



University Advancement
Public Relations

Program Review

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Executive Summary

Purpose:

The purpose of this program review was to examine the Public Relations Office at the University of La Verne, to describe the work and capacity of the staff as a whole to carry out the mission and to identify its effectiveness, including areas of strength as well as challenges.

Mission:

The mission is to manage the university's message, image, communications and outreach relating to the excellence and achievements of its students, faculty, staff, projects and programs as well as provide support to faculty research and generate awareness and advocacy among key constituencies whose support is essential if the university is to attract the human and financial support required to achieve its goals.

Goals from 2007 Strategic Plan

- ❖ Generate news stories and maximize positive media coverage
- ❖ Conduct a program of external strategic communications via mail, publications, email and Web to reach targeted audiences
- ❖ Conduct a program of internal strategic communications via mail, publications, email and Web to reach university employees
- ❖ Enhance La Verne's visibility locally, regionally and nationally, utilizing a variety of communications resources and tools by promoting faculty research.

New Goals for 2012

- ❖ Position the University of La Verne as a national leader among mid-sized independent universities serving diverse populations
- ❖ Maximize use of traditional, new, and social media to generate awareness and appreciation of the university's programs and the achievements of its personnel
- ❖ Strengthen the university community by implementing consistent internal communications
- ❖ Ensure that external and internal audiences share a common understanding of the university by working in close collaboration with Enrollment and Marketing
- ❖ Strengthen relationships with off-campus communities whose support will advance mutual goals
- ❖ Track and manage issues that affect the university community
- ❖ Establish an annual strategic communications plan with key stakeholders and track quantifiable results in monthly reports

Indicators

The data used in this review involved direct, comparative measures of trend information regarding how public relations offices are run at similarly-aligned institutions, as well as work produced, such as press releases, story counts web page views, print publications and video production. In this manner, comparisons with national data and benchmarking were made possible. Also, focus groups were held to incorporate a variety of university audiences on how the Public Relations Office is perceived. In addition, a higher education public relations expert was contracted to help assess the effectiveness of the Public Relations Office and to provide his observations of how the Office is received by key university stakeholders.

Highlights of Findings

- ❖ The focus of media relations has expanded in the past year, working to better utilize regional and national media to help create a stronger state/national perspective of the university. As a result, in 2011-12, the Public Relations Office placed 127 media stories in regional publications, with 16 of those being considered national publications.
- ❖ There has been a glaring discrepancy between the University of La Verne and most other colleges and universities — at both the local and national levels — in printed publications, especially the university magazine.
- ❖ There is a need to expand the capacity and frequency of the printed VOICE Magazine to deliver non-solicitation communication pieces to our constituency at quarterly intervals.
- ❖ Focus group responses were generally positive and respondents praised the Public Relations Office for its use of a variety of media to project a positive message of the university to its constituency. Two of the three focus groups held mentioned the VOICE Magazine as a positive vehicle for university news and information.
- ❖ The addition of a social media program, featuring active Twitter accounts for @ULaVerneNews and @PresLieberman plus six staff Twitter accounts launched in November 2011, has opened the door to a whole new way for the department to communicate. To date, @ULaVerneNews has attracted 581 followers, while @PresLieberman has 645 followers.
- ❖ Focus Group responses clearly demonstrated a general ignorance about the work of the Public Relations office among faculty, staff and students, and a need for education about PR's role and responsibilities — particularly in differentiating PR from Marketing, Web Services and the Campus Times.
- ❖ The Public Relations Office needs to develop and launch a searchable online faculty experts guide.
- ❖ There is a need for clarification among campus community stakeholders regarding the roles and responsibilities of both marketing and public relations. Increased collaboration is critical for the two departments to ensure the university is consistently represented.

I. PURPOSE AND MISSION

Purpose:

The purpose of this program review is to examine the Public Relations program at the University of La Verne; to describe how the program is currently conducted; to evaluate the capacity of the Public Relations Office to carry out its mission; to identify areas of strength; to identify areas for development; and to form action recommendations meeting the emerging needs of a university seeking national recognition.

Mission:

Its mission is to manage the university's message, image, communications and outreach relating to the excellence and achievements of its students, faculty, staff, projects and programs as well as provide support to faculty research and generate awareness and advocacy among key constituencies whose support is essential if the university is to attract the human and financial support required to achieve its goals.

II. GOALS FROM 2007 STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Generate news stories and maximize positive media coverage, especially as it reflects institutional excellence, the vision and mission of the university, and La Verne's commitment to diversity and sustainability.
2. Conduct a program of strategic communications via mail, publications, email and Web, to reach university alumni, parents, friends, donors, parents of enrolled students, opinion leaders in education and government, the local community and the general public. The combined effort of these communications will deliver focused messages promoting awareness, name recognition and pride in institutional excellence.
3. Conduct a program of strategic communications via mail, publications, email and Web, to reach university employees, with focused messages promoting understanding of university initiatives and pride in institutional excellence.
4. Promote academic excellence and faculty research through development and implementation of programs to enhance La Verne's prominence, visibility, name recognition and reputation locally, regionally, and nationally, including providing content for Web site through effective use of images, video, and other forms of electronic communication, and establishing an online faculty experts guide.

New Goals for 2012

- ❖ Position the University of La Verne as a national leader among mid-sized independent universities serving diverse populations to help work to increase awareness of our campus community, our faculty/staff and students.

- ❖ Maximize use of traditional, new, and social media to generate awareness and appreciation of the university's programs and the achievements of its personnel.
- ❖ Strengthen the university community by implementing consistent internal communications to improve the current model and build collaboration among all campus community stakeholders.
- ❖ Ensure that external and internal audiences share a common understanding of the university by working in close collaboration with Enrollment and Marketing.
- ❖ Strengthen relationships with off-campus communities, whose support will advance mutual goals, helping increase collaboration and partnerships.
- ❖ Track and manage issues that affect the university community and work to identify our areas of expertise to help build the university's presence.
- ❖ Establish an annual strategic communications plan with key stakeholders and track quantifiable results in monthly reports to help improve communication of roles/responsibilities/results.

III. DESCRIPTION AND CAPACITY OF THE PROGRAM

The “Description and Capacity” section of this review is organized to describe (a) how the Public Relations program was conducted based on the 2007 Advancement Strategic Plan and (b) how the program expanded through the presidential transition in 2011 and under the leadership of the new president who assumed office in July 2011. The subsequent sections discuss Findings, Recommendations, Action Recommendations and Action Plans, including revised Goals and Objectives for the Public Relations program.

Description

The Public Relations office performs a critical function of evaluating public attitudes; identifies the mission and program and procedures of an organization with the public interest; and executes a program of action to earn public recognition.

At the University of La Verne, the Public Relations Office operates as part of the University Advancement Division within the institution's organizational structure. Through effective and efficient communications, it evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of the organization with the public interest, and executes a program of action to obtain attention, understanding and acceptance.

When seeking to measure and define public opinion, image is vital. As it involves public appearance, the university's image, presentation and packaging are just as essential as content. The consistent communication of image is a prime component of all public relations efforts.

Concurrently, the public relations office seeks to enhance reputation and increase recognition. It establishes relationships, cooperation and interdependence with media outlets and opinion leaders. This differs fundamentally from marketing, which, working within a defined marketplace, targets consumers with paid communications. Where the value of marketing comes

from persuasion resulting in increased demand, the value of public relations is derived from consistent and transparent messaging.

Alumni and donors are among the key constituencies served. Alumni are the single largest group with which the university and PR department have direct contact. Two-thirds of donors are alumni. Reflecting the five “I’s” of the traditional major gift “cultivation cycle” — Identify, Inform, Interest, Involve, Invest — the print and electronic communications program of the PR Office serves to Inform and Interest these constituents, and in the many cases where PR is in contact with alumni to develop stories, it is meaningfully Involved with these people. The PR Office thereby plays a critical part in setting the stage for their becoming further Involved and Investing in the institution.

Public Relations develops effective communications to expand awareness and appreciation of the university by those publics on whose support La Verne depends to fulfill its mission. It utilizes print and electronic communications; builds local, regional and national media relations; collaborates with Marketing, Alumni, Development, Sports Information and other offices; and it advises the president and senior administration on public relations issues.

Capacity

Press Releases: A press release is a document that disseminates information about the university to media. Generally, it is an invitation and even a solicitation to media to present positive publicity about the university to the public. Since the hiring of the Assistant Director, Media Relations, press release activity has doubled. The department is on pace to send out 64 press releases for the year. In addition, the department has placed four Op/Ed pieces since September, compared to one the previous year. The University has been the subject of two national stories and three Tweets on national Twitter accounts.

Story Count: Story count is a running total of the number of news and feature accounts of university personnel, news and events generated by the Public Relations office and published in print and via electronic communication. The ***VOICE Online*** is on pace to double its story count from the previous year, averaging seven stories per month (compared with three per month the previous year). There has also been a 40 percent increase in stories/features posted to La Verne News, which is on pace to post 98 stories in FY2011-2012.

Web Page Views: A page view is an accounting of a web page being viewed at an individual computer or other device, such as cell phone. This number has skyrocketed, from 94,438 in FY/2010-2011 to 220,879 in FY/2011-2012. Most notable is the jump from 32,610 views to 71,383 on the News site. In addition, page views on the ***VOICE Online*** have nearly doubled (15,000 to 26,276) and the Advancement site has had an increase in views from 51,057 to 83,223 in one year.

