

# UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS WORK PLAN

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## **2021-22**

**IN AUGUST 2019**, the UVA Board of Visitors approved “A Great and Good University: The 2030 Plan” setting our institutional heading for the next decade. Concurrent with this strategic plan, University Communications completed its supporting five-year communications plan, outlining our seven goals, shared priorities and unit objectives. These two documents form the basis for our annual work plan.

The following represents our third work plan installment for the five-year period from 2019 to 2024. Following a turbulent 2020-21 academic year defined by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is notable that many of the projects that comprise the 2021-22 work plan reflect a continuation of the significant work completed in the prior year.

It is also important to note that this work plan is not intended to be a catalogue of all that we do. Instead, it outlines the projects, content themes and internal initiatives that we will pursue in FY22 in support of “The 2030 Plan” and in alignment with the goals described in our five-year plan.

## GOAL ONE

# Strengthen Our Foundation

### Projects/Programs

#### **PANDEMIC COMMUNICATIONS**

Provide communications leadership and support for Fall 2021 planning efforts as the University looks to transition to more normalized operations. Develop communications that promote vaccination benefits, compliance, and requirements; mandatory prevalence testing processes; masking rules; policy changes and other emerging issues as needed. Share these efforts via UVA Today, email, social and earned media.

#### **GREAT AND GOOD INSTITUTIONAL PROMOTION**

Produce a multi-year institutional campaign (including a new PSA and supporting creative that aligns with content strategy) that communicates the University's values and articulates the essence of what it means "To Be Great and Good in All That We Do."

#### **UVA STRATEGIC PLAN SUPPORT**

Support the ongoing development and implementation of "A Great and Good University: The 2030 Plan," through the development of owned, earned and promoted story content that highlights related institutional initiatives and key milestones. Continue to maintain and support the strategic plan website including timeline and dashboard, in partnership with President's Office.

#### **PROACTIVE MEDIA RELATIONS**

Strengthen relationships with the media. Seek new earned coverage opportunities and reach major media outlets and reporters that we have not previously engaged with on a frequent basis. Develop and implement a robust strategy that improves relationships with traditional media and digital influencers, supports targeted priorities and strengthens our ability to effectively manage issues. Coordinate earned media and thought leadership opportunities that advance the institution and its leadership (particularly the president) in areas including civil discourse, principles of democracy, equity, inclusion and community engagement.

#### **STUDENT RECRUITMENT**

Partner with Enrollment to develop an enrollment strategy. Also, deliver an annual refresh of prospective student recruitment materials to attract and support exceptionally talented and diverse students. Materials may include print collateral, acceptance packages, parent mailer, financial aid brochure and enrollment landing webpage.

Make a thorough review, assessment and recommendation concerning future use of the Student Experience website. Support storytelling via UVA Today, virginia.edu and social that accurately conveys the University's shared sense of place and helps answer the question, "What is life like at UVA?," especially as the University looks to normalize operations in the fall.

## Content Themes

### **FACULTY AND STAFF**

Produce content that illustrates the quality of faculty instruction and research, the professionalism and competence of staff and, by extension, that elevates the University's reputation as a great place to teach, work and provide service to others.

### **HONOR THE FUTURE**

Support Advancement in their major gift efforts to the Honor the Future fundraising campaign by creating and distributing content and earned media attention that emphasizes how philanthropy improves the quality of education, instruction, research, diversity and access, community, patient care and the breadth of the student experience.

### **CLASSIC UVA**

Develop heartwarming content that captures the "essence of UVA" and highlights what makes UVA such a special place to live, study and work. This includes developing content with a renewed focus on the beauty of Grounds, traditions, student experience, and other topics that capture a sense enjoyment and fun within our University community.

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## GOAL TWO

# **Cultivate the Most Vibrant Community in Higher Education**

## **Projects/Programs**

### **PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

Serve as principal coordinator of communications strategies announcing and supporting community-based initiatives that emerge from or reside in the President's Office. Manage communication plans supporting announcement of key executive leadership appointments. In addition, promote significant institutional events and initiatives, including the annual holiday video, and supporting Final Exercises for the Class of 2022 and other signature community-based initiatives.

### **COMMUNITY BRIDGES 5K**

Support the planning, communication needs and event promotion for the Spring 2022 walk/run aimed at connecting the University with the Charlottesville community.

## **UVA FOOTBALL MARKETING**

Working in partnership with Athletics, launch the next phase of support for football to promote interest, support and engagement for the 2021 season. This includes the expansion of “The 4th Side” program and the second year of the “For All Virginia” campaign.

