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INSTITUTIONAL MARKETING STRATEGY

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF ARMENIA

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

We Aspire, Inspire, & Achieve

Our aim is to combine the power of storytelling with empirical research to promote university mission, values, and processes. We enable AUA to communicate and market its increased impact to all its strategic audiences. We engage exceptional talent committed to excellence.

Introduction.

The AUA strategic plan 2019-2020 clearly defines the University's priorities for the AUA's continued growth, identifying a range of academic performance objectives that reflects AUA ambitions. Student recruitment, research and innovation, internationalization and centres of excellence, accentuating the AUA brand reputation and building productive stakeholder engagement are all high-level features of the strategic plan. It is in that context that the AUA strategic plan identifies the need to communicate our ambition and success as one of its key enablers. The AUA strategic plan calls for operational excellence in marketing, communications and brand development to help achieve the university-wide goals. The strategic plan includes 12 goals for the University and goal number 9 indicates: To effectively promote the University's accomplishments and impact. Consequently, this proposal presents a university-wide Marketing and Communications strategy, comprising several specific strategic strands. It introduces a centralised support unit consisting of experts to deliver quality services to address the university's key purposes and to assist each of AUA's units to achieve their own goals and objectives. This strategy takes a progressive approach to building the Marketing and Communications infrastructure and capacity for engaging AUA's audience more effectively, aiming to focus on key and essential developments now and to build upon these going forward with an emphasis in the areas of research reputation, internationalization, undergraduate and graduate recruitment. Of equal importance, it introduces a joined-up, integrated and consistent approach to improve external engagement so that the AUA's overall profile and reputation with external priority audiences, becomes consistent and each of its market-facing areas communicate to the highest standard.

Background.

Universities around the world now have well-resourced marketing and communications capacity, often comparable to those found in industry and enterprise. Universities have recognized that a marketing approach and marketing and communications tools can be adapted with the purpose of broadening their institutional impact across diverse client and stakeholder groups. To date, AUA has taken a devolved approach to communications. That is, each of its parts undertakes marketing and communications at a departmental level (Admissions, Acobian

Center, Development, EPIC, Open Education). Aside from some centralized templates and guidelines, strategy and outputs are set at a localized level. In addition to this being a reflection of the segmented structure of a university, it has also been a product of necessity in the absence of a central, expert M&C support division at AUA. In 2018, in order to address the university's branding needs, AUA commissioned a rebranding effort. With the new branding guidelines, AUA is well-positioned to achieve its needs for a M&C.

Executive Summary.

AIM: To enable AUA to communicate and market its impact to all of its strategic audiences.
Goal: Deliver the marketing, communications, web and brand support services required to enable AUA's strategic plan which among others seeks to effectively promote the University's accomplishments and impact. Ultimately, this is about positing AUA as the number one choice for higher education in Armenia and the region. Objective: To provide AUA with a consistent, integrated and expert approach to promoting its core activities and achievements to its audiences and markets

The Strategy.

Approach

1. Establish a clear and consistent AUA proposition for the university as a whole.
2. Develop a series of primary AUA messages
3. Design AUA's marketing and communications around its audience(s) – putting the end user first.
4. Translate AUA stories into compelling media content.
5. Communicate and market with a focus on creativity, flair, and originality.

Actions

1. Infrastructures
 - Build a user-friendly website
 - Create a compelling brand strategy around a clear AUA proposition
2. Standards
 - Develop and outstanding social and digital media presence
 - Create an integrated AUA website that connects its entire people
3. Operational
 - Establish integrated marketing team to serve our core audiences
 - Evolve the current Communications department to a marketing and communications team equipped to provide professional, expert support across the University.

This strategy provides four key strategies by which an M&C strategy can support the delivery of the 2020 AUA Strategic Plan.

1. A coherent & powerful brand.

Action: to deliver a comprehensive brand, messaging and positioning strategy to be deployed University-wide.

In summary, the plan is to agree to top-line proposition that AUA can integrate into its external message and allow it to permeate its brand identity.

AUA should be clear, consistent and disciplined in promoting a strong reputation externally.

AUA should adopt a single, unified brand proposition for marketing, communications and wider external engagement purposes. This primary proposition message consists of AUA, as a University that is external facing and exceptionally engaged and responsive with industry, commerce and community; a University that places graduate employability as a top line priority and that offers incredible access between education, research and business. AUA is determined to build this researched reputation over the lifetime of AUA's Strategic Plan.

