

Public Information/External Relations Department

AUP for Academic Year 2022-2023

October 2021

Describe Department/Unit

Connection to College Mission

The mission of the CCCC Public Relations and Institutional Advancement Department is to support the college mission by enhancing public awareness and participation in the college's many programs, services, and activities. The department seeks to increase the overall visibility of the college and reinforce its brand and reputation within its diverse communities. Cerro Coso offers academic excellence, responsive student services, advanced technology, community and industry partnerships, and workforce and economic development.

The role of public information and marketing efforts is to highlight the high-quality education and dynamic services the college provides to its unique rural communities resulting in the college's growth. To effectively communicate and market to existing and prospective students, Cerro Coso Community College must use a variety of strategies, based on target audience communication styles, and constantly re-evaluate marketing methods and messages to meet diverse student populations.

Advancement efforts serve to engage alumni, friends, donors, parents, students, prospective students, faculty, and staff to treasure their association with the college, building relationships and partnerships with community and business leaders that strengthen their support, advancing the college. The department strives to inspire those who are not directly connected with the institution to take notice of the college's academic reputation and contributions to the region and beyond.

Report on Improvements Made and Gaps Identified in the Prior Year

Student Equity

Actions Taken Last Year

Student equity continues to be a high priority for Cerro Coso Community College. In order to positively and accurately reflect Cerro Coso's brand and to leverage its diversity to thrive in a competitive market place, the body of marketing, recruitment, and communications work that is produced strives to accurately reflect the diversity of the workforce, student population, and communities served. Marketing efforts convey value for all students and their unique skills and talents. Marketing, recruitment, and communication efforts overall (including stories and photography) accurately reflect the diversity of students by actively featuring a variety of classes and activities that highlight the college's diversity, including showing multiple ages, genders, ethnicity's, cultures, etc.

The Department has established a targeted marketing strategy in the Distance Education Equity Plan to create an inviting environment for black and Hispanic students (under-represented populations) to increase equity access. This will be accomplished through ten marketing campaigns with images of diverse populations in STEM programs. Those campaigns will be executed in fall 2021 and spring 2022 registration campaigns. Another goal of this strategy is to establish a collection of photos representing these populations and programs to be utilized in other marketing and outreach efforts.

Gaps to be Addressed

Blacks and Hispanics in STEM programs of study.

Outcomes Assessment: Loop-Back Improvements Made

Actions taken in the prior academic year

Over the past year, the coronavirus pandemic has caused significant change. As we coped with the epidemic's impact, we've had to adjust not only how we operate, but how we interact with students and each other. Being mindful of their needs during this extraordinary time, we had to change our communication strategies to remain adaptable, flexible, and understanding of the fears, uncertainty, and constantly changing circumstances.

Promotional strategies were adjusted to create an image of positivity, safety, and reliability around the institution.

We faced a new internal communications challenge of how to keep a fully remote workforce and education system engaged and motivated during a period of extended home isolation. Many programs and services increased their offerings to meet the challenges, which required a substantial increase in the need for communications.

Every communication technology tool available was utilized to inform employees and students about COVID-19 prevention measures, resources, policies, and procedures.

All of this led to a new communication challenge...information overload and an "infodemic" of misinformation, differing opinions, and conspiracy theories that contribute to confusion, and increase anxiety and stress. A strategy to keep information concise, thorough, and quick to read and process was intentionally executed to improve the effectiveness of communications.

While the immediate focus was on navigating through COVID-19, we still needed to consider continuity and the restoration of "normal."

Outcomes Assessment: Results of Last Year's Assessments

The past year has truly been "business unusual". The pandemic completely changed the way we interact with one another on a daily basis, and required everyone to be adaptable, flexible, and creative. It also presented an unanticipated increase in the need for communication, marketing, and endless meetings to adapt to the continually changing conditions.

Challenging the concept of "best practices" in the areas of public relations, marketing, and advancement...fear, confusion, and information overload now created a negative environment filled with tremendous uncertainty. The mission remained the same...increase brand awareness among prospective students, parents, families, current students, and alumni. Progress in promoting Cerro Coso Community College as a leader in higher education became almost secondary to how to navigate the changing circumstances. Promotional strategies were adjusted to create an image of positivity, safety, and reliability around the institution.

Followers are up on all forms of social media, including 5.72% on Facebook and Instagram is up 45%.

Target Met?

Yes

A comprehensive website survey provided valuable information leading the charge in immediate changes to the existing website and the design of a new website for the college that is useful, easy to navigate, uncluttered, easy to find, and meets its purpose.