- 1. For All Virginia:** A multi-year marketing campaign in support of UVA Football awareness and reputation building to include paid and owned promotion, creative and enhanced ACC spot
- 2. The 4th Side:** A multi-year, tailored fan engagement marketing campaign to build a stronger, heightened rapport between fans and the program

## **MEMORIAL TO ENSLAVED LABORERS DOCUMENTARY FILM**

Complete a documentary-style, short film focused on the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers and the inspired story of the advocacy that led to its creation.

## **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA CAMPAIGN**

Reconceive approach to CVC communications with the goal of engaging senior leadership and activating faculty and staff to drive fundraising efforts that help support the local community.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL PAGEANTRY AND OUT-OF-HOME PROGRAM**

Maintain a robust pageantry program that expresses the UVA brand throughout Grounds and across the region. This includes:

1. The development, implementation and ongoing lifecycle management of the banner program across the Grounds
2. Update the imagery and evolve the look of the UVA bus art program and bus shelters
3. Branded artwork and current media in regional airport installations

## **Content Themes**

### **DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL ENGAGEMENT**

Robustly support the University’s commitment to strengthening democracy through content that reflects UVA’s engagement, scholarship and research in this area. Content includes storytelling around civil discourse, free expression, viewpoint diversity, historical truths and related themes. This content should address issues critical to democratic principles with a goal of engaging in community-building and open dialogue.

### **DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

Produce content that reflects and supports the institution’s community “bridge building” focus, including efforts or activities at the individual level of faculty, staff and students, and at the institutional level, that highlight and celebrate initiatives creating or strengthening community partnerships. Communicate a sense of belonging and the University’s aspirations for the future.

## GOAL THREE

# Enable Discoveries that Enrich and Improve Lives

### Content Theme

#### **RESEARCH**

Continue to advance Content and News' approach to storytelling to demonstrate the scope and impact of UVA's research endeavors, especially in the areas of environmental resilience, brain and neuroscience. Mature and advance content and strategy for the UVA Research Digest product to bolster the University's reputation and grow readership and engagement.

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## GOAL FOUR

# Make UVA Synonymous with Service

### Project/Program

#### **UVA | NOVA**

Through owned and earned media, support the University's new operations and growing presence in Northern Virginia. Partner with key UVA | NOVA stakeholders to offer support and counsel in the launch of the new entity through the development of a marketing awareness campaign, digital presence, and logo/branding design efforts.

#### **UVA WISE MARKETING**

Provide counsel and support to the UVA Wise marketing and communications team. Initiatives include owned and earned media, enrollment support, environmental pageantry, new branded merchandise, and the implementation of the brand standards portal at [brand.uvawise.edu](http://brand.uvawise.edu). Plan for video and photo asset refresh in Fall 2021. Also, support their development of a UVA Wise strategic plan website.

With the maturation of the 30/3.0 pipeline program for students attending Wise for a year before coming to UVA, what can we learn from the effort thus far to further inform promotion of the program.

## Content Theme

### **VALUE PROPOSITION**

Build on and develop new content that illustrates the value of a UVA education and promotes important initiatives such as SuccessUVA. This includes stories about financial aid, graduation rates, career services and outcomes, cost and debt, inclusive access, rankings, admission, the unique student experience, academic rigor and other components that contribute to the overall value of attending UVA and earning a UVA degree.

### **20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11**

Publish a series of stories that illustrate the continuing impact of 9/11 through the experiences of people affiliated with UVA whose personal and professional lives were influenced by the attacks and their aftermath. Stories will offer examples of how 9/11 inspired members of the UVA community to lives and careers of service, explore the societal impact of 9/11, and provide examples of how the memories of those lost on 9/11 continue to inspire philanthropy and entrepreneurship.

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## GOAL FIVE

# **Increase the Value and Equity of the University of Virginia Brand**

## **Projects/Programs**

### **UVA TODAY CONTENT & GROWTH STRATEGY**

Leverage learnings from FY21 UVA Today content strategy planning process to implement new distribution approaches, social media campaigns, and ongoing product development to promote UVA Today audience and engagement growth. Produce and distribute compelling and appealing content that elevates the reputation of the University and supports its strategic priorities. Reach and engage audiences through paid content promotion. Raise awareness of UVA Today through paid and owned campaigns. Develop a process for evaluating the UVA Today site design and functionality to ensure that it remains best-in-class for news and content consumption.