This primary proposition is already part of AUA's reputation – this is a proposal to simply harness this message for maximum leverage. Aligned to it will be the wider range of unique selling points (USP's) that already defines AUA across the campus experience, its cultural infrastructure and initiatives. Specific propositions will also continue to address the specific needs of any given audience – adding to and drawing from the strength of the primary brand proposition. Specific propositions will also continue to address the specific needs of any given audience – adding to and drawing from the strength of the primary brand proposition.

A comprehensive brand strategy for AUA will be delivered by the end of 2020, beginning with a baseline reputation and perception audit, which we will use to build our brand strategy.

2. Expertise in marketing, communication, web & branding.

Action: recruit and restructure to create an expert M&C hub to support university-wide business aims.

As the industry knows, a strong brand and marketing excellence are key to success. This AUA will give priority to its brand and how it is marketed. Creating a central M&C Division, that

possess the knowledge, skills and resources to provide the expert marketing and communications services required to help AUA achieve its ambitious growth targets.

The current decentralized marketing model offers limitations and minimum scope for:

1. Coordination or leadership;
2. A consistent direction or standard approach;
3. Efficient use of resources. Web is a good example of this inefficiency but publications, advertising, social media are similarly lacking consistency.

A central tenet of this proposal is that marketing and communications is an expert and increasingly specialized activity. Within AUA the evidence supports the view that M&C has been engaged as downstream activity across faculty and units with no consistent expertise; this is self-evidently both ineffective and costly. This strategy therefore proposes that AUA resources a central expert Marketing and Communications Division to support the university as a whole, its faculty and its key units.

3. Putting our audiences & our markets first.

Action: communicate in a consistently compelling way to an increasingly diverse AUA audience.

To communicate effectively, a university needs to know its message, know its audiences and hone that message to maximum effect on the channels that connect best with each audience.

Recruitment of Clients (including all faculty, graduate school and research office).

AUA's various student audiences are distinct in nature and are processed via multiple admissions routes. If marketing is primarily about the generation of leads via the creation of a larger and deeper market share, these multiple admissions offices are the point of sale for AUA. The focus should be to ensure a consistency in sales effectiveness. The focus should also be to integrate AUA multiple admissions routes – both for CRM purposes but also to begin to build a data-informed approach to marketing. The absence of a data strategy, a CRM and an integrated approach admission at PG level all currently hinder effective marketing and sales.

Research, Science and Innovation Clients for University - To Business (U2B) Development.

Effectively communicating a compelling research and innovation story has to be core to AUA's M&C strategy as it focusses on AUA becoming a 'research-led' university. An accelerated approach to building AUA's national and international research reputation with both peer and wider strategic audiences should be a factor at all levels.

AUA M&C should be resourced to a standard that allows it to compete with comparable universities. For example, it aims to deliver a full-time promotion of AUA research and innovation story targeted at strategic audiences, hosted across the correct channels and achieving real impact through compelling content. This is to be consistent with AUA's strategic plan of building a research-led profile.

The Return on Investment (ROI) for AUA is to achieve the research and innovation reputation that its competitor 3. Putting our audiences & our markets first. Putting our audiences & markets first. universities are achieving and in so doing, provide researchers with the profile and exposure that can help drive connections with their respective research activities. This actions speaks to the ambitious plans set out in AUA's Strategic Plan.

Communicating with a Focus on Creativity, Flair and Originality. Telling the AUA story is the cornerstone of the communications strategy. It requires clear internal channels for stories – or 'content' – to be captured by a central communications team with the expert skills to translate these academic, expert and research-based endeavours into compelling stories that connect with significantly larger target audiences and the wider public through the most appropriate communications channels. The AUA story should be told with colour, personality, creativity, and the avoidance of outmoded convention.

This is where the marketing and communications perspectives merge: compelling content on the website is the launch pad for effective communications and, increasingly, social media provides the channels to AUA's target audiences alongside traditional media.

4. Creating a world-class user experience.

Action: introduce a new AUA website AUA needs a web presence that serves its many audiences and that makes engaging with AUA online a consistently easy experience; internally, AUA needs to integrate its many reception points with its external audiences so that their experiences become consistently positive and optimized for maximum business success. The priority areas in need of action are:

Website

A compelling web profile and proposition is of paramount importance to any university and especially so to a university with the ambition of AUA's Strategic Plan. The internationalization aims of AUA's Strategic Plan speak to a global audience whose first impression of AUA will be online. Equally, the recruitment ambition articulated requires a national-level web strategy that matches the presence being achieved by the wider sector.