Print Publications: The Public Relations Office conceptualizes, designs and has materials about the university printed for distribution to its constituency. In addition to designing and producing announcements, invitations and programs for the Presidential Inauguration from July through October, Public Relations produced a Summer/Fall issue of the ***VOICE*** magazine and then, in the spring, created ***The La Verne Report***, a 64-page book about the university.

Video Production: With the acquisition of video recording equipment, the Public Relations Office expanded its capabilities to record various events and capture interviews for electronic dissemination. Public Relations created 10 videos during FY2011-2012.

Twitter: Twitter provides brief, immediate bursts of information through electronic devices – mostly smart phone-type devices – and is a popular way for people to follow the news and events of the university. Twitter accounts for *@ULaVerneNews* and *@PresLieberman*, plus six staff Twitter accounts, were launched in November 2011. To date, *@ULVNewsSpot* has attracted 645 followers; *@PresLieberman* has 581 followers.

A.) PERSONNEL AND SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS

The Public Relations Office made extraordinary strides during the previous 10 years, accomplishing much with only a two-person staff. This two-person staff alone generated publicity and disseminated information for the university’s five-year, \$42 million “Building On Excellence” capital campaign. Public Relations even produced images for fundraising and donor naming opportunities because there were no architectural drawings available. From 2004 through June 2011, this two-person staff consisted of:

The **Director of Public Relations**, who handled budget, project coordination, division of duties and overall effectiveness and efficiency. His primary objective was to position the university as an institution of recognized academic excellence. He also developed and managed a strategic, targeted communications plan to strengthen the university image and increase visibility; maintained media relationship continuity and served as liaison between media and the institution; supported university advancement efforts through communications and publications; managed all university crisis communications efforts; served as primary official university spokesperson. Direct report to Vice President of University Advancement.

The **Associate Director of Public Relations** is creative director for all University Advancement printed material; manages production and printing budgets for all publications; is creative director of the university’s printed magazine, VOICE, and e-magazine, VOICE Online; oversees University Advancement, Public Relations Web pages; assists Public Relations Director in all departmental efforts and assumes Public Relations Director responsibilities as needed. Direct report to Director of Public Relations.

In 2010-2011, in order to address the absence of administrative support in the Public Relations Office, the position of Executive Assistant to the Vice President of University Advancement was redefined as Executive Assistant to the Vice President of University Advancement for Donor Stewardship and Public Relations. Approximately 50 percent of the position’s duties are devoted to support Public Relations, including development and maintenance of Web pages for University Advancement, the University President and Public Relations; posting and reviewing Web content (text, images and video); implementation and support of Public Relations and University President Twitter accounts; monitoring Google Analytics for University Advancement, Public Relations and Alumni Relations Web pages; and other varied projects as

needed; maintaining and updating mail lists of news media, elected officials, and U.S. News & World Report universities in our category.

Between July and October 2011, two positions were added:

Assistant Director, Media Relations manages all local, regional and national media relations; develops personal relationships with writers and editors; creates press releases, media advisories, supporting publicity documents, and serves as the university's public spokesperson; develops content and writes for VOICE printed magazine, VOICE Online e-magazine, and University Advancement Web pages; assists Public Relations Director in all departmental efforts and assumes Public Relations Director responsibilities as needed. Direct report to Director of Public Relations.

Public Relations Coordinator, converted from temporary status to regular, full-time, effective July 1, 2012, writes and edits materials for print, online and social media outlets; creates and updates databases for media relations needs; edits and archives photo images for department; tracks, files and organizes all media clips; conducts research for media and department needs; posts dynamic content to university Web site; assists with photo and video shoot scheduling; performs other administrative support duties for Public Relations to ensure accomplishment of daily tasks and overall smooth office operations. Direct report to Interim Director (Assistant Director, Media Relations).

The impact of the addition of 2.5 staff members has been substantial. The **ADMR**, a gifted, seasoned professional selected for the position from a pool of more than 100 applicants, hit the ground running in October 2011 and took over the media-related responsibilities previously held by the Director of P.R. The **Public Relations Coordinator**, hired to help out in various capacities, has emerged as a phenomenal web developer talent and videographer. His work in electronic media has taken some of the workload off the ADPR, who is now focused on print publication and specialized work for events and communications at the presidential and dean's level. The **Assistant to the Vice President for Donor Stewardship and Public Relations** has pioneered the department's foray into the social media realm and has exceeded all expectations. Her hard work and ingenuity spearheaded a brilliant, CASE Award-winning social media campaign.

With the addition of another assistant director, a PR coordinator and the part-time PR work of the executive assistant to the vice president, La Verne compares favorably to other institutions both locally and nationally in the area of staffing. The extensive "Survey of Public Relations Practices in Higher Education" reports a national average of 3.11 full-time positions in PR. A survey of La Verne's neighboring schools revealed that, while La Verne is not overstaffed by any means, it is not desperately understaffed, as was the case until recently.

Staff Dedicated to Public Relations

National Survey Mean, All Colleges & Universities	3.11
Sampling from Survey of Local Colleges & Universities	
Cal Poly Pomona	8
Cal State San Bernardino	8
Cal Lutheran	6
La Verne	4.5
Chapman	4
Whittier	4
Azusa Pacific	2
Biola	2
Redlands	2

Turnover of Personnel

The Public Relations Office enjoyed stability of personnel with no turnover for seven years. Effective June 1, the Director accepted a position in a different department. The Assistant Director, Media Relations was appointed interim director in late June, and it is expected that a national search will produce a new director, at an indeterminate time. The Associate Director of Public Relations has been in the department for eight years; the Assistant Director, Media Relations, is in her first year; the Public Relations Assistant; previously a temporary hire, now has permanent, full-time status. The Assistant to the Vice President for Donor Stewardship and Public Relations has been in the department for two years.

B. Inventory of Basic Equipment as of July 2011

Office space: Each of the full-time permanent Public Relations professionals has an office of adequate size. The PR Coordinator shares a workspace with two others from other departments. There is no room to expand, and there is a definite need for additional positions in PR, so there is a definite need for more office space.

Computers: The Assistant Director, Media Relations, needs an upgrade on her PC, which stumbles at inopportune times with her heavy writing workload.

Storage for image files and backup: Adequate. The additional storage space on a separate server in OIT seems to have resolved this issue. Containers for image CD storage have been purchased and are being utilized.

Computers (Mac Mini) for student workers: Inadequate for image handling and graphics, which would be the primary need for such a computer.

iPad: Interim Director and Associate Director have 1-year-old iPad tablet computers, which are adequate.

Color printer for routine printing: The department has one color inkjet printer. Adequate.

Large format printer: Adequate.

Furniture: Adequate.

Workspace: See OFFICE SPACE above.

Material and equipment: Adequate.

Before June 2012, the Public Relations Office shot images and videos with a single Canon “point-and-shoot” digital camera. Because it is not always cost-effective to hire contract photographers and videographers for each and every campus activity, alumni event and news story opportunity, it was decided that purchasing a Digital SLR camera with both photography and HD-video capabilities, was essential. Upon collaboration with the new Director of Digital Marketing, new photography and video equipment was purchased, prompting plans to produce more-sophisticated media content in-house for the next school year.

C. Operating Budget

During the past two decades, La Verne has not budgeted regularly for the expanding alumni base which increased by 20,000 in the last decade alone. The university has also not increased funding for publications and the rising costs of printing, paper, and postage. The operating budget has never been comparable to budgets at comparable private institutions, which fund multiple university magazines each year, annual reports, neighborhood newsletters, cultural events calendars, donor-only publications, academic journals and various other publications.

Budget Spent on Publication & Distribution of Campus Magazines

National Survey Mean, Private Colleges & Universities	\$116,000
National Survey Mean, All Colleges & Universities with Total Student Enrollment 5,000-9,999	\$101,000
Estimates Derived From Survey Sampling of Local Colleges & Universities	
Chapman	\$350,000
Azusa Pacific	\$302,400
Cal Poly Pomona	\$188,400
Redlands	\$180,000
Biola	\$158,400
Whittier	\$100,000
Cal Lutheran	\$ 90,000
La Verne	\$ 86,000
Cal State San Bernardino	\$ 62,400

As a result, VOICE production the past decade has been reduced from four issues to three issues to two issues to one issue, annually. The office has been unable to mail VOICE to parents or non-donor “friends.” The President’s “State of the University” report and direct mail updates/news/announcements to alumni and donors were eliminated. Other proposed publications (cultural events calendar, annual report, newsletters supporting academic colleges) have not been funded. By 2010-11, the office’s budget covered only enough for a single 24-page issue of the university magazine, plus \$7,000 for all other operating costs, most of which was devoted to a modest amount of freelance writing and photography.

While there have been increases to the Public Relations Office budget during the past two university financial cycles, the office remains inadequately funded to meet increasing demands. As university leadership acknowledged the lack of resources afforded Public Relations, three supplemental allocations of \$50,000 to \$80,000 each were made in a 15-month span up through 2010-11. That supplemental funding supported additional photography and video; development of VOICE Online; the announcement of the new President with a mailing to all external constituencies, Web page, online stories, images, and video; the beginning of an initiative for national visibility, and one additional issue of the VOICE. However, these one-time allocations did not solve the underlying problem of inadequate budgeting for normal operations.

The Public Relations Office has responded to limited resources, and new opportunities afforded by advances in technology, by expanding electronic communication via the Web and social media, especially after 2010, when the office was given authority to create and post content to its own Web pages. The Advancement Web pages and President’s Web pages have hundreds of images, eight videos; two blogs; the VOICE online posts new content weekly, and monthly blast e-mails drive alumni to these sites. However, all of these programs need to be more robust. Limited support for writing and photography has restricted development of more informational pieces and the creation of vital dynamic content.

