Francis Marion University
Communications/Social Media-Website
IE Departmental Assessment Plan
Assessment Plan Period: 2018-19
Preparers: Josh Lloyd, Tucker Mitchell

Mission Statement

University Communications tells the FMU story to the public, and serves as the official channel through which the University disseminates information internally and externally. The office's major functions include media relations, internal communications for the University community, production of official University publications, photography and videography for off-campus audiences, and marketing and communications support for University initiatives. Two key components of the overall communications strategy is the ability to present the FMU story to multiple audiences through the university website and its constantly evolving social media channels.

Goal-Social Media

Francis Marion uses three main platforms for its social media presence – Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. While each platform requires a specific plan and different methods of monitoring, there are commonalities across all that can be monitored with the intention of increasing visibility over time. The areas of interest are Follower Count and Engagement. The Office of Communications has enhanced the university's social media presence in recent years but anticipates across all social media channels due to improved content and tactics.

Desired Outcomes/Follower Count

Facebook	Grow followers by 3% year over year
Instagram	Grow followers by 3% year over year
Twitter	Grow followers by 1% year over year

Assessment Methods & Procedures
The Office of Communications uses Google-based analytics to constantly measure use of, and interaction with, university social media channels. Follower count measures the number of individuals who "follow" a social media feed.

Baseline

Channel	Sept. 2017	May 2018
Facebook	13,892	15,404
Instagram	3,214	3,580
Twitter	2,784	2,903

Benchmark

Channel	Sept. 2018	May 2019
Facebook	15,474	17,013
Instagram	3,624	3,850
Twitter	2,932	3,029

Target

Facebook	Grow followers by 3% year over year
Instagram	Grow followers by 3% year over year
Twitter	Grow followers by 1% year over year

Results

All goals were met. University channels continued their steady, upwards trend begun four years ago. New tactics introduced mid-year began to evidence some traction, but more is expected in the year ahead.

Planned Improvements Based on Assessment Results/Action Plan – SOCIAL MEDIA

New tactics introduced mid-year need time, but are already showing great promise. All measurements are up and appear to have momentum. Additional connections with other university social channels (alumni, student life, athletics) should generate still more improvement – for the main FMU channels and the others. This becomes a momentum cycle – all feed the growth of each other. Increased capability to generate additional content, and increased capability with regards to knowledge of the social environment and its inner workings, should pay dividends as well.

Goal-Social Media

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Desired Outcomes/Engagement
Grow total social media engagement by 3%.

Assessment Methods & Procedures
The Office of Communications uses Google-based analytics to constantly measure use of, and interaction with, university social media channels. Engagement measures the number of users who actively "engage" with social media – sharing posts, commenting, liking or otherwise indicating some active interest in the post or story. Interactions are combined for all channels because many interactions are multi-channels – a like or a share on Facebook may also register as a like or share on Instagram.

Baseline
Total engagement events   Sept. 2017-May 2018   148,450

Benchmark
Total engagement events Sept. 2018-May 2019   171,000

Target
Grow total engagement by 4%.

Results
The goal was exceeded by a significant amount. New tactics introduced mid-year combined with improved staff capabilities, leading to enhanced content quality grew followers which is likely to grow engagement. Engagement as a percentage of total followers and impressions also grew.

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Increased capability to generate additional content, and increased capability with regards to knowledge of the social environment and its inner workings, should pay dividends as well. Team members are receiving additional training with regard to understanding and managing analytics.

Goals — Website

Francis Marion's website is used for a multitude of reasons by a number of different audiences. A primary use is as a marketing tool to provide information on what the university offers and to show why it's a good choice for prospective students. This supports goals of Enrollment Management and the university at large. It is also offers information and general administrative support for current students, faculty, staff. Improved site traffic is a notable goal as is ongoing site enhancement and staff training in support of the university's devolved system of site management. The site's use should grow, user experience should improve and it should be refreshed regularly.

Desired Outcomes
• Increase page views by 1% year over year.
• Establish a training schedule that includes bi-weekly office hours for small group training sessions, and monthly group sessions to discuss specific topics.
• Create a plan/schedule for regular site refreshes (partial and total).

Website
• Increase page views by 1%. (measurable)
• Establish regular training opportunities, by website staff, for university staff.
• Continue "constant refresh" posture for critical web pages, enhance and complete plan for overall site refresh.

Assessment Methods and Procedures
Site analytics powered by Google allow the Office of Communications to monitor visits and views to the site in general and to individual pages. Creation of plans and procedures is monitored through actual activities and the creation of documents and reports.

Baseline
Website
Website Visits
• From May 2017 to May 2018, FMU's website had about 348,000 unique visits.
Website Training
• Training is currently conducted reactively, when users request it. There are no regular meeting times.
Website Refresh
• The website received a complete refresh in 2016-17. Refreshment of individual site elements is performed daily or monthly (dependent on page or specific element), or, as needed (dependent upon changing information).

Benchmarks
Website Visits
• From May 2018 to May 2019, FMU's website had about 358,000 unique visits.
Website Training
• Training plan was completed in draft form but no rollout was completed in 2018-19.
Website Refresh
• A refresh schedule for individual pages was completed and was implemented in the spring of 2019. An overall plan has not been completed.

Target
Website Visits
• Increase unique site visits by 1% year over year.
Website training
• Complete final plan. Implement schedule. Review and revise as needed.
Website Refresh
• Create an overall plan and a reporting process.

Results
Website
• Visits were up by 2.8%, just above goal. (Google Analytics)
• Training plans are in motion but were not completed.
• Refresh plans and processes are underway, but are slightly behind schedule.

Planned Improvements Based on Assessment Results/Action Plan
Website
Page views/visits can fluctuate for a number of reasons. We set a modest goal and reached it, but minor changes, often in factors beyond the Office of Communications' control, could mean missing a goal – or surpassing it by a greater margin.

Improvements in process and plan have made the site better on an anecdotal or "feel" basis. New software set to be put in place in 2019-2020 will allow for more rapid analysis of some site functionality basics, such as missing links, misspellings and more. The new software's primary purpose is to ensure the accessibility of the site for the visually impaired. This will be a new goal area in the coming year.

Other site improvements will evolve from improved content-gathering capabilities throughout the department, better training across the university, and a more consistent refresh process.

Training plans need to be completed. FMU's devolved system of website management, in which many individual departments manage updates and minor revisions to their pages, demands a regular training schedule as opposed to ad hoc troubleshooting. A refresh plan needs to be completed to ensure that the site maintains a fresh appearance for frequent visitors.