Audiences that are increasingly, and often almost wholly, reliant on web communications will judge the calibre of an institution on its online content and performance. For these reasons and for the fact that virtually all external engagement refers back to the AUA website and is founded on a baseline of online excellence, a transformation of AUA's current website has to be a high priority for this marketing and communications strategy.

Social Media

Implementing the AUA social media strategy that seeks to rapidly build and engage AUA's social audiences as a means of supporting branding, recruitment marketing and profile building. Social media is a dominant medium for many of AUA's core audiences – it is where many of AUA's strategic audiences reside. AUA's Social Media Strategy will aim to:

1. Align all of AUA's official social media accounts on one publishing platform;
2. Allow AUA to promote its primary message to its diverse audiences;
3. Collectively promote excellence in AUA's social media content and tone; and,
4. Undertake campaigns for both recruitment and industry audiences that are compelling, scalable, targeted and measurable.

Marketing & Communications Production

Introducing a quality, minimum standard to all AUA collateral via a centralized support service to faculty and units that promotes a consistently high standard of how AUA as sum of many parts portrays itself to external audiences through content, design, and branding.

Currently, there are various production houses working directly with faculty and units producing online and offline outputs of varying presentation and quality. To some extent, the development of a AUA house-style is addressing this. However, a concern arises whereby the cost to the university in a wholly outsourced and devolved solution in this area cannot deliver efficiency or maximum return on these investments. AUA M&C, as reconfigured and resourced in this strategy, can provide a central content conduit for both faculty and units. This would deliver a higher quality content production process, better content and collateral for stakeholders and real efficiencies for AUA financially. Moreover, the external audience would begin to experience a single, unified AUA.

M&C Planning & Operations Informed by Insight & Intelligence

Investing in a system that means that all to-market, external facing activity is informed by data, research and intelligence as a means to achieve greater efficiency and greater competitive edge.

Marketing and communications planning and operations have largely been guided by limited data, evidence and judgment in the absence until recently of a cohered M&C function, the level

of demand for consumer and market insight has been low. M&C team will complete a full audit of all current and potential data, and research to influence AUA's decision making and operational performance.

KHACHATUR ABOVYAN ARMENIAN STATE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY

MARKETING STRATEGY

Introduction

Marketing Strategy of Khachatur Abovyan Armenian State Pedagogical University /hereinafter ASPU/ is created to promote ASPU, its brand, and its resources to the national and international community and to increase student recruitment by meeting the following main goals and objectives:

Goal 1. To enhance visibility and reputation of ASPU on national and international level

Objective 1.1 To create and communicate a meaningful brand which will differentiate the services provided by ASPU from other HEIs in order to attract not only potential students, but also potential staff, together with research clients

Objective 1.2 To enhance the University's reputation by key marketing messages across all platforms to all potential stakeholders

Objective 1.3 Work with faculty, staff and students to develop and implement impactful, cost-effective marketing communication strategies to enhance public awareness of ASPU as an affordable and quality provider of higher education.

Objective 1.4 To develop tailored and sustainable communications plans to each target stakeholder group, using case studies, student and staff voice and evidence based stories

Objective 1.5 To build relationship with ASPU alumni to ensure that they remain strong advocates for the University

Goal 2. To increase recruitment of national and international students

Objective 2.1 To foster further the use of market research to support portfolio development and recruitment strategies.

Objective 2.2 Offer high schools and colleges liaison services to target schools and colleges of further education

Objective 2.3 To develop and undertake sustained relationship management campaigns with applicants, potential applicants and partner institutions that encourage applications and convert applicants into students

Objective 2.4 To provide websites, marketing materials, promotional campaigns and events that encourage target students to engage with ASPU and ASPU's brand identity and values

Goal 3. To provide consistency across all marketing and recruitment channels

Objective 3.1 Develop and implement corporate communications strategy

Objective 3.2 To exploit social media as a key communications channel by increasing its presence on all web/social media

Objective 3.4 To Increase web/social media presence via official website, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter etc.

Objective 3.5 To develop an integrated marketing campaign involving promotions such as adv. through social media, direct mail and selling

Objective 3.6 To increase personal interactions with all stakeholders by participating in different national and international events

VANADZOR STATE UNIVERSITY AFTER H. TOUMANYAN

MARKETING PLAN (2020-2024)

VSU Marketing Plan was created on the basis of VSU Development Strategy.

The process of creating the Marketing Plan was carried out by the VSU Acting Rector, Vice-rector on scientific affairs, Head of Quality Assurance Centre, Department of Cooperation and Relations, Department of Media and Publishing, Department of Education Reforms, as well as the representatives from the Chairs of Foreign Languages, Psychology, Sociology and Economics.

To identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the University in the field of marketing the working group conducted a SWOT analysis, as a result of which the following main objectives of the University's marketing plan were determined:

1. Increase in VSU ranking in RA;
2. Enhancement of VSU International visibility and attractiveness;
3. Development of University-society relationships.

To fulfill these objectives, the University shall take the following steps:

Objective 1: Increase in VSU Ranking in RA

1.1. Systematic dissemination of VSU academic staff's professional activity

- to organize online courses, conferences, round-table discussions, webinars, master classes and other activities to exchange best practices and expertise with partner universities;
- to illustrate VSU staff's innovative approaches, scientific research activity, and successful experience through social networks, local mass media, VSU official web page and other educational platforms;
- to periodically share comparatively successful and interesting lectures, seminars, discussions, intellectual games online;
- to periodically organize open lessons at secondary schools of the region to strengthen university-school relations;

1.2. Publicizing VSU students' and graduates' academic achievements

- to involve regional students studying at VSU in the dissemination of the University's activities;
- to create #AlumniVSU online platform to create database about the University graduates and their achievements;
- to periodically organize reunion events for the University graduates.

Objective 2: Enhancement of VSU International Visibility and Attractiveness

2.1. Provision of intercultural learning environment, recruitment of foreign students:

- to become attractive in the labor market it is essential to publicize short descriptions of academic programs and disciplines in a foreign language through the official web page and other means of mass media;
- to organize international summer schools;
- to organize trainings for those VSU students and staff who have participated in international credit mobility and are willing to act as VSU ambassadors;
- to participate in international fairs and exhibitions;
- to develop joint projects for VSU and partner university students;
- to upload on the VSU website the staff's scientific articles, scientific proceedings, and collections of conference papers each separately available by the author.

2.2. Promotion of international credit mobility:

- to provide information on mobility among internal and external stakeholders;
- to illustrate and apply the best practices of international mobility;
- to provide incoming students and staff with information and guidelines about the University, city, region, republic, transportation, food, entertainment, sightseeing, etc.

Objective 3: Development of University-Society Relationships.

Dissemination and Promotional Activities:

- to make promotional and informative videos about VSU in English;
- to organize internal and external PR campaigns (student volunteering groups, student council, student scientific association);
- to increase opportunities of bilateral University-Society communication;
- to activate cooperation with local and republic mass media;
- to create a database of VSU stakeholders and graduates.

For the implementation of Strategic Marketing Plan, the following actions are to be taken:

- clear-cut action plan,
- scheduled activities,
- established budget,
- monitoring periodically conducted by a steering committee.

SHIRAK STATE UNIVERSITY MARKETING STRATEGY

The marketing strategy was developed on the basis of Gyumri State Pedagogical Institute (GSPI) Development Strategic Plan (2015-2019).

A marketing strategy has been developed to fulfill the mission of the University, with the aim of raising and strengthening the rating of the University in the region as an organization implementing educational and scientific activities.

When conducting marketing activities, the University has taken into account external and internal beneficiaries:

- Applicants
- Students
- Lecturers
- Other University staff
- Parents
- Audience
- Organizations: commercial and non-commercial (Armenian and foreign)
- Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport and other institutions related to education.

In conducting market research, the University has distinguished the following goals of its marketing strategy:

- Raising the University rating;
- Improving communication tools with internal and external beneficiaries;
- Improving and introducing marketing tools.

GOAL 1. The following criteria have been set for raising the University rating:

- University educational activities;
- Scientific research activities;
- International visibility;
- University brand;

- Innovations.

1.1.To improve its educational activities, the University has set the following objectives:

- To regularly collect observations and suggestions from students, graduates and employers on the effectiveness of the educational process by providing feedback;
- To examine and analyze the link between the theoretical material, practical work and practice and the compliance with modern labor market demands;
- To ensure the availability of optional subjects by students for providing learning outcomes;
- To periodically review and comply professional academic programs with the labor market demands;
- To expand and diversify the business cooperation.

1.2.To improve its scientific research activities, the University has set the following objectives:

- To encourage the scientific research activities of SUS academic staff;
- To stimulate the coverage of scientific research activities on the University website and other communication sources;
- To conduct an annual intra-university grant competition;
- To carry out joint trainings and online courses with other universities;
- To organize Academic Mobility of lecturers with different specialties;
- To organize conferences and discussions with partner universities as an exchange of experience;
- To cover the open lessons and scientific seminars on the official website and social networks.