The funding situation was significantly addressed in the 2011-12 budget approved by the Trustees, which included an investment in University Advancement infrastructure. As mentioned above, one new Administrative/Professional position within Public Relations – Assistant Director, Media Relations – was established and filled. A second staff position – Public Relations Coordinator – was also approved. Though that position had temporary status initially, it has recently been re-classified as permanent full-time. The Assistant to the Vice President is budgeted for 50 percent of wages from PR.

Additionally, requests by the university’s new president for new informational resources, including an institutional report, were not accompanied by funding to cover costs. In order to produce the institutional report, it was determined the budget originally earmarked for the scheduled second issue of VOICE magazine would be utilized for a new publication, The La Verne Report.

It was revealed in our survey of neighboring schools that La Verne lags behind most when it comes to publication of additional books, magazines, reports and other informational pieces.

Local College & University Survey, Additional Printed Publications

School	Annual Report	Cultural Events Calendar	Other
Azusa Pacific	Yes	Yes	Various
Biola	No	N/R	4 Academic Journals
Cal Lutheran	No	Yes	Quick Facts
Cal Poly Pomona	Yes	No	Various
Cal State San Bernardino	Yes	No	Various
Chapman	No	No	Various
Redlands	Yes	Yes	Various
Whittier	Yes	No	Various
La Verne	No	No	Various

Without budget for additional publications, as well as new software and equipment to effectively and efficiently meet the expanding demands on Public Relations, it will not be possible to implement the breadth of programs or attain the scope of attention and coverage aspired to by the administration.

Administrative Support Programs

Budget

A three-year program of budget development and staffing was developed as part of the Kaludis Consulting report on Investment in Advancement completed in February 2011. Recommendations included adding three staff members in Public Relations and increasing the operational budget by \$332,000 over three years. Hiring the two new positions mentioned above, effective in 2011-12, was a direct result of these recommendations. In addition, budget was added for the publication of a second issue of the VOICE magazine, and funding was augmented for freelance writing and photography.

Staff recruitment, training and retention programs

- ❖ In hiring, the standard university recruitment process has been supplemented through utilization of the Director's and Associate Director's networks of personal and professional contacts.
- ❖ Budget constraints allowed for only limited professional training in the use of software. Some additional training was provided by the former Director of Digital Communications.
- ❖

Resource Management

- ❖ At least two bids are sought for every print job
- ❖ In-house, large-format printer allows printing of posters and enlargements for use at special events, at a fraction of the cost of an external vendor
- ❖ Electronic communication is used wherever possible to reduce printing and mailing costs
- ❖ Close budget management is ongoing and reviewed by Associate VP

Professional Development

- ❖ Membership in Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)
- ❖ Providing opportunities to attend professional workshops and symposia offered by established organizations including the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), and Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (AICCU) and the National Council of Independent Colleges (NCIC) Summer Conference.
- ❖ Providing opportunities to participate in Online Webinars involving discussions on work-related issues and technology advancements.
- ❖ Approving individual instruction for both existing and new methods of communication, media relations and technology advancements.

D. Media Relations

A critical component of the Public Relations Office is Media Relations. Designed to help emphasize the “public” in public relations, Media Relations works to establish, promote and retain a positive image of the university and put its “best foot forward” in regard to internal and external audiences, utilizing local, regional and national media outlets.

From 2007 through early 2011, Media Relations focused primarily on reaching local media outlets to tell La Verne stories. Op-Eds were occasionally placed regionally. Under the leadership of the university’s new president in the past year, the path and purpose of media relations has shifted and expanded to go beyond targeting local media outlets to using regional and national media in helping to establish a stronger state and nationwide presence for La Verne.

Currently, Media Relations has two areas of primary focus – to improve (and in some cases, build) its internal relationships among the campus community (administrators, faculty and staff) and to do this while thinking big-picture. The aim is to match what is happening at the university with regional and national higher education trends. In order to effectively achieve this aim, a strong collaborative relationship between Media Relations and the campus community must be established and encouraged. The only way to successfully pitch university stories is for campus community members to share information with the Public Relations Office.

Press Releases Issued Per Week, Average

National Survey Mean, All Colleges & Universities	2.09
Sampling from Survey of Local Colleges & Universities	
Cal Poly Pomona	7
Redlands	4-10
Cal State San Bernardino	5-8
Cal Lutheran	4
La Verne	2-5
Azusa Pacific	2-3
Chapman	3-5
Biola	1
Whittier	NR

Traditional and New Media

Targeting media is a critical element to any public relations plan as media are powerful in shaping perception. For that reason, it is vital to build positive relationships – internally and with journalists – to achieve more informed, positive reporting about the university. Such relationships will also build trust and can affect how potentially negative news stories are reported. Media Relations uses traditional media and new media as tools to tell the university’s stories. Traditional public relations elements include developing press releases and press kits that are distributed to media to generate interest. Brochures, newsletters and annual reports are also employed.

As the newspaper industry contracts, the use of interactive social media has increased. Social media outlets allow the organization to engage in two-way communication and receive immediate feedback from various stakeholders. To this end, the Public Relations and Media Relations staff utilizes new technology facets such as Facebook and Twitter. Alumni Relations established a Facebook presence approximately 2007; in 2011 Public Relations launched an official Twitter program, which includes @ULaVerneNews – the official Twitter account of Public Relations, and support for @PresLieberman, who is very active on Twitter. In addition, all PR staff members engage in tweeting on their own Twitter accounts. Stories, images and video on the Advancement and President’s web pages convey important background to media; and the VOICE Online carries updates several times per week.

Media Relations is also strategic in its distribution of information to media using traditional and new methods. Press releases are not used for every media happening and instance. It is more effective in most cases for a media relations professional to call a reporter with whom there is strong rapport and inform the reporter of an upcoming story of interest. Press releases must be developed strategically and meet a defined purpose. It is important to recognize that the raw number of press releases distributed has little impact on the amount of press coverage an

institution receives. Public relations professionals have no control over what media decide to cover, publish, and/or feature. Too many press releases can result in a critical contact ignoring correspondence from the public relations professional and can serve to lessen the impact and effectiveness of information dissemination.

Media Pitching

Media Relations staff send press materials to updated media lists on a daily, weekly and monthly basis, as appropriate for both the story and the targeted media. With the hiring of the Assistant Director, Media Relations, the office now has an experienced staff member to pitch Spanish-language media.

Proactive and Reactive Media Relations

In an effort to portray the university in a positive light at all times, the media relations staff work to be both proactive and reactive as needed to meet media outlet inquiries and requests.

Proactively, we work to:

Know Our Media

- ❖ Focus on message development and target key media on relevant issues.
- ❖ Develop a strong relationship with key journalists – this will build trust and establish better understanding of what stories interest them and find out how they prefer to receive press releases and briefings.
- ❖ Be helpful – be prepared to provide a university angle on local, regional and national stories and offer a faculty member or administrator for media interviews as needed.

Plan Ahead

- ❖ Work to regularly develop positive stories that affect real people.
- ❖ Encourage faculty to share their successes.
- ❖ Create a media calendar to ensure there are no internal conflicts, remain prepared for potentially negative stories, and seek to have a list of stories at ready to rotate/pitch for positive press.

Reactively, we work to:

Be Effective

- ❖ Respond to the journalist in full by deadline
- ❖ Be helpful, polite and positive
- ❖ Avoid saying ‘no comment,’ as this can sound as if the university has something to hide
- ❖ Build a set of university “experts” who can brief journalists directly, ensuring the appropriate university spokesperson is available for interview and is fully briefed
- ❖ Make sure all university stakeholders are aware of media guidelines and media protocol
- ❖ Organize facts and figures and background information for big stories
- ❖ Media Relations is also responsible to handle any form of crisis management/communications and spokesperson training as well as media tracking for any clips. This role at La Verne is critical to increasing awareness of the university’s

academic excellence and highlighting the programs and people who make up its exceptional learning community.

E. Print Publications

Public Relations-Produced Print Material

Print publications represent a major component of a Public Relations/Communications program.

Production of printed materials gives the Public Relations Office the opportunity to present the image of the university, as well as the message the university wishes to project, in a way that cannot be matched electronically. According to new research conducted by Harris Interactive and reported at whattheythink.com, the majority of U.S. adults think that printed media is easier to read than the digital equivalent. Interestingly, most adults reported that they feel more comfortable when they have something on paper than when it's on screen, suggesting that we make an instinctive association between things we can touch and feel and things that are 'real.'

Among six private and two public institutions surveyed in Southern California, most programs include a university magazine, published at least three times per year; a report to donors; some form of an annual report. Additionally, a few produce such publications as academic journals, quick facts, cultural events calendar, neighborhood newsletters and newsletters supplemental to the university magazine.

At La Verne, nearly the entire Public Relations operational budget has in recent years been devoted to production of the university magazine, VOICE, which, though underfunded and sporadically published, is nonetheless the institution's most compelling and popular communications piece.

The VOICE is a calling card for advancement, marketing and admissions — and, occasionally, administration. Competition for fundraising dollars today in higher education — especially at smaller, private institutions such as the University of La Verne that rely heavily on donors — continues to underscore the demand for printed materials, which is as strong as ever.

