

9.81 University Communication & Marketing (REVISED WORKING DRAFT 10.15.24)

Purpose

University communications are essential for engaging with university constituents, conducting institutional business, fostering engagement at UNI and sharing the University's story of excellence and impact in teaching, scholarship, service, and outreach. A unified university communications policy is necessary to establish clear responsibilities and standards for how university entities connect and communicate with constituents.

~~To establish authority for oversight of official university marketing and communication channels, programs and activities.~~

Scope

The Office of University Relations oversees official university and marketing channels. Official UNI communication channels include web domains housed under the UNI.edu and UNIPanthers.com platforms, the main UNI social media platforms and their affiliated sibling accounts. High-level official institutional UNI email communications from the Office of the President (or at the request of that office) also fall under this umbrella.

UNI's marketing and communications operates under a decentralized structure. Individuals residing in multiple colleges, divisions and departments perform a variety of marketing, communications and creative work within their areas of focus. These individuals collaborate with their peers and members of the University Relations staff.

Policy

The Office of University Relations (UR) is charged with providing leadership, guidance and strategic oversight for UNI master brand institutional marketing and communication channels used to reach internal and external audiences.

These duties specifically include the usage of master brand logos, marks, affiliated lockups and graphic treatments. Other components included under the purview of UR include: Visual identity, editorial style, crisis communication, media relations, university websites, internal campus communication, community relations activities, parent communication (in conjunction with other campus departments), printing, video displays and contracting for related professional services.

UR shall develop standards, guidelines and procedures necessary to manage university communication efforts and routinely communicate these to university units.

In alignment with the University of Northern Iowa's Strategic Plan, the Office of University Relations develops and implements the university's global marketing and communications strategy. UR engages Admissions, Unit Marketers, Alumni Association, UNI Foundation, Athletics and other university stakeholders in processes designed to develop, implement and communicate the University's marketing and communication strategies which includes sharing the University's story of excellence and impact in teaching, scholarship, service and outreach. The strategic marketing and communications plans for individual colleges, departments or units should align with the larger objectives set forth by UR. Those individual colleges, departments or units are responsible for the tactical implementation of their plan as it relates to their specific area and would include activities and events not necessarily addressed in the higher-level University strategic plan.

~~The Office of University Relations (UR) is charged with the leadership and oversight of all official institutional marketing and communication channels, and programs and activities used to reach internal and external audiences.~~

~~These specifically include those activities related to logos and marks/visual identity, style, usage, crisis communication, media relations, university website, internal campus communication, campus distribution of mass e-mail, community relations activities, parent communication, printing, displays, and contracting for related professional services.~~

~~UR shall develop standards, guidelines and procedures necessary for the effective management of university communication efforts, and shall routinely communicate these to university units.~~

Marketing & Brand Management

- UR shall regularly develop and make available a marketing and communication plan that aligns with the university's and UR's strategic goals.
- UR shall work with Admissions, Unit Marketers, Alumni Association, UNI Foundation, Athletics and other university stakeholders to establish processes and procedures for stakeholder engagement in developing, implementing and communicating the University marketing and communications plan.
- UR shall regularly communicate the marketing and communication plans with University stakeholders such as senior leadership, deans council and Unit Marketers and report progress relative to the goals and objectives outlined in said plans. This includes regular assessment and reporting of internal and external brand awareness to evaluate the success of those branding and marketing strategies.

- Colleges and other departments outside University Relations shall support the objectives outlined in UR's marketing and communication plan while also implementing the marketing and communication efforts associated with their units' activities, events, and priorities.
- UR shall develop, maintain and make routinely available for use by university units, a visual identity and editorial style guide.
- University entities shall conform to the standards outlined in the University of Northern Iowa Visual Identity & Editorial Style Guide, including but not limited to the prescribed use of the nameplate (or approved affiliate marks) on all promotional and electronic communication paid for with university funds. These rules also apply to internal signage and on-campus display concepts developed for or by university colleges, departments and affiliated units. <https://ur.uni.edu/uni-brand>

University nameplate and associated logos

- ~~● UR shall develop, maintain and make routinely available for use by university units, a visual identity and style guide.~~
- ~~● University entities shall conform to the standards set forth in the University of Northern Iowa Visual Identity & Style Guide.~~
- ~~● University entities shall use the prescribed nameplate (or approved affiliate marks) and associated colors, etc., as described in the Visual Identity & Style Guide.~~
- ~~● The nameplate or wordmark must be included in all promotional print and electronic communications paid for with university funds.~~
- All university and university-related web pages shall conform to the development standards outlined in the university web policy -- UNI Web tools: Resources for Web Developers. <https://ur.uni.edu/uni-brand/web-guidelines>
- ~~● All university and university-related Web pages shall conform to the standards set forth in the University of Northern Iowa Visual Identity & Style Guide.~~
- ~~● All university and university-related Web pages also shall conform to the Web page development standards set forth in the university Web policy -- UNI Web tools: Resources for Web Developers.~~

- UR shall develop standards, guidelines, and procedures to manage university social media channels effectively. University entities managing unit-level social media channels must follow those social media standards and guidelines. Units maintaining social media platforms should provide a point of contact (name, email, cell phone) for the primary gatekeeper(s) of their accounts. <https://ur.uni.edu/uni-brand/social-media-uni>