Target Met?

Yes

The earthquakes of 2019 followed by the ongoing pandemic of 2020 have completely changed the Foundation's need and strategies for moving fundraising efforts into a virtual environment. Not for a lack of trying, this proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The Foundation altered its plan of action implementing a communication's strategy that emphasized, mission, immediate need (coyote cupboard, promise), and personal success stories. While effective to some extent, fundraising during times of change and uncertainty is hard.

Foundation assets have decreased 9.4% over the past year resulting in the decision to leave the current Foundation manager position vacant. The Foundation lost two full-time positions in 2019/2020. This will result in an increase to the workload of the existing Director.

Employee Giving is down 16% over the previous year due to the retirement of some major donors. Donations to the Foundation were down 68.77% and came to \$71,369 for 2020/2021. This drastic drop is due to the uncertainty of the pandemic and restrictions on group gatherings that prevented major fundraiser both for the Foundation and athletics.

Target Met?

No

The department did meet its goal to increase scholarship awards to students. Scholarship awards by the Foundation were up 8.21% providing more than \$87,800 in cash awards to students. There still remains concerns with the way the scholarship system is matching students to qualified scholarships that needs to be addressed and will be a goal for next year.

Target Met?

Yes

Outcomes Assessment: Missed Targets

Develop a sustainable funding source for the Cerro Coso Promise

Type:

AUO

Target Missed/Gap Detected:

100%

Type of Gap:

Other (explain in Analysis).

Analysis and Plan for Improvement:

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anticipated. The Foundation altered its plan of action implementing a communication's strategy that emphasized mission, immediate need (coyote cupboard, promise), and personal success stories. While effective to some extent, fundraising during times of uncertainty is difficult.

The Foundation is anxious to re-engage in-person efforts with smaller more targeted efforts.

This is an ongoing initiative until the \$3M endowment goal of the Foundation's is reached.

- Reinstate President's Circle
- Implement a capital campaign
- Increase Alumni Relation engagement and activities

Anticipated Semester for Implementing Planned Improvements:

Ongoing

Anticipated Semester of Next Assessment:

Fall 2022

Outcomes Assessment: Schedule of This Year's Assessments

Develop a way to measure the effectiveness of our print advertising campaigns to determine key performance indicators like our marketing return on investment (ROI).

Establish a Marketing Team/Committee to develop a Strategic Marketing Implementation Plan.

Increase Foundation donations by 5%.

Conduct a systematic evaluation of the scholarship program to include the review of: Processing of applications, Scholarship Software Management System, Individual scholarship criteria, administration and distribution processes

Program Review

Public Internal/External Relations

Year of Last Program Review:

2015

Actions Taken in the Prior Year to Address Strategies:

While many of the department's goals were derailed by the earthquakes of 2019 and ongoing pandemic of 2020, progress has been made in meeting the department's 3 and 5 year goals.

Three-Year Department Goals

Improving internal processes and providing consistency throughout the college service area will ensure improvements to institutional effectiveness, and department practices.

- Redevelop an active alumni program that will increase Cerro Coso's standing as a college of first choice leading to increased enrollments, improved brand promise, and provide valuable human, fiscal, cultural, and physical resources. The college public relations, marketing, and development manager will be responsible for overseeing the development of an active alumni program.
 - The Alumni Associate was developed, a board in place, and goals were being discussed. The group has not met

- since the stay-at-home orders were lifted in June of 2021. Program director will get this group re-engaged.
- Lead CCCC Foundation planning efforts to support college goals, objectives, and strategies. The Advancement Director is responsible for leading foundation planning efforts and will assist the foundation in meeting its three year goals.
 - Improvements have been made. Current goals include increasing membership on the board with representatives from all service area locations. And, increase fundraising efforts.
- Conduct a website user survey and make improvements to the college website improving the user experience. The public relations, marketing, and development manager will work with the web content editor to accomplish this goal by fall 2016.
 - Completed in 2016 and again in 2020.

Six-Year Department Goals:

- Develop, maintain, and continually renew the financial resources necessary to sustain the engagement of alumni in the life of the college to the benefit of the college. Department manager will work with the alumni board to accomplish this goal over the next six years.
- Strengthen the reputation of Cerro Coso Community College and enhance its visibility through new and existing media channels including the development of a common college application that engages students in planning, applying, and interacting with the college on handheld devices.
 - This goal was accomplished through the Navigate App launched by Student Services.
 - Designing a new website that will provide a better mobile experience.