There have been four primary areas of focus within the university's advancement office requiring print publications:

- ❖ Donation solicitation
- ❖ Alumni communication
- ❖ Events
- ❖ Image enhancement

Unlike magazines at other local colleges to which La Verne compares itself, the VOICE has been published only once per year in three of the past four years. Whittier, Redlands and Pomona College publish a university magazine three times per year; Chapman, Azusa Pacific, Cal Poly Pomona, UC Riverside and USC all produce and distribute a magazine four times per year.

In addition, reduced budget has shrunk the page count of the VOICE from 36 pages to 24 pages. While that size is comparable to the Cal Poly and Azusa Pacific magazines, the VOICE has most recently been published only once per year. Publications at Chapman, Pomona, Pitzer and Redlands have twice the page count; UC Riverside, Whittier, USC and Pepperdine magazines are three-times the size of the VOICE.

With the allotted budget, in recent years Public Relations has produced one run of 60,000 copies of the VOICE. Most are mailed to alumni; any leftover copies are distributed to donors, potential donors, prospective students, media, and groups of visitors to campus to provide a snapshot of and showcase the excellence of the university, which is the magazine's *raison d'être*.

In April, a committee was formed to determine if there was a way, with minimal budget increase, to produce in the coming year and distribute to all 60,000 in our constituency:

- ❖ Two issues of the Voice
- ❖ One Honor Roll of Donors
- ❖ One Annual Report

The Honor Roll is a publication of Annual Giving; the Annual Report is a new publication. Through investigation into printing practices and postal regulations, the Associate Director of Public Relations (who was committee chair) discovered a way to produce four issues of the VOICE — one of them a special Honor Roll Issue and one a special Annual Report Issue. By producing four issues, the magazine attains periodical status and will be exempt from sales tax. That alone will save more than \$20,000. The university was willing to add budget for production of an annual report and additional issue of the Voice; however, it was determined that only a small fraction of that supplement — if any — will be required to fulfill quarterly publication requirement. Delivering the university magazine four times annually immediately raises the university's profile and gives La Verne a vehicle for providing alumni and friends a high-quality communications piece every three months.

Advancement Applications

According to "Survey of Public Relations Practices in Higher Education," 78.05 percent of the colleges employ a graphic artist to create layouts and designs for promotional material. Additionally, 58.54 percent of colleges employ an editor who generates content for and manages college publications, including 68.42 percent of private schools. The combined salary for these two positions approaches \$100,000. At La Verne, the Associate Director of Public Relations fills both of these positions, plus writing, photo editing, management, online magazine publishing and other specialized communications. The value is evident, as it allows the department to produce its own printed materials at a fraction of the cost and in a fraction of the time that outsourcing would require.

Publications such as the VOICE, Honor Roll of Donors, and Annual Report keep alumni connected to their alma mater, and strengthen their positive image of the university. They are thus more inclined to be active and engaged supporters of the university, as donors and as those helping to perpetuate tradition and school spirit.

Perhaps no aspect of University Advancement relies more heavily on printed materials than events. There are save-the-date cards, announcement pieces, invitation packages (most include a printed RSVP card to be returned), event programs and various other pieces required, and expected to be produced, for events.

Hundreds of pieces have been created in-house with same-day turnaround, but also were customized, one-off pieces that were (and still are) used strategically in fundraising. This proved to be especially effective during the university's \$42 million "Building On Excellence" campaign. During this time, development directors attempting to solicit donations were desperate for presentation materials, but official renderings were not available from the architects until late in the campaign. This called for creativity and imagination in producing vital fundraising materials, which Public Relations was able to supply.

During most of the period from 2004-2011, the majority of print pieces utilized by Alumni Relations, Annual Giving, and Special Events were designed by the Associate Director of Public Relations. In the 2010-2011 academic year, a significant shift was made in which the Associate Director took on major responsibility for new content on the Advancement Web site, and launched VOICE Online magazine. Accordingly, Alumni Relations, Annual Giving, and Special Events were asked to outsource more of their publications.

While some divisions within University Advancement have outsourced production of some materials, the bulk of the department's important print materials are still created by Public Relations. Daily familiarity with departmental goals and strategies, coupled with the technical capabilities to turn those ideas into printed materials provides an effectiveness that is unmatched. One of the most valuable aspects of this — and one consistent with the president's "One University" concept — has been in effect for years with the attention to branding and consistency in the look and feel of these university materials. It has been said that those who receive university publications regularly can tell at a glance when a printed piece has been created by the PR Office.

F.) Electronic Communications: Web, Email, Social Media

If Facebook were a country, it would be the world's third largest and twice the size of the U.S. population.* The convergence of information with the World Wide Web, catapulted by social media, is a phenomenon affecting every sector, every entity and every person. As professionals working in higher education, the Public Relations Office's role in University Advancement is continuously evolving to understand and put into practice new electronic tools and techniques to better serve the University on a social, academic and fiscal scale.

Web

The Public Relations Office has never had control or responsibility for the university's Web site — only for University Advancement's pages. Responsibility for the Web site originally lay in OIT and several years ago shifted to the Marketing Department. Both of these are common models at other universities, as is the model wherein the Public Relations Office handles the university Web site.

Local College & University Survey, Public Relations Online Features

School	Web Page Responsibility	Online Magazine	Online Alumni Newsletter	Experts Guide	Blog
Azusa Pacific	Media Relations	Yes	N/R	Yes	Yes
Biola	University	N/R	N/R	Yes	Yes
Cal Lutheran	Most Univ. pages	Yes	No	Yes	No
Cal Poly Pomona	Home/Division	No	Yes	Yes	No
CS San Bernardino	Home/Division News/Magazine Blogs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Chapman	None	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Redlands	University	Yes	No	Yes	No
Whittier	University	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
La Verne	PR/UA/President News	No	Yes	No	No

Prior to summer 2010, and during the Web redesign process of 2008-2009, the Public Relations Office did not have the authority to add its own content or create new web pages and support by the Web Design team in Marketing for Web site development for Advancement was minimal. In summer 2010 the Web Design team gave authority to Advancement, Public Relations and other departments to create and maintain their own Web pages. Training was provided in 2010-11.

Since July 2011, the PR Office has created, and continues to add, new pages and content for at least 14 websites within the university's web page network (See Appendix). The primary function of utilizing Web sites is to communicate the purpose, activities, accomplishments and developments of the University of La Verne with its public (students, prospective students, alumni, staff, faculty, community, nation). Additionally the Web serves as a mode for the University's public to connect with the institution on a personal and interactive level. Allowing visitors to view high quality photos and videos of the President and of students, faculty and staff provides transparency and, hopefully, reflects the University's mission and goals. Consistent and dynamic design elements are employed to enhance the University's professional image and foster positive first impressions of the institution to new visitors.

Email

Utilizing mass emails is not only an efficient and cost-effective mode for directly communicating with the university's public, but the PR Office has employed it to highlight current and pertinent information tailored to a specific group. For example, sending out weekly media reports to senior management helps keep that group current in providing a complete list of links to all media stories pertaining to the University. Email also serves to drive individuals, through links, to the

University's Web site for in-depth content. In addition to raising awareness, email is optimal in providing time-sensitive (breaking) news.

Social Media

Twitter: The La Verne PR Office now uses this evolving area of communication, which is also used by more than half of the Public Relations offices in the country (CASE, 2011), in a variety of ways. Specifically through the use of hash tags, pertinent information can reach a relevant target audience, and promote familiarity. For example, #ULVPeeps was initially created to promote the new university president, but is now also used in general by the university community to share relevant bits of information with each other. It also serves as another mode to drive traffic back to the University's Web sites. Advancement's Facebook program is carried out by Alumni Relations with support from Public Relations. This is consistent with that of peer institutions, all of whom engage in social media, and administer their own Facebook pages.

YouTube: Approximately one-half of the 40 videos currently on the University of La Verne YouTube channel were produced by Public Relations. This social network is the foremost platform for easily uploading and viewing high-quality videos and is ideal for promoting the university's mission, image and values. One example is a "Ride Your Bike to Work Day" video where the President and staff are seen riding bicycles to work, promoting awareness of La Verne's participation in the global effort on sustainability. This medium has also provided a dynamic window to the new president's personality and values. YouTube videos also drive traffic back to La Verne Web sites. The YouTube channel supports branding.

Of the local institutions surveyed, only one Public Relations department among them reports little or no work in electronic/social media. Ironically, that one university is the only one that reports producing podcasts.

It will be important for the Public Relations Office to continue to respond to emerging trends of the Web and social media that will affect higher education in the years to come. Our survey respondents agree. When asked to rank their projected emphasis in communications media for the next three years, some preferred web video and e-mail, some noted social media, some emphasized print. Most, however, were in agreement that communication using all available media continues to be most effective in their messaging efforts.

<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>

IV. EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS

Direct Indicators

Public Relations has produced a sizable jump in communications activity in all areas in FY2011-2012, relative to FY2010-2011. Here are some examples of the tools we have used:

Press Releases: These one-page documents are distributed to specific media to generate media attention to highlight campus happenings, feature stories, etc. Public Relations Office generates approximately six press releases on average per month.

Media Advisories: These are designed to invite media to a campus happening or an event.

Story Count: This is the number of VOICE online articles placed and/or the number of La Verne News stories posted.

Web Page Views: This is the number of views are web pages are receiving from a variety of users on the World Wide Web.

Print Publications: This includes any type of invitation, announcements, brochures, cards and printed VOICE Magazine the PR Office produces for print.

Video Production: Using internal staff at every possibility, the PR Office films, edits and conducts interviews using video.