Marketing & Advertising Operations

- UR or its designee must approve marketing/advertising concepts and tactical materials before production whether by an affiliated unit/program or a commercial agency. This document defines the designee as a UNI Unit Marketer or UR's ad agency of record. UR retains the right to grant and rescind designee status based on compliance/non-compliance with UNI brand standards.
- UNI permits the purchase of advertising in external media to advance the institution and its individual units and programs so long as the advertisement incorporates the established university graphic identity, reflects key institutional messages and adheres to the established guidelines and standards.
- All graphic elements included in any advertising must conform to the standards outlined in the university's visual identity guidelines.
- UR is the point of contact for paid advertising for the university. This includes traditional print, radio and television advertising, as well as online, OTT, programmatic display ads, as well as social media ads. UR or its agency oversees all placement of advertising for the university.
- UR may determine that a specific advertising or multi-media project or campaign is best handled by a commercial agency rather than being produced in-house and assists campus units in coordinating with approved vendors.

Use of commercial marketing/public relations/advertising agencies and consultants

- ~~If UR decides a project or body of work is best handled by a commercial agency, it shall select the appropriate agency for the job (in accordance with university purchasing guidelines):~~
- ~~In cases where commercial agencies are contracted to provide marketing communication services to the university, or an affiliated unit/program, UR must approve concepts and tactical materials before final production:~~

- UR shall maintain an inventory of event assets for use on and off campus. Rental and set-up fees may apply in some cases.

Displays

- ~~● Display concepts, developed for or by university colleges and departments, and affiliated units, shall comply with the standards set forth in the University of Northern Iowa Visual Identity & Style Guide.~~
- ~~● UR shall maintain an inventory of professional display units for use on and off campus. Rental and set-up fees may apply in some cases.~~
- University Relations shall maintain an archive of approved recent photos for publication, website, social media and other applications by units across campus. The Rod Library Special Collections & University Archives archive historical UNI photos. Campus units may coordinate photo shoots if working with UR-approved freelancers to ensure that UNI retains intellectual rights to use and archive those images. Before any photo shoot, photo subjects must be vetted via the threat assessment.
- ~~● The UR photographer is responsible for maintaining an archive of university photos for use in publications and on websites.~~
- ~~● To access UNI's PhotoShelter, please visit: <https://uni.photoshelter.com/index>~~

Communications & Media Relations

Crisis Communications

- UR is responsible for official institutional communication on and off campus related to issues of concern to the UNI community and crises. UNI Public Safety is charged with alerting the community regarding any imminent threats to campus, along with other notices that fall under its purview.
- UR (or its designee) shall use the automated UNI Alert system to distribute weather messages.
- UR shall develop, maintain and routinely distribute a university Communication Handbook for Issues, Crises and Emergencies.
<https://uni.edu/resources/alert>
- ~~● UR is specifically responsible for official institutional communication on and off campus related to issues and crises.~~

- ~~● UR (or its designee) shall use the automated UNI Alert system to distribute emergency messages.~~
- ~~● UR shall develop, maintain and routinely distribute a university Communication Handbook for Issues, Crises and Emergencies.~~

Campus Communications

- UR is responsible for sharing university-wide announcements. Announcements and feature story ideas can be submitted to UR for distribution.

Campus Communication/Mass email

- ~~● UR is responsible for sharing university announcements through appropriate channels such as Inside UNI.~~

Parent Communication

- Admissions shall coordinate with UR to approve automated email and direct mail enrollment marketing communication to parents of prospective and incoming students.
- UR shall coordinate with appropriate university designees including Student Life to ensure messaging to parents and families of current students is accurate and aligns with UNI standards.
- ~~● UR shall lead university efforts to integrate communication to parents of current and prospective students.~~
- ~~● All mass communication to parents of current and prospective students shall be approved by UR. Some designated departments and commercial agencies may be authorized by UR to distribute specific information to parents.~~

Media Relations

- UR shall be responsible for contact with the news media, including creating and distributing information relating to general university news or topics requiring an institutional response. UR may authorize some departments to distribute specific information and news releases to the media upon request.
- News releases related to the university or its respective units shall be edited, approved and distributed by UR or its designee. UR shall develop and routinely distribute guidelines for news release development and media contact.
<https://ur.uni.edu/guidelines-news-releases>

- News conferences shall be coordinated by or in partnership with UR. University Relations should be consulted to gauge potential media interest in events coordinated by other units, such as dedications, groundbreaking, etc.
- Faculty and staff should coordinate with UR before engaging with the media or conducting interviews on university-related topics. Student-governance groups are strongly encouraged to use University Relations to contact/engage/respond to the news media.

<https://ur.uni.edu/contact-us>

Media Relations

- ~~UR shall be responsible for contact with the news media, including creation and distribution of information relating to general university news or topics requiring an institutional response. Some designated departments and commercial agencies may be authorized by UR to distribute specific information to the media.~~
- ~~News releases related to the university or its respective units shall be edited, approved and distributed by UR. UR shall develop and routinely distribute guidelines for news release development and media contact.~~
- ~~News conferences shall be coordinated by or through UR.~~
- ~~Faculty, staff and student-governance groups are encouraged to use University Relations to contact the news media, but are not required to do so. Governance groups may contact the media, issue news releases, and conduct news conferences as they deem necessary.~~