Strategies Still to be Addressed:

- Identify and develop useful measures and metrics for evaluating the department's effectiveness and efficiency. The college public relations, marketing, and development manager will be responsible for ascertaining and implementation of measure and metrics.
 - This will be a task of a Marketing Committee in developing a Strategic Marketing Implementation Plan.
- Develop a viable college marketing plan that guides the promotion and growth of the institution.
 - Also a task of the Marketing Committee

Last Year's Initiatives

Lead Foundation efforts in developing a sustainable funding source for the Cerro Coso Promise

Fundraising continued to be very difficult following the earthquakes of 2019 and ongoing pandemic of 2021. The uncertainty of the pandemic and restrictions on group gatherings prevented major fundraiser both for the Foundation, athletics, alumni, and other auxiliary groups.

As a result of the changing conditions the President's Circle was suspended for the time being and fundraising efforts were modified to a communications strategy that focused on immediate need (coyote cupboard, Promise) sought to keep audiences informed and engaged.

This will continue to be an ongoing department initiative.

Improve Marketing Communications with Faculty

Some progress has been made on this initiative.

- A presentation was made during Faculty Flex Day Training on "How to Market Your Programs and Classes"
- Attended a Faculty Chair meeting to discuss specific marketing needs

Improve connections with our communities through storytelling

Good progress has been made in soliciting stories and sharing those stories with our many audiences. A 10-hour a week student interviewed and wrote many stories from the student perspective that caught the attention of the media.

Reminder of Initiatives for the Current Year

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Lead Foundation efforts in developing a sustainable funding source for the Cerro Coso Promise

Increase Scholarship Awards to Students

Plan Initiatives for Next Year

Initiatives for Next Academic Year

Establish a Marketing Team

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

No

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

- Present need for Marketing Team to College Council
- Team charge, goals, initiatives, strategies, and metrics established
- Team formed

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s):

- Team Established
- Team charge, goals, initiatives, strategies, and metrics established

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

Yes

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s):

- Representative participation in marketing efforts
- Team goals established
- Strategies for marketing implementation formed
- Metrics for evaluating marketing effectiveness developed
- Marketing plans implemented

Person Responsible:

Director of Public Relations and Institutional Advancement

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy, It addresses a Strategic Plan goal or objective

Increase Foundation Fundraising income by 20%

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

Yes

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

Fundraising has been difficult following the earthquakes of 2019 and ongoing pandemic of 2021.

- Increase fundraising efforts starting with four smaller fundraisers
- Reinstate major fundraisers like Star Party
- Increase donations by 20% over 2 year period

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s):

- Fundraising events executed
- Donations increase by 20% over 2 year period

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

Yes

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s):

Survey assistance will help evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.

Person Responsible:

Director of Public Relations and Institutional Advancement

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

It addresses a 2- or 5- year program review strategy, It addresses a gap in outcomes assessment

50th Anniversary Implementation

Is this part of a multiyear initiative?

No

Specific Action Steps to be Taken:

- Team established
- Anniversary plans and strategies developed
- Plan executed to celebrate College's 50th Anniversary

Early Observational Data, or "Lead" Measure(s):

- Anniversary plan executed

Does the department request help developing these instruments?

Yes

Institutional Performance Data, or "Lag" Measure(s):

Assistance in developing surveys and metrics for all activities.

Person Responsible:

Director of Public Relations and Institutional Advancement

Unit gap or institutional goals addressed:

Other. Explain below

New - 50th Anniversary Celebration

Evaluate Resource Needs

Facilities

None.

Information Technology

None anticipated.

Marketing

Increase gas by \$10 per campus

- Increase in gas prices

Increase IWV Marketing/Advertising Budget by \$10,000

- Convert all black and white ads to full color cost increase of 20%
- Create two promotional videos a year (outsourced)

Increase IWV Sponsorships by \$1,000

- Sponsorships in Movie Theaters and Little League

Increase paper budget to Tehachapi by \$5,000

- Based on budget augmentations for ISEP program and new printer at the Tehachapi campus

Professional Development

Continue to attend CASE Conference in the fall and CCPRO in the spring.

Other Needs

None.

Staffing Requests

1000 Category - Certificated Positions

2000 Category - Classified Staff

Institutional Advancement

Location:

Ridgecrest/IWV

Salary Grade:

Number of Months:

Number of Hours per Week:

Salary Amount:

Justification:

Staffing of this department needs to be evaluated as the Foundation recently lost two full-time positions in the last year. Two people can only do so much. Recommend reviewing when Director retires at the end of 2022.