1.3.To increase its international visibility, the University has set the following objectives:

- To develop a foreign language PAP (Professional Academic Program) specification and subject descriptions, post them on the official website and send to cooperating foreign universities;
- To train the lecturers to carry out a foreign language PAP;
- To ensure a continuous increase in the number of participants in Academic Mobility;

- To participate in international educational fair-exhibitions;
- To develop the possibility of receiving a double / joint diploma;
- To periodically revise and update the foreign language sections of SUSh website.

1.4. For the brand, the University has set the following objectives:

- To ensure the presence of media at University events;
- To ensure online broadcasts of University events on the Internet;
- To regularly post informative materials on University activities in social networks;
- To organize online courses in Armenian and foreign languages;
- To develop and expand educational services for foreign students;
- To organize preparatory courses for applicants;
- To involve students, alumni and faculty in University brand design;
- To expand cooperation with schools;
- To encourage the best students.

1.5. The University has set the following objectives for innovation:

- To expand the number of technically equipped auditoriums;
- To organize courses with the use of new technology;
- To encourage innovative scientific research activities among students and faculty;
- To establish the education-business relationship within the University.

GOAL 2. Improving communication tools with internal and external beneficiaries

The University has set the following objectives:

- To create a database of students and alumni;
- To create a database of schools, colleges;
- To establish a guide for first-year students,
- To introduce the idea of mentorship in student life;
- To expand cultural, sports and public events at the University;
- To regularly organize school Olympiads;
- To organize professional orientation courses;

- To organize an open day for applicants and other beneficiaries;
- To regularly participate in educational fair-exhibitions;
- To organize free courses for applicants;
- To organize additional paid courses for students and other interested persons;
- To represent University academic programs in schools;
- To organize open lessons and discussions for public school staff and pupils;

GOAL 3. Improving and introducing marketing tools

The University has set the following objectives:

- To organize internal and external advertising campaigns;
- To prepare foreign-language advertising and informational clips;
- To create an employer base and regularly send job offers to students and graduates;
- To create an internal student network;
- To introduce and advertise the distance learning based on certain academic programs;
- To regularly post promotional information materials on the Internet and in the media;
- To regularly organize corporate events;
- To prepare image stands;
- To create an online University weekly,
- To create Armenian and foreign language booklets and University study guides;
- To create souvenirs for enhancing the University brand;
- To continually expand and update the materials posted on the official website in Armenian and foreign languages.

To implement an effective marketing strategy at the University, objectives were set to develop:

- A Marketing plan according to the schedule;
- Advertising strategy;
- Public Relations strategy;
- University image design policy.

As well as to implement:

- An employment analysis of students and graduates;
- A periodic study of the labor market;
- A study of the students' learning satisfaction;
- A study of the socio-psychological description of the University student, applicant and alumni.

YEREVAN STATE CONSERVATORY MARKETING STRATEGY

Yerevan State Conservatory strategic plan was the basis for the YSC marketing strategy.

The main purpose of the YSC Marketing strategy is to support the mission, vision, and academic processes established by the University.

The marketing strategy outlines the priorities that may influence the University's continuing development and reputation. For this reason, the university has set goal and objectives aimed at the development and enhancement of the reputation of the university on the international platforms.

Goal: To make YSC a preferred and competitive higher educational institution in the region and on the international level.

Based on the stated goal, the following objectives are set:

- To enhance the attractiveness of the university on the international level
- To enhance the reputation of YSC in Armenia
- To increase the awareness level of society about YSC activity.

Objective 1. To enhance the attractiveness of the university on the international level

- To participate in international higher education fairs.
- To present the history and achievements of the university on international platforms.
- To increase students' involvement in international competitions and highlight results.
- To organize events with representatives of foreign HEIs: seminars, conferences, discussions, etc.
- To present the best practices of academic recognition.

Objective 2 . To enhance the reputation of YSC in Armenia

- To introduce to the society the famous professors of YSC.
- To cover academic staff achievements, researches, best practices.
- To present to the public the educational activities and services of YSC.
- To continue collaboration with RA music schools and colleges to raise students' interest in YSC.
- To have meetings with YSC students and graduates, present their successes to the public through the media.

Objective 3. To increase the level of awareness of society about YSC activity.

- To produce and present commercials.
- To ensure close cooperation of the Conservatory with the media.

- To spread information about YSC activity on social platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).
- To develop an attractive website of the university, where relevant information about YSC is placed.

