

Advancing the Brand and Reputation of NC State
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 11, 2020
12:00 pm - 1:30 pm
Brooks Hall, Room 101

Introductions, Welcome and Overview

- Committee introduced themselves.
- Provost Arden thanked the committee for their time to serve on this committee, and thanked Brad Bohlander and Benny Suggs for agreeing to co-chair the committee.
- The nine designated task forces represent the major areas that were discussed in the Strategic Planning leadership retreat.
- One theme that keeps emerging is the importance of continuing to advance the brand and reputation of NC State. One might say the brand is advanced by exceptional people doing exceptional things. While that is true, we know that in and of itself doesn't always directly advance the reputation.
- The Provost and Margery Overton read through the guidelines given to the committee on background, report format, deadlines and other useful information which will be posted to websites. These documents are available for review in the Task Force Google Drive shared folder.

Background and Charge from Provost Arden

Provost Arden provided overall process guidance and direction to the Brand Task Force, asking us to begin by discussing and pursuing the following areas.

1. Defining where we are now related to brand strength and reputation.
 - a. Where have we been as an institution and where are we now?
 - i. Think about the progress made under the current strategic plan.
 - ii. Where we are today is night and day from where we were 10 years ago, but we still have a way to go.
 - iii. What are areas where we are extraordinarily strong but not getting the recognition we deserve?
 - b. What are current issues and opportunities?
 - c. What are the negatives or obstacles to advancing brand and reputation? What are we wrestling with?
2. Major themes regarding Brand and Reputation
 - a. Where do we want to be in 10 years?

- b. What are the themes (the big areas or ideas we want to recommend that will best advance brand and reputation)?
 - c. What are related and supporting Strategies and Initiatives that we recommend?
- 3. Big Picture
 - a. Try to keep discussion and recommendations at the strategic level where possible and don't get too far in the weeds.
 - b. Don't spend time now on implementation or metrics, we will handle that later.
 - c. Don't worry about resources (costs, staff, etc.) at this time.
 - d. We want this to be big-picture, ambitious thinking. Not to be constrained by buckets.

A Word About Rankings

- Regarding rankings, understand the importance but try to avoid setting metrics. We have not been consistent across the university regarding how we approach and complete ranking surveys, and are working on that. But, we want first to do the right things to gain reputation and enhance our brand, and hopefully rankings will follow.

Committee Discussion (bullets contain feedback and ideas from committee members)

- *How we approached brand over last 5 years*
 - Discussion highlighted how NC State only became focused on the importance of brand over the last few years, and how the university established and built its brand identity over the last 5 years.
 - NC State defines brand as *"an individual's or public's sum total experience, expectations, perceptions and emotional connections (or lack thereof) with an organization."*
 - University Communications led the campus community through a collaborative, research-driven process to identify and establish a strong brand identity, resulting in a brand platform that describes who we are as a university, our differentiators and our promise to everyone we interact with.
 - From that effort we built a brand toolkit which includes colors, fonts, logos, etc. to consistently and professionally express the brand.
- *Closing the Gap between Our Quality and Our Reputation*
 - We need to close the gap between how good we are and how good our reputation is.
 - World and U.S. rankings - how do we get others to know about us - nationally and internationally? We have the quality and strengths, but not the recognition.
 - We've got the quality and strengths, but not the international reputation.
 - Need to have stronger name recognition nationally and internationally.

- We are trending in the right direction. People forget how far we've come. The challenge is not how good we are, it is how we tell that story beyond the region.
- We've come a long way over the last few years to be recognized as a leading research university across the state and regionally. But, how do we transform that recognition to a national level? We are not well enough known across the nation or around the world.
- People who know us like us. People who don't have a perception and not knowing how good we are.
- We also need to do a better job internally providing the NC State community with stories, facts and examples about the university's excellence and strengths - so that they can share with their networks and communities as well.
- How do we take advantage of being in Raleigh? Growing in size and reputation.
- We hurt our reputation when we qualify who we are, such as "top among universities that don't have a medical school." Don't qualify who we are.
- *Centennial Campus*
 - People who visit Centennial and NC State are always impressed.
 - Centennial is a wonderful asset - a wonderful draw.
 - Need to get conferences on campus - where you can see the campus of the future, see public-private partnerships. You see businesses and the Entrepreneurship Garage.
 - We need to make the benefits of Centennial (to the city, state, region, nation - to research and discovery - to education and partnerships) more clear. It is a big differentiator for NC State.
 - We need to bring people in to experience it.
- *Obstacles and Challenges*
 - Investment - a significant lack or current allocation of resources required to implement national and international brand and reputation marketing communication campaigns.
 - Risk averse - traditionally afraid to take big risks. Be strategic about a few calculated risks.
 - We're not bold enough. Old Tuffy was a step in the right direction. Bold but not crazy.
 - Lack of focus - trying to be all things to all people. Own up to what we are really good at - and don't be afraid of it.
 - Too decentralized. Need better systems to be able to collaborate, share strategies and resources, and tell our stories better.
 - From branding to surveys, decentralization is a challenge to ensure information sharing and quality.
 - Because we're so decentralized it is hard to report internships and hires to companies.

- Something that's come up is how distributed things are. When we think about branding, not all is done at an institutional level - some has to come out of departments and centers. How do we make that better resourced?
As a faculty member, how do I brand my center?
- Faculty retention. Ask the last 10 high-impact faculty who left the university why they left NC State. high impact faculty, last 10 why did they leave?

Next Steps

- Galina Meyle from the Alumni Association will be scheduling once-a-month committee meetings. We can decide as a group if we need to meet more frequently in total or in sub-groups.
- Brad and Benny will send questions for the committee to consider in advance of the next committee meeting.