Indirect Indicators

Public Relations requested a series of focus groups be conducted with various campus stakeholders to provide information to us on how our office is perceived campus wide. The Office also sought out the counsel of John Ross, principal of Ross Writes, to provide us with feedback on his conversations with key stakeholders on campus about the PR Office. Here are some examples:

(From Focus Groups)

- Strengths of the Public Relations program include a student-friendly, student-centered message that is publicized through a variety of media. The image portrayed is one that maintains an aesthetic feel that the university is a small community dominated by close-knit and inclusive relationships that include alumni, current students, faculty, staff and the community.
- One of the weaknesses that Classified employees identified is the lack of training for employees on publicizing events.
- One opportunity that was suggested by a Focus Group was having better and more open communication between Public Relations and Faculty, which would assist the PR program in learning more about each department and the accomplishments that occur within them.
- One opportunity that the faculty focused on was to have a similar theme or message throughout the Public Relations outreach that is originating from the university. By having a clear direction for PR, the goal of the university becomes clear.

(From John Ross)

- (Prior to the hire of the Assistant Director, Media Relations) The ability of Public Relations to respond to requests for assistance was a huge concern among the deans I interviewed. One dean, expressing supreme frustration, said he simply refused to deal with that office. When he wanted a story posted on the web, he utilized the services of Marketing and Recruitment. With the hiring of the assistant director for media relations, the office has become far more responsive.
- Having advised the university on strategic communications issues for slightly more than a year, I am very impressed with the shift in culture that has occurred within the Office of

Public Relations. The associate and assistant directors function effectively and complementarily. They encourage and support each other and demonstrate a will-do/can-do ethos that is increasingly recognized across campus. This is a sea change from the perceptions I encountered during my first interviews with campus leaders.

V. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Goal #1 – *Media Relations: Generate news stories and maximize positive media coverage, especially as it reflects institutional excellence, the vision and mission of the university, and La Verne’s commitment to diversity and sustainability.*

Findings

- ❖ In recent years, media relations focused mainly on reaching local media outlets to tell La Verne stories; op/eds were occasionally placed regionally.
- ❖ Current struggles in the newspaper industry have led to drastic reductions in available news space in print media. Efforts to generate and maximize coverage require establishing and maintaining contacts/relationships with representatives of all forms of available media.
- ❖ The focus of media relations at La Verne has expanded in the past year seeking to utilize regional and national media in helping establish a stronger state and nationwide presence.
- ❖ Since the hiring of an Assistant Director for Media Relations in October 2011, and with the support of the Public Relations Assistant hired in October 2011, the department more than doubled the number of press releases drafted and pitched to appropriate media outlets.
- ❖ As a result of these efforts in fall 2011, the university launched an initiative for greater regional and national visibility which has so far resulted in 127 regional stories; five regional op/eds, and 16 national media mentions from a variety of national outlets in print and via social media and on their Web sites. The anticipated publication of two national articles in prominent higher education publications was reached, and the office exceeded that goal by 200 percent.
- ❖ To meet the needs of the diverse families the university serves, the Media Relations Program has started to create and maintain relationships with ethnic media.
- ❖ In a survey of five focus groups rating the Public Relations office, there was virtually no mention of positive coverage of the university in the media. Only members of the Faculty Senate listed “increasing the amount of attention that is drawn to the university” as a strength of the PR office.
- ❖ According to its own survey, La Verne’s PR office is comparable to neighboring colleges & universities in press releases produced weekly. La Verne, the only institution, of the eight surveyed, that does not currently have a functioning Experts Guide, which could have some effect on media coverage.

Goal #2 - Strategic Communications to External Audiences: Conduct a program of strategic communications via mail, publications, email and Web, to reach alumni, parents, friends, and donors; opinion leaders in education and government; and the local community and general public with focused messages promoting awareness, name recognition and pride in institutional excellence.

Findings

- ❖ Print publications are crucial to this goal, and are central to PR programs at comparison institutions. However, until 2011-12, budget reductions at La Verne have virtually eliminated non-solicitation mail communication and publications to alumni and donors, other than one issue of the VOICE magazine per year, and reduced the university's premier print communication, the VOICE magazine, to fewer pages, a smaller audience, and once-a-year publication.
- ❖ The PR office has continued to send either an annual 4-page "President's Report" or a copy of selected issues of VOICE magazine, such as the presidential transition and inauguration issues, to officials at universities in our category in the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings.
- ❖ In recent years, there has been a significant shift of PR time and resources toward electronic communication, including participating in two university-wide web re-design projects led by the Marketing Department; development of new pages for Advancement, President, Inauguration, and Alumni; collaboration on e-communication to alumni; development of web feature stories for the main page of the university web site; and creation of dynamic content in the form of slideshows, photo galleries, and 10 videos produced by PR.
- ❖ A social media program, featuring active Twitter accounts for @ULaVerneNews and @PresLieberman plus six staff Twitter accounts, was launched in November 2011. To date, @ULaVerneNews has attracted 645 followers; @PresLieberman has 581 followers.
- ❖ VOICE Online launched in Summer 2010, posting new stories weekly, and receiving more than 15,000 page views within its first year. That number has nearly doubled during the 2011-2012 period, with 26,276 page views, and the electronic publication has averaged nearly two new stories per week. Views of the university news web pages have more than doubled in 2011-12, with a total of 71,383, up from 32,610 the previous year. Total views stood at 220,879 for all PR-managed web pages, with two weeks left in the fiscal year.
- ❖ Focus group responses were generally positive and respondents praised the department for its use of a variety of media to project a positive message of the university to its constituency. Two of the three groups with relevant responses mentioned the VOICE magazine as a positive vehicle for university news and information.
- ❖ Survey results from neighboring schools revealed that La Verne lags well behind in printed/mailed publications. In addition to the disparity in delivery frequency and page count in university magazines, half of the institutions surveyed produce some form of annual report. A few reported production of academic journals, "quick facts," and supplemental editions of the university magazine targeted at such groups as donors and the surrounding neighborhood. La Verne does none of these at this time.

Goal #3 - Strategic Communications to Internal Audiences: Conduct a program of strategic communications via mail, publications, email and Web, to reach university employees, with focused messages promoting understanding of university initiatives and pride in institutional excellence.

Findings

- ❖ A quarterly *Advancement News* email from the Vice President was implemented in fall 2008. By 2010-11 this communication was increased to about once every three weeks
- ❖ In 2010-11 two blogs were introduced by Advancement with support from PR: Amanda's Blog which targeted donors and other constituents with very personal and stewardship-oriented posts during renovation of Morgan Auditorium, and a blog by the Vice President on topics relating to fund raising. Dropoff from the first year of blogs to the second reflected fewer posts because of a completion of the publicity campaign for the Morgan Auditorium. In its first year, Amanda's blog had 1,673 views; 486 in its second. Jean Bjerke's blog dropped from 776 the first year to 260 in 2011-12.
- ❖ In 2011, PR began supporting the president on publication of a monthly *President's Pause* email message to campus employees, and a once-per-semester *Presidents' Paws* email message to students. These pieces are edited by PR and have heightened communication from the President's Office greatly.
- ❖ Email and social media messages regularly drive traffic to the Web site and *VOICE Online*, for news and articles promoting university initiatives and institutional pride. Traffic on the *VOICE Online* site has grown significantly in its second year. The 26,276 page views demonstrate a substantial increase, and it's likely that much of that traffic came from events such as the activity of the new president and her inauguration.
- ❖ Focus group responses were generally positive and respondents praised the department for its use of a variety of media to project a positive message of the university to its employees. Two of the three groups with relevant responses mentioned the *VOICE* magazine as a positive vehicle for university news and information.
- ❖ Results of the survey of neighboring colleges and universities, conducted by the PR Office, support no conclusions in this area.

Goal #4 - Enhancement of visibility and recognition regionally and nationally: Focusing on promoting academic excellence and faculty research, develop program to enhance La Verne's prominence, visibility, name recognition and reputation locally, regionally, and nationally, including providing content for Web site through effective use of images, video, and other forms of electronic communication, and developing an on-line faculty experts guide.

Findings

- ❖ Web pages created to inform all audiences during the presidential transition and leading up to the inauguration in October 2011 set records for traffic to the President's Inauguration, and VOICE Online pages. The Inauguration website received 26,364 hits, suggesting much of the VOICE Online's traffic of 26,276 views was directed at Inauguration coverage. The new president's web page drew 11,447 visitors in 2011-12.
- ❖ Framework and program for searchable on-line faculty experts guide was developed in 2011; guide is now being populated with information on key faculty as PR works with those individuals to develop stories for our own outlets or media placement. This group begins with the members of The Academy at the University of La Verne, and includes other notable experts as well, such as economist Ahmed Ispahani and College of Law faculty specializing in certain areas. (See APPENDIX VI).
- ❖ *VOICE Online* has carried six articles featuring members of the La Verne Academy, and all members will have been featured in an article by the end of 2012.
- ❖ Initiative for regional and national visibility through media placement is under way.
- ❖ The Public Relations Office completely redesigned its website to provide greater media accessibility and more thoroughly represent its mission, products and services. This enhancement allowed for simpler navigation to the university's mission, facts and figures, media kits, press releases, publication archives, multimedia links and social media pages. In addition to an aesthetically improved design, the new website allows users to submit "story suggestions" and make inquiries to specific PR staff members regarding a specific need.
- ❖ Results of the Focus Groups show clear disapproval and disenchantment with the university's Public Relations, although many comments apply to Marketing, Web Services or the Campus Times — even though the term "Public Relations" is used. Nonetheless, many of the comments that do apply to Public Relations are consistent in their demand for better communication and accessibility between Public Relations and the Campus Community. Criticisms reflect frustrations in not connecting with PR, as well as confusion about what type of information is needed from faculty and staff to ensure their news or events receive the desired publicity.
- ❖ Results of the survey of neighboring colleges and universities, conducted by the PR Office, support no conclusions in this area.

