



Minnesota State Colleges and Universities

Update on Brand Strategy Development



Board of Trustees Study Session

June 17, 2014

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities system is an Equal Opportunity employer and educator.





Current Situation

1. The distinguishing features and unique characteristics of each Minnesota state college and university are among MnSCU's greatest strengths. These strengths however, present an ongoing challenge to our ability to communicate our collective value to the state and contributions to the economy, the workforce, jobs, and the lives of Minnesotans.
2. Current positioning of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities does not fully communicate what we offer students, and does not adequately relay the benefits of public higher education, or result in meaningful connections with key audiences, or sufficiently differentiate us from the University of Minnesota, private and for-profit institutions.
3. Data show that awareness levels of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities among prospective students, current students, parents and other stakeholders are low. Data also show that the collective impact of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities on the people of Minnesota and the state's economy is not well understood.



Objectives

- Strengthen the brand and positioning of each college and university.
- Improve the ability of each college and university to attract and serve students and communities.
- Increase awareness among key audiences, reinforce partnerships with communities and businesses, increase strong support among opinion leaders and public officials, all of which results in increased enrollment and support for our colleges and universities.



Target Audiences

- Prospective students
- Influencers of prospective students - parents/families/high school guidance counselors/workforce center counselors/etc.
- Current students
- Alumni
- Donors
- Elected and appointed officials
- Community and business leaders, industry partners and related state agencies
- Residents of the state of Minnesota (metro and Greater Minnesota), especially those who live in the communities served by MnSCU colleges and universities
- Faculty and staff

Process Review

■ January 2014: Formed steering committee

- Earl Potter, President (co-chair)
 - Peggy Kennedy, President (co-chair)
 - Ron Anderson, President
 - Sue Collins, President
 - Richard Davenport, President
 - Richard Hanson, President
 - Loren Boone, Marketing and Communications
 - Kent Clark, University Advancement
 - Scott Faust, Communications and Marketing
 - Mary Jacobson, Marketing and Public Relations

 - Trent Janezich, Advanced Minnesota
 - Denise Laymon, Development and Alumni
 - Bill Mulso, Advancement
 - Jim Stumne, Marketing
 - Rebekah Summer, Research and Communications
 - Peter Wielinski, Student Services
- St. Cloud State University
Minnesota State Community & Technical College
Century College
Northeast Higher Education District
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Bemidji State University
St. Cloud State University
Minnesota State University, Mankato
Bemidji State University
Anoka-Ramsey Community College and
Anoka Technical College
Northeast Higher Education District
Minnesota State Community & Technical College
Southwest Minnesota State University
Century College
Alexandria Technical and Community College
Minnesota State Community & Technical College



Process Review (continued)

- February 2014: Issued RFP
- March 2014: Interviewed top 3 agencies
- April 2014: Selected PadillaCRT
 - Criteria
 - Understanding of objectives
 - Response and work plan
 - Qualifications and experience
 - Cost/value
- May 2014: Finalized Contract

PadillaCRT Higher Education Experience



Other Higher Education Experience: Bethel University and Seminary, Capella University, College of William & Mary College of Business, Davidson College, Grove City College, Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Catherine University, University of Richmond, University of St. Thomas School of Law, Virginia State University, Virginia Union University and St. Cloud State University.





Building a Successful Brand

Before a brand identity can be effective, it must be supported by internal audiences who care deeply about the equity they have built over time.

The approach includes building a lasting identity that will be:

- Informed by inclusive research tightly linked to a process that builds consensus across the colleges and universities in the system
- Dynamic enough to engage faculty, staff, alumni, donors, board members, students, referral sources, civic leaders and the community at large
- Tightly linked to MnSCU's Strategic Framework and Charting the Future
- Able to create additional value without undermining the strength of each college's and university's brand

Approach

Guiding principles:

- Clear and common goals
- Fact-based recommendations
- Internal stakeholders involved throughout

Process:





To Get There, We Need To:

- Understand how MnSCU colleges and universities reference their own brands as well as their connection to the system brand
- Understand peer approaches as well as strategies that work in similarly complex organizations outside of higher education
- Understand benefits, barriers and points of difference of our state colleges and universities
- Develop positioning and brand strategy options and recommendations



Phase I. Current Positioning and Brand Assessment

Positioning and Brand Audit

- College and university brand assessment
 - Diversity and commonality of positioning
 - Use of MnSCU brand
- System brand assessment
 - Consistency
 - Channels

Peer and Competitive Audit

- Other comparable colleges and universities systems
 - Trends
 - Evidence of best practices
- Other higher education options in Minnesota
 - Trends

Deliverable: Summary report that informs Phase II





Phase II. Constituent Research and Insights

Insight, Identify Trends

- Qualitative one-on-one interviews, 15 minutes in length, via phone, 72 interviews