## **VINTAGE COLLECTION, INTRODUCED**

Introduce new vintage branded merchandise in Fall 2021. Partner with CLC, Athletics, Aramark and the UVA Bookstore to promote the new line. Develop and refine creative involved in promotion, and partner to create advertising campaign locally. Oversee design of collection “splash page” and build ahead of product launch in Fall. Working with CLC, Aramark and the UVA Bookstore, help create engaging pop-up shopping experiences on Grounds and in athletic venues. Plan ahead for year two support, including careful review of merchandise quantities and product line expansion.

## **FLEET IDENTITY PROGRAM**

Educate various stakeholders and implement a new flexible identity system for the University’s fleet of vehicles that represents a variety of different departments and serves a wide range of purposes. Effort will include a goal of converting major units –including the entire Facilities Management fleet—to the new system.

## **BRAND.DOT REVIEW**

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of brand.virginia.edu with focused attention on improving the user experience, simplifying the site, refining and enhancing brand expressions, and, if needed, adding new institutional photos, brand assets, and tools for our user community.

## **LICENSING OVERSIGHT AND SUPPORT**

Partner with Athletics to provide oversight for standards, instructions and usage information for University licensing families, including the suite of new Athletics marks as well as institutional marks and related brand details. Seek to build momentum in driving new creative uses of the marks to increase revenue.

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## GOAL SIX

# **Positively Influence Perception Among Key Audiences**

## **Projects/Programs**

### **SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY**

Develop and implement a progressive social media strategy that accounts for current trends and emerging practices. Review available data to understand content consumption, platform impact and audience behaviors. Consider the need for content promotion, issue management tracking, new platforms and overall marketing and advertising needs.

## **BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE AND MARKETING ANALYTICS**

Continue to develop and apply business intelligence practices to maximize use of analytics across our department for decision-making, campaign management, content delivery and audience research.

### **RESEARCH PLAN**

1. Conduct the second instance of a comprehensive analysis of Content and News readership and its effect on perceptions of the University.
  2. Complete and share findings for the fifth instance of a longitudinal perceptions study of the University among alumni, and among non-alumni Virginia residents.
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## **GOAL SEVEN**

# **Exercise Excellence and Best Practice in Communications and Marketing**

### **Projects/Programs**

#### **UVA TODAY EDITORIAL PLAN**

Revise annual editorial plan to reflect FY22 content priorities in support of the institution's "2030 Plan" and/or emerging priorities.

#### **DRUPAL 9 MIGRATION**

Complete the work begun in FY21 to prepare for the Drupal 9 migration, rebuilding and upgrading owned digital sites in Drupal 9 to prepare for Drupal 7's expiration in late 2022. Plan and address necessary UX improvements, visual enhancements and site functionality changes resulting from the migration.

#### **VIDEO PRODUCTION STRATEGY**

Assess and develop a renewed strategy that captures the full range of video-related work that we do. This new strategy should be informed by business needs, audience behavior, content preferences, emerging trends in digital and social delivery of video-related assets.

## **Internal Initiatives**

### **RETURN TO 2420 OLD IVY ROAD PLAN**

Prepare for the department's return to in-person work in the Fall 2021. Evaluate work-from-home experiences and staff feedback to pilot an approach intended to provide added flexibility and strengthen productivity and long-term employee satisfaction. Carefully review what we have learned about how we worked with—and related to—each other during the pandemic. Develop new ways to promote collaboration across units and teams to advance teamwork and productivity.

### **BUDGET AND EXPENSE MANAGEMENT**

Build upon the extensive work achieved in FY21 to evaluate and track the funds needed to accomplish our organizational goals and identify ways to maximize the value of our investments. Advance budget management processes to promote the highest level of internal communication and ensure proper stewardship of the University's financial resources.

### **INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE PLAN**

Launch and track progress against year one of our 2021-24 Inclusive Excellence plan, established to promote University Communications' commitment to advancing a culture of inclusivity through our departmental practices, University partnerships and strategic communications initiatives.

1. Conduct an employee climate study in the late fall to assess staff satisfaction and sense of belonging among our team. Assess feedback and compare developments over time to determine new opportunities to advance office culture and deepen sense of belonging.
2. Emphasize an office culture that values collaboration, ideation, celebration of our differences, risk-taking and coaching.
3. Seek out and regularly participate in digital accessibility training and other programming to ensure our sites and other digital communications remain current. Address updates as required based on new accessibility standards.
4. Through future hiring, enhance recruitment strategy to strengthen range of diversity within our applicant pools.

### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Support new professional development opportunities within the office and on Grounds. The focus should be aimed to two areas:

1. Continue to encourage and sponsor development opportunities aimed at advancing individual career goals, developing new skills and expertise and supporting employee passions.
2. Create and encourage professional development opportunities that reflect and support intercultural awareness and competence.