NOTE: One additional finding is mentioned for the record but is largely outside of the scope of this Program Review. The external reviewer for this Program Review noted that he "encountered intense competition over control of university communications between the offices of Public Relations and Marketing & Recruitment." The faculty focus groups reflected much confusion about the respective roles of these two units and even recommended consolidation of the two in order to achieve better coordination. Clarifying the role confusion and establishing better

collaboration are addressed in the Action Recommendations of this report. The structural issue is not within the scope of the Program Review.

Action Recommendations

After considering feedback from our focus groups and campus interviews with key management, the PR Office held a retreat to discuss future objectives and strategies to help us better meet our goals in serving this university campus, both internally and externally. The team worked together to suggest the following action recommendations for the Public Relations Office to achieve its Mission:

A. Implement a five-year Communications Plan that:

- i. Includes Goals and objectives
- ii. Produces an operating plan to reach those goals
- iii. Establishes new programs development/implementation plan/timeline
- iv. Satisfies budget and staffing needs to reach goals; including job duties/scheduled performance evaluations to aim to promote staff development/growth
- v. Develops internal public relations plans to re-establish the credibility of the Public Relations Office with the university community
- vi. Provides avenues to increase visibility of the university in significant regional/national media
- vii. Creates a stronger sense of collaboration regarding electronic and print media campus wide
- viii. Helps spell out the roles and responsibilities of the Public Relations Office internally/externally, resulting in goals being met more efficiently/effectively.

Reason: Focus Group and Campus Interviews have noted a lack in organizational management and leadership from the PR Office.

B. Programs to be developed:

- i. “Benefitting From PR” Public Relations Office Tour
 1. Staff will visit with key stakeholders on campus (deans, department chairs, AP and Classified committees, ASULV, etc.) to offer personal introduction as well as clarify roles and responsibilities of PR Office and provide contact information.
 2. Introduce faculty/staff to ways they can benefit from PR services (gaining visibility for their scholarships, programs, research).
 3. PowerPoint will be developed as visual aid
 4. Will help identify differences between what PR and Marketing do for campus outreach
 5. Will help build a bridge internally among campus stakeholders and PR Office

Reason: Focus Groups and Campus Interviews reflected confusion over PR/Marketing role and also shared perception that PR Office team is not easy to reach/unavailable.

- ii. Mini PR Plans - Developing for CAS, CBPM, CEOL
 1. Calendar monthly meetings with deans, PEC to establish active presence on campus
 2. Directly work to meet their needs regarding events, faculty research and scholarship
 3. Provide one-on-one attention to each dean/college to help increase awareness by faculty and staff of Public Relations Office efforts to work to meet their needs.

Reason: Focus Group and Campus Interviews clearly revealed that some areas on campus feel neglected. Our goal is to reach out and provide service to all.

- iii. Develop Strategic Public Relations Plan for university linked to 2020 Vision & La Verne Experience
 1. Create university-wide key messages for these two facets
 2. Increase awareness of two major initiatives/provide clarification
 3. Align Public Relations Office with strategic planning process
 4. Provide media opportunities to showcase progress

Reason: In order to stay true to our mission to represent the university today and in the future, PR must be aligned and tailored to match our 2020 Vision & La Verne Experience – we need to highlight the priorities set forth.

- iv. Establish Media Relations Calendar for Op/Ed Placement, Upcoming Events
 1. Has consistent op/eds written over six-month period, guaranteed for pitching/possible placement on a regular monthly basis
 2. Op/eds can be written by President and also by faculty to showcase their areas of expertise
 3. Upcoming events calendar will create a system to send all university events that are open to public to local media for calendar listing placement; ideally helping to generate audiences to attend

Reason: Focus Group and Campus Interviews questioned campus happenings/events getting enough attention. In order to meet this concern, PR will have a calendared list of op/eds, stories to go out consistently to help bridge this perceived gap.

- v. VOICE Content Brainstorming Sessions
 1. Invite various stakeholders (alumni, marketing, deans, PR staff) to participate in story-planning meetings for future VOICE online and print publications
 2. Helps establish a sense of unity for publication if participants feel their story ideas are heard/considered

3. Opportunity for PR staff to educate campus community on what makes a story publishable
4. Opens communication between campus community and PR Office

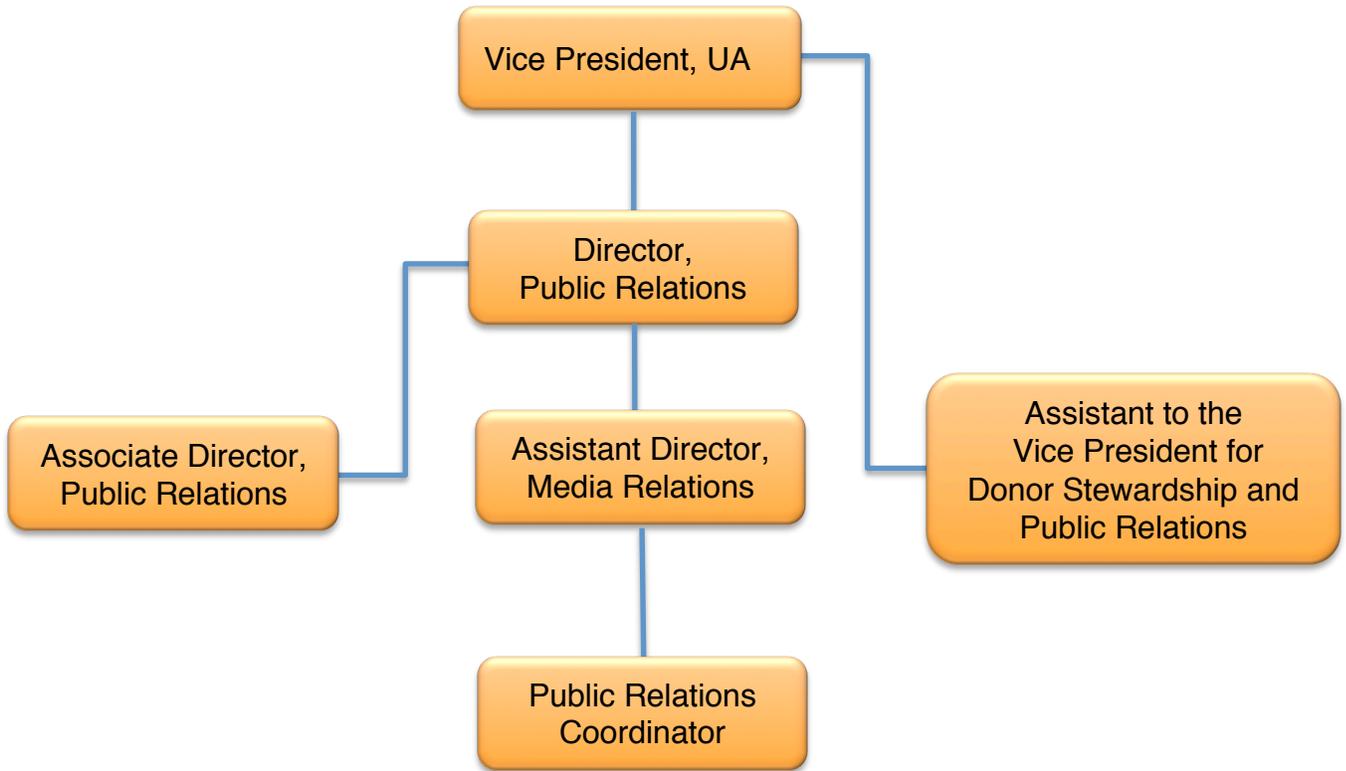
Reason: Focus Group and Campus Interviews voiced concern about the lack of collaboration regarding story selection for these publications. To address this PR believes that offering these types of sessions will help campus voices feel heard.

Note: All programs described above are designed to work to address challenges brought to the attention of the Public Relations Office via the research conducted for this program review. All programs to be developed will work under current budget restrictions and by utilizing current staff.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Organizational chart



APPENDIX II

Focus Group Results

To view, please click on link below, then click on

PROGRAM REVIEW FOCUS GROUP

link on web page.

<http://laverne.edu/advancement/pr-program-review/>

APPENDIX III

Results of campus interviews with key management

John Ross, RossWrites

In February, 2011, the principal of RossWrites LLC was engaged by the University of La Verne to provide strategic communications counsel for a series of meetings in Washington, D.C. for the purpose of introducing its new president, Devorah Lieberman; its board chair, Luis Faura; its vice president of University Advancement, Jean Bjerke; and its director of Public Relations, Charles Bentley to higher education media.

During the summer I provided worked with Charles and Jean Bjerke on communications issues related to introducing the new president to the university and opinion leaders in the region and on op-ed projects. As part of the planned program review of Public Relations, I was invited to campus to begin an assessment of that office's operations.

At that time, the Public Relations office included the director, an associate director for publications, and the services of a part-time assistant. It was severely understaffed, but plans were underway to hire a much-needed assistant director for media relations. The director was a professional sports journalist with several years of experience at another large university before coming to La Verne eight years earlier. He also graduated from the University of La Verne. The associate director for publications is a former magazine editor with 20+ years experience in newspaper and magazine writing, reporting, editing and publishing.

