat visitors</li> <li>▪ Average time spent on page</li> <li>▪ Web inquiries</li> <li>▪ Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Youtube) page views, likes/followers, etc.</li> </ul>

5) SimpsonScarborough: Elizabeth Scarborough. "Higher Ed Marketing Metrics". *CASE Webinar*. (April 2012). <<http://simpsonscarborough.com/wp-content/uploads/CASE-Webinar-Higher-Ed-Marketing-Metrics-April-2012-v1.pdf>>



<b>Earned Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Media placements in home, regional, national, and international markets</li> <li>▪ Mentions in trade publications</li> </ul>
<b>Recruitment, Alumni Relations, and Advancement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Campus visits made by prospective students</li> <li>▪ Total applications</li> <li>▪ Participation in advancement campaigns</li> <li>▪ Alumni participation in events or membership</li> </ul>
<b>Direct Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Click-through, open-rate, unsubscribers of email campaigns</li> <li>▪ Hits to unique urls, reply cards, response to calls of action of direct mail</li> <li>▪ Hits to ad campaign web pages, scans of QR codes, calls to 800 numbers of print ads</li> </ul>

Contacts at **Institution A** are only starting to plan an evaluation study but express little interest in aggregate measures of message-open, click-through, and page-hit rates or the general public's perception of the institution. The study will measure the impact of their branding initiatives on narrow audiences that can influence the institution's resources: federal and state government leaders that can earmark grants, proposal reviewers at federal research funding agencies, and science and technology leaders who shape public opinion.

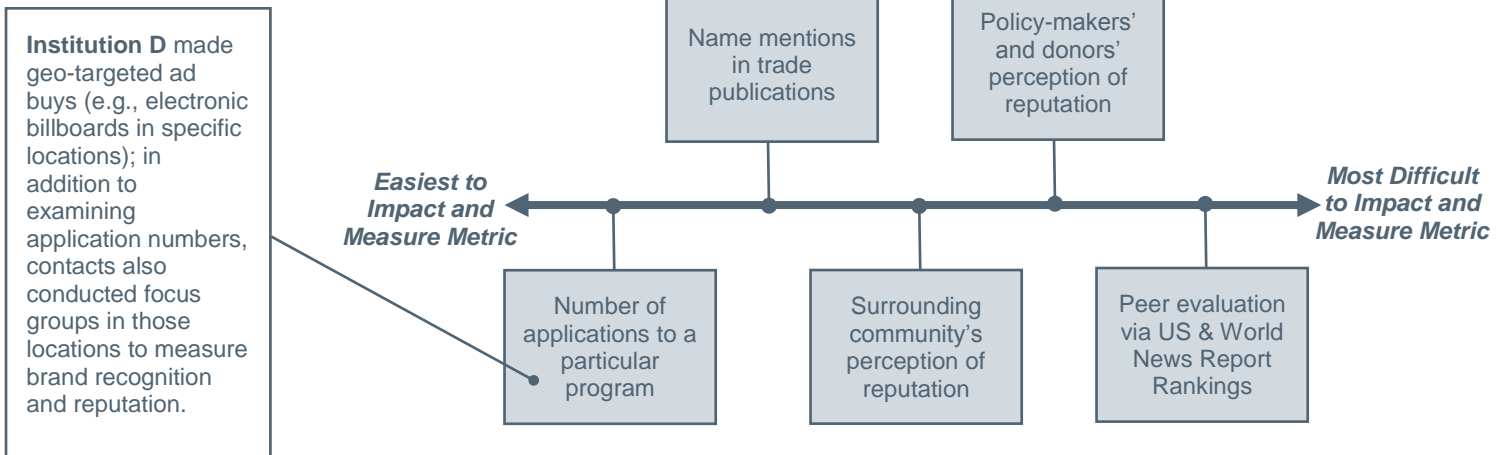
### ***Designate One Staff Person to Metrics and Analytics Tasks***

Two profiled institutions employ a director-level staff person who conducts before-and-after analyses of enrollment and fundraising yield across key demographics and geographic locations to evaluate targeted marketing campaigns. Profiled institutions that do not employ a director of analytics and metrics do not collect as many metrics because assessment is not the top priority of any one staff person.

### ***Profiled Institutions Struggle to Measure Overall Effectiveness of Marketing***

Contacts concede that comprehensive study of institutional brand recognition and reputation requires a large multi-method study; institutions often engage an external consultant to assist with these assessments several years after first implementing new branding campaigns. An improved ranking in US & World News Report may indicate that branding activities are successful because rankings depend on peer evaluations; similarly, more research awards may indicate that the institution has become more prestigious or rigorous in the opinion of science leaders. However, measurement of marketing's contribution to these shifts is very difficult.

## Spectrum of Metrics from Easiest to Most Difficult to Impact and Measure



## Evaluation

### ***Most Profiled Institutions Do Not Compare Performance to Competitor Institutions***

Contacts at four of five profiled institutions express little interest in visibility or reputation compared to peer institutions; instead, contacts utilize the previously detailed metrics to compare themselves in the present against themselves in the past. Because all of the marketing and communications offices at profiled institutions are relatively new and undeveloped, contacts will likely begin to compare themselves with competitor institutions after years of self-evaluation.

## 5) Research Methodology

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### Project Challenge

Leadership at a member institution approached the Forum with the following questions:

- How do institutions characterize the integration of marketing and communications activities among centralized administrative units and decentralized academic units? How do institutions seek to synchronize branding and messaging across stakeholder groups and delivery channels?
- How do contacts describe their institution's brand identity, recurring messages, and/or central themes? Upon what marketing tools and channels (e.g., billboards, television, radio, social media, web advertisements, earned media, press relations) do institutions rely to promote these messages?
- What is the organizational structure for governance of institution-wide marketing or communications initiatives? How does the central office coordinate with marketing initiatives across the institutions (e.g., visual identity guidelines, preclearance of press releases, regular meetings)?
- How do contacts evaluate the success of marketing and branding campaigns? What metrics do contacts utilize to determine successful marketing strategies?

### Project Sources

The Forum consulted the following sources for this report:

- Advisory Board's internal and online research libraries (eab.com)
- National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) (<http://nces.ed.gov/>)
- Contact institution websites
- Google Analytics website (<http://www.google.com/analytics/>)
- Meltwater website (<http://www.meltwater.com/>)
- SimpsonScarborough website (<http://simpsonscarborough.com/>)

## Research Parameters

The Forum interviewed marketing and communications leadership at four technological research universities as well as at Institution C.

### A Guide to Institutions Profiled in this Brief

Institution	Location	Type	Approximate Institutional Enrollment (Undergraduate/Total)	Classification
Institution A	Pacific West	Private	1,000 / 2,200	Research Universities (very high research activity)
Institution B	Mountain West	Public	3,800 / 5,300	Research Universities (high research activity)
Institution C	Northeast	Private	6,500 / 7,000	Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
Institution D	South	Public	6,000 / 7,700	Research Universities (very high research activity)
Institution E	Northeast	Private	3,700 / 5,400	Doctoral/Research Universities

*Source: National Center for Education Statistics*