During August 16 and 17, I met with 22 university personnel including members of the President's Executive Council, three out of four college deans, a number of senior administrators, the public relations staff, and the president. I was very surprised by the general negative image held, particularly by deans, of the Public Relations office. Though they understood the problems caused by lack of staff, the shared opinion was that the director was very effective in providing communications counsel when the university was presented with crises, but that office provided little in support for generating publicity for their programs. I also encountered intense competition over control of university communications between the offices of Public Relations and Marketing and Recruitment. Finally, other than for the presidential inauguration, there appeared to be little short- or long-term planning. Under the prior administration, public relations appeared not to have been a high priority. The new president highly values effective public relations and is determined that the office and its staff be efficient in generating expanded awareness, appreciation, and support for the university among internal and external audiences.

In late summer, the university was deeply in the throes of preparing for the presidential inauguration and the first series of letters from the president to internal and external constituencies. And the Division of University Advancement was in the process of hiring the assistant director for media relations. At the same time, the university was beset by a series of vexing issues involving the College of Law and Athletics. Drawing on his deep understanding of the institution, the director of Public Relations provided good counsel to the president regarding

the troubling concerns over the law school and athletics. Judging by the outcome of the personnel search, teamwork between the director and the vice president of University Advancement resulted in an excellent hire. However, the editorial support the director provided the president on her letters seemed marginal. The writing was not of high quality and too much time appeared to elapse between his receipt of her edits and return of his revised drafts.

The ability of Public Relations to respond to requests for assistance was a huge concern among the deans I interviewed. One dean, expressing supreme frustration, said he simply refused to deal with that office. When he wanted a story posted on the web, he utilized the services of Marketing and Recruitment. With the hiring of the assistant director for media relations, the office has become far more responsive. At least as far as media relations requests are concerned, it is endeavoring to respond within 24 hours if not sooner.

The presidential inauguration was a watershed event for the university, for University Advancement, and for Public Relations. It was brilliantly planned, extremely well executed, and enjoyed excellent follow-up. Public Relations acquitted itself with enlightened professionalism. Most notable was the publication of a suite of stories in the VOICE Online and within hours after festivities had concluded. The entire department deserves kudos for this stellar achievement.

In November and December, I visited the campus twice with the goals of conceiving and facilitating the production of the university's first annual report and of providing guidance on the mandated Public Relations Program Review. With the inauguration complete and the assistant director for media relations on board, the vice president of University Advancement and I felt the time was right to begin addressing the concerns expressed by the deans and other senior leadership about the output of Public Relations. I recommended that the director and each of his subordinates prepare a set of objectives for each month. This would include identifying and addressing major tasks such as preparing the annual report, providing counsel regarding the College of Law, and completing the program review. Where possible, particularly in media relations and publications, an attempt would be made to set quantifiable objectives. The first set of these monthly plans was produced in January by the associate director for publications and the assistant director for media relations. However the director of Public Relations, instead, offered a lengthy memo stating that he was too busy to plan and listing all the tasks that prevented him from doing so. He could have submitted the same list as his plan.

The associate director for publications and the assistant director for media relations assumed responsibility for producing the annual report leaving the director of public relations to supervise the public relations program review. Though the director was spending two days each week at the College of Law effectively advising on public relations issues, those responsibilities did not consume all of his time. Work on the program review bogged down. At issue, apparently, were revisions in the mission of the office and its goals and objectives. Under the previous administration, the office had been viewed and saw itself as primarily a news bureau and source of non-admissions publications both print and electronic. Evolving this focus into one more broadly attuned to managing university internal and external communications to support the institution's strategic goals and annual objectives proved to be challenging. It became clear to both the vice president of University Advancement and me that the director experienced difficulty in managing multiple tasks concurrently and in adopting a larger vision for the

essential role that an effective office of public relations should fill in the leadership of the institution. Clearly, the Public Relations Program Preview would lead to major change in the office's operations and management. I wondered whether the failure to move the review forward was an indication of the director's reluctance to adapt to the needs of an institution with an expressly articulated imperative to project itself more broadly on a regional and national stage.

During the production of the annual report, the associate and assistant directors proved to be a masterful team. The report was delivered on time; presented a strong image of a university on the move; and was filled with well written stories, compelling photographs, and easily understood data demonstrating La Verne's capacity to achieve its vision. At the same time, the associate director conceived and placed exciting stories in VOICE Online, and the assistant director placed numerous articles in local news media.

Having advised the university on strategic communications issues for slightly more than a year, I am very impressed with the shift in culture that has occurred within the Office of Public Relations. The associate and assistant directors function effectively and complementarily. They encourage and support each other and demonstrate a will-do/can-do ethos that is increasingly recognized across campus. This is a sea change from the perceptions I encountered during my first interviews with campus leaders. The assistant director has also gained the respect and trust of the president who is calling upon her to perform public relations tasks that would ordinarily fall into the director's role. The salient question at this juncture is how the program review will appropriately refocus the role of the Public Relations office to meet the expanding communications needs of the university.

APPENDIX IV

Web Page Creation

- Main Website
 - What's Happening at La Verne (Story Rotation)
 - Occasional design of slides on homepage
- University of La Verne News Website
 - Press releases
 - News and updates
- Advancement Website
 - Jean's Blog
 - Amanda's Blog
 - Meet the Staff
- Public Relations Website
 - University in the News (media placements list)
 - Multimedia
- Social Media Website
- Presidential Inauguration Website
 - Home
 - Biography
 - Guest Book
 - Pre Event Pages
 - Registration
 - Schedule of Events
 - Symposia
 - Ceremony
 - Reception
 - Homecoming Weekend
 - FAQ
 - Post Event Updated Pages
 - Overview
 - Gallery
 - Speeches
 - In the News
- President's Website
 - Welcome
 - Biography
 - Perspectives on Natl. Issues
 - In the News
 - Multitmedia
 - President' Pause
- Alumni Relations Website
 - Winter/spring commencement page
 - Occasional design of slides on homepage

- New Alumni Web Pages (redesign project in the works)
- LIVE from La Verne
 - Hosting site for live streaming projects used on inauguration)
- Ann & Steve Morgan Auditorium
- Voice Magazine Online
- President – Select Website
- Experts Guide Homepage

APPENDIX V

Faculty Listed in University of La Verne Online Experts Guide (To be expanded)

Jonathan Reed, Professor of History
Tom Harvey, Professor of Organizational Leadership
Andrea Labinger, Professor of English (retired)
Jeffrey Kahan, Professor of English
Ken Marcus, Associate Professor of History
Iraj Parchamazad, Professor of Chemistry
Reed Gratz, Professor of Music
Kathy Lamkin, Professor of Music
Glenn Gamst, Professor of Psychology
Ken Scambray, Professor of English
Patricia Long Professor of Psychology
Al Clark (Honorary), Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs
Ahmed Ispahani, Professor of Economics
Peggy Redman, Professor of Education
Diane Uchimiya, Professor of Law
Ruth Trotter, Professor of Art
Dion Johnson, Director of University Art Galleries
Robert Neher, Professor of Biology

APPENDIX VI

Pitney-Bowes White Paper: "What Alumni Want" 2010

To view, please click on URL below, then click on:

Higher Education "What Alumni Want" White Paper

link on web page.

<http://laverne.edu/advancement/pr-program-review/>

APPENDIX VII

SURVEY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

To view, please click on URL below, then click on:

Survey of Public Relations Practices in Higher Education

link on web page.

<http://laverne.edu/advancement/pr-program-review/>

APPENDIX VIII

Kaludis Consulting Recommendations Regarding Investing In Public Relations

Advancement has the primary responsibility to serve as the “voice” of the University—crafting and delivering key messages to all internal and external constituents. In communicating with and seeking to influence constituencies related to recruitment—prospective students and their parents, school guidance counselors, etc.—Advancement shares responsibility with Marketing. The strategies and tactics employed by Advancement and Marketing must be in harmony and, ideally, function synergistically. Better collaboration in planning and execution is needed.

Top priorities for the communications agenda are:

- Telling personalized “success stories” (alumni, students, faculty, staff)
- Crafting substantive messages that highlight La Verne’s efforts to:
 - Develop academic distinction (known for) and distinctiveness (differentiators)
 - Enhance regional and national recognition and prominence

Employing this strategy across all communications channels consistently and over time will build the University’s image/identity and reputation.

Gaps in the Message-Development-and-Delivery System

La Verne’s message-development-and-delivery infrastructure should be comprised of a broad array of print and electronic communication tools used to convey the institutional vision, priorities, news, and success stories to all internal and external constituencies through mass media and targeted communications channels. Important pieces of the infrastructure are missing or underdeveloped (see Table B).

Table B: La Verne’s Message-Development-and-Delivery Infrastructure

<i>Print Tools</i>	Underdeveloped	Missing
VOICE Magazine	■	
Annual/President’s Report		■
Aftermarket reprints		■
Honor Roll of Donors	■	
<i>Electronic Tools</i>	Underdeveloped	Missing
Online Experts Guide		■
Online VOICE Magazine	■	
Online alumni newsletters (each college)		■
Online Annual Report		■
Unified Events Calendar		■
Email Program	■	
Social Media Program	■	

KEY

- **Online experts guide** – searchable guide developed for media, speaker, and expert identification, identifying key faculty and staff experts, their areas of expertise, publications, honors and awards, and contact information
- **VOICE magazine** – high quality, quarterly, mailed to all alumni, donors and friends in the university's data base, and to parents of current students.
- **Online VOICE magazine** – dynamic, compelling stories, video, images, and slideshows; fresh content constantly updated. The online VOICE should never look the same from one week to the next
- **Online newsletters for alumni of each college** – companions to the online VOICE, and some content is shared, but each newsletter is tailored to the individual audience of alumni, parents, donors, and friends of that college
- **Aftermarket promotion** – reprints of selected stories and profiles disseminated to specially targeted groups of donors, alumni, prospective students, parents, media, and leaders in government and education
- **Annual report** – online and possibly also in print, incorporating a president's message, success stories, vision and plans for the future, and data about enrollment and financial strength.
- **Annual/President's Report** – printed piece, either letter format or designed as a short printed report, mailed twice a year to all constituents.
- **Honor Roll of Donors** – printed once a year, mailed to all donors, including profiles of donors, success stories, and compelling images.
- **Online University events calendar** – incorporating schedules, and details about upcoming musical and theatre performances, art gallery shows, and photography gallery shows.
- **Email communication program** – utilizing technology for blast emails to alumni and donors, regarding news and success stories of the university.
- **Social media communication program** – utilizing La Verne Alumni Facebook Fan Page and ULVNewsSpot on Twitter to convey daily updates that are informative, compelling, and invite response by visiting La Verne Web site, or sharing comments, images, and video of their own.

Communicating in the Information Age

The 24/7 news cycle is symbolic of the Information Age. And the voracious appetite for content has changed the communication landscape and shortened the communication cycle.

Organizations—in business, industry, academia, government—are expected to provide continuously updated information. This shortening of the communication cycle puts tremendous pressure on what are often stretched-thin resources. This is particularly true at La Verne.

The skills and resources required to communicate effectively today are significantly different than just 10 years ago. Take social media, for example. These tools—Internet forums, social blogs, social networking, podcasts, audio and video sharing, etc.—are valuable vehicles for “outward” communication, particularly with individuals under age 30. Popular social-networking and video-sharing websites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube have tremendous reach. Capitalizing on the power of social media requires more time and effort than some traditional channels. Yet, because of their growing place in daily life, we cannot ignore them.

Further, communicating through these channels provides an ongoing reservoir of user information that potentially has value for Advancement. But we need the resources to access and evaluate this information and to extract what is useful. Building the capacity to reach out using social media and to mine the information flow must be part of the infrastructure plan.

The centrality of the Internet in this Information Age has changed the communication paradigm. As smartphones, tablet computers, hand-held game systems, social media, streaming video, podcasting, voice-over-internet, e-books, online games, 3D imaging, virtual reality, etc., become more ubiquitous and their use more pervasive, www.laverne.edu will become the heart of La Verne's communication system—an increasingly critical means of reaching and being reached by all constituencies. As such, it needs to be visually interesting to attract and engaging to hold visitors, with increased interactivity and use of pictures and video. A cohesive, institution-wide strategy for web content, functionality, development and maintenance is needed.

Communication Theme: Success

The placement and promotion of success stories help enhance the University's visibility, image, and reputation; build alumni pride; and contribute to the motivation for donor support. Beyond individual success stories, the promotion of milestone achievements in the institutional trajectory demonstrates that the University is dynamic, developing, and making a positive impact on society.

Success stories should feature *faculty* achievements – nationally recognized research, awards, and honors; personal engagement with students that transforms lives; and community engagement that impacts the region and beyond. Stories should showcase *student* excellence and success – individual accomplishment; individual and team honors and awards earned in competition with other universities including athletic achievements; and rankings in national competitions from debate to video production to moot court competitions. Stories should display and promote the achievements and leadership of *management* and *staff*. Stories should showcase the achievements, service, and impact of *alumni* in their chosen professions, their communities, and at the local, national and international level.

Dissemination of success stories should include:

- Pitching stories to print media, television, and radio at local, regional and national levels
- Making stories the centerpiece around which the website is developed (feature stories, profiles, and blogs/vlogs on the University website and in the online VOICE magazine)
- Promoting stories through a strong social media program including Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
- Featuring stories in the printed VOICE
- Aftermarket promotion via selected reprints
- Incorporating stories in speeches and presentations at all events and for all constituencies, and in all written communications including correspondence, brochures, and fund raising solicitations

The Success Stories initiative should be designed to permeate the culture of conversation of La Verne, building institutional pride within the campus and alumni community, and promoting regional and national visibility and reputation.

A shift in University culture—from institutional modesty to publicly expressed pride—is needed for the initiative to work. Further, resources must be devoted to identifying, researching, and developing success stories, as well as to obtaining compelling images

and video, to bring those stories to life. The entire University community—especially the academic leadership and faculty—have to partner with Advancement in identifying and developing success stories.

The increased volume of work associated with these new and/or expanded initiatives will create a substantial increase in departmental clerical activities.

Proposed Programs/Initiatives

- Expand VOICE Magazine to 3 issues/year
- Refresh Online VOICE Magazine weekly with multiple new stories and features including images, slideshows and video
- Create and maintain online alumni newsletters for each College and selected affinity groups (e.g., CAPA)
- Produce an Annual Report/President's Report
- Launch Success Stories Initiative (including adding profiles to website)
- Expand social media program (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- Fully implement a unified University Events Calendar

Resource Implications

- Staffing
 - YEAR 1
 - Staff Writer (VOICE Magazine, Online VOICE Magazine, online alumni newsletters, Success Stories, Annual Report/President's Report)
 - Web/Social Media Specialist
 - Administrative Assistant
- Operating Budget
 - Publications printing and distribution
 - Contract Services (photography/videography)

APPENDIX IX

**Comparative Data of Local Colleges and University
from Survey Conducted by University of La Verne Public Relations Office**

To view PDF version, please click on URL below, then click on:

RESULTS OF PR SURVEY

link on web page.

<http://laverne.edu/advancement/pr-program-review/>

APPENDIX X

www.whattheythink.com

Two out of three Americans prefer print media

According to new research, digital media is no substitute for traditional printed media. A recent survey conducted by Harris Interactive on behalf of Earthtone suggests that most people choose how they consume media based on personal preferences.

Research shows that the majority of U.S. adults think that printed media is easier to read than the digital equivalent. Interestingly, most adults reported that they feel more comfortable when they have something on paper than when it's on screen, suggesting that we make an instinctive association between things we can touch and feel and things that are 'real'.

At the same time, many adults also showed a preference for the immediacy that digital media offers. We value the real time information from around the world, the ability to find the music we love in seconds, and the low cost of web-based communications.

"You can exchange a dozen emails in the time it takes to find a stamp for your snail mail, but a handwritten birthday card in your mailbox somehow means more than an identically worded email in your inbox," says Nader Alaghband, founder and CEO, Earthtone. "Simply put, we choose new, digital media where it adds value and we opt for traditional media when that's what's best for us."

The Paperless Office

Predicting a paperless future has been de rigeur for decades, but the Earthtone survey shows that most employed adults (58 percent) think that the paperless office is unlikely to become a reality any time soon.

People's preference for print offers one explanation for this widespread skepticism. Nearly two out of three (64 percent) workers prefer ink on paper to a computer screen when it comes to reading. Interestingly, even workers in technology and telecommunications companies agreed that reading in print was easier than reading online, with 70 percent preferring paper, as compared to 57 percent of adults employed in the banking, finance, and insurance industries.[1]

However, employee preference may not be the primary reason why nearly six out of ten don't envision working in a paperless office in the next five years. In fact, businesses depend on print because some compliance rules require them to retain records in hardcopy. As a result, print will continue to be a mission critical business function until regulators decide to accept digital record-keeping.

What's Next for Hardcopy?

While a challenging economic climate may have eroded most consumers' commitment to the environment, with two in three U.S. adults (67 percent) agreeing that they care more about saving money than "being green," companies' commitment to the environment remains strong,

with only 11 percent of employed adults reporting that their company is now less likely to choose "green" products if it means spending more money. An often-overlooked opportunity for these businesses lies in changing workers' printing habits. For many small businesses, outsourced printing is a cost-efficient way to be green.

In addition to investing in print hardware that rarely operates at capacity, otherwise cost-conscious businesses regularly find themselves paying more than they have to for ink, paper, and other consumables. The cost of maintaining extensive in-house print capacity is compounded by gratuitous usage. Each printed page costs only a few pennies and employees are very unlikely to consider the aggregate cost of unnecessary printing to the business they work for.

In fact, according to the survey, nearly four out of five workers whose company outsources at least some of their printing (79 percent) said that they do so at least once a year. Because printing out-of-house bears a more obvious – albeit lower – cost, it is rare to find people using a print shop unnecessarily.

In addition to cutting costs and minimizing waste, printing through the cloud makes it easier for environmentally-responsible businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. By using Earthtone – a service that offers free carbon offsets on every print job – businesses and users can find, compare and choose one of a growing number of greener suppliers for their outsourced printing needs.

Additional findings from the survey include the following:

- 68 percent of employed adults feel more comfortable when they have something on paper than on screen.
- 64 percent of employed adults say reading in print is easier than reading on screen.
- One fourth of employed adults (26 percent) report that their company outsources its printing at least once a year, and one fifth (19 percent) say their employer orders prints online at least once yearly.
- Less than half of employed adults (42 percent) think the paperless office will become a reality at the companies they work for in the next five years.

The survey covered a range of topics, including:

- Corporate and personal attitudes toward green procurement.
- Online shopping trends amongst businesses.
- Preferred media amongst consumers.