- Participants:
 - alumni
 - prospective students
 - parents of prospective students
 - current students
 - business leaders
 - community leaders
 - college and university presidents
 - legislators
 - members of the Board of Trustees

Phase II. Constituent Research and Insights (continued)

Gauge Attitudes; Establish Benchmarks

- Survey of target audiences with most questions consistent across groups
- Data collected using 3 approaches:
 1. Online survey of general population adults in Minnesota to capture state residents, parents/families of prospective students and opinion leaders (N=1,000, MOE +/- 3.1%)
 2. Online survey, distributed through MnSCU, of current students, faculty and staff, alumni, donors and high school guidance counselors
 3. Telephone survey of prospective students:
 - N=400, MOE +/- 4.9%
 - Minnesota residents, 17 – 30 years of age, who are considering college next 2 years
 - Oversample people of color, n=100
 - 55% seven-county metro/45% greater Minnesota
 - Establishes benchmark that can be used to measure progress over time

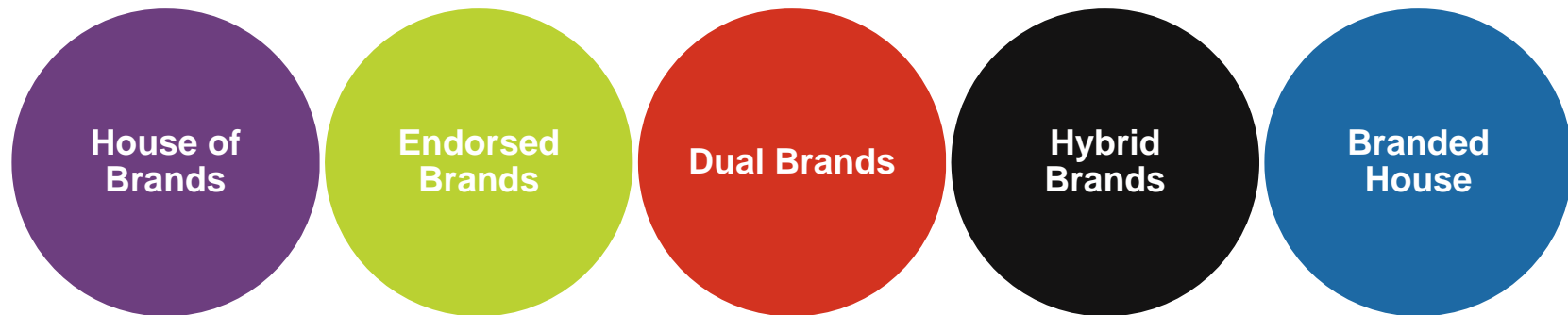
Deliverable: Report summarizing qualitative and quantitative findings





Phase III. Develop and Present Positioning and Brand Strategy Options and Recommendations

Brand Strategy Options:



Brand Strategy Options

House of Brands

Strong individual brands, tied together loosely – if at all - by umbrella brand



Brand Strategy Options (continued)

Endorsed
Brands

Common umbrella identity **attached** to each entity



Brand Strategy Options (continued)

Dual Brands

Parent organization and individual brands share platform equally



Brand Strategy Options (continued)

Hybrid
Brands

Mix of the above

Google

+

nest



Adobe Flash Player



Minnesota
STATE COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES

Brand Strategy Options (continued)

Branded
House

All brands presented as one, single identity



Phase III. Develop and Present Positioning and Brand Strategy Options and Recommendations (continued)

- Present up to three positioning and brand strategy options based on research
- Provide sample brand platforms for each, including some of the following:
 - Brand position
 - Brand experience drivers
 - Brand story lines
 - Brand manifesto
 - Brand expression
 - Constituent brand session
- Test at least two of these options with key stakeholders
42 total individual interviews; six from each:
 - Students
 - Faculty and staff
 - Prospective students
 - Business and community leaders
 - Alumni
 - MnSCU board members
 - MnSCU presidents



Phase IV: Final Report and Recommendations

Recommended brand platforms and approaches for implementation may also include:

- Recommendations for a multi-institutional brand advisory board that will guide and oversee the brand over the long term
- Recommendations for structural and operational initiatives to gain acceptance and consistency
- Adjustments to brand style guidelines
- Tools to help quickly and easily evaluate individual treatments to support brand standards
- Training for brand stewards and ambassadors



Leadership Involvement

Presidents

- Individual interviews with each president
- Updates at Leadership Council meetings
- Email updates from time to time from the steering committee

Steering Committee

- Oversees the work of PadillaCRT and involves others along the way in answering questions that come up, or re-directing as needed
- Works closely with the chancellor, cabinet members, and the chief communications officer to analyze the results of the research and consider a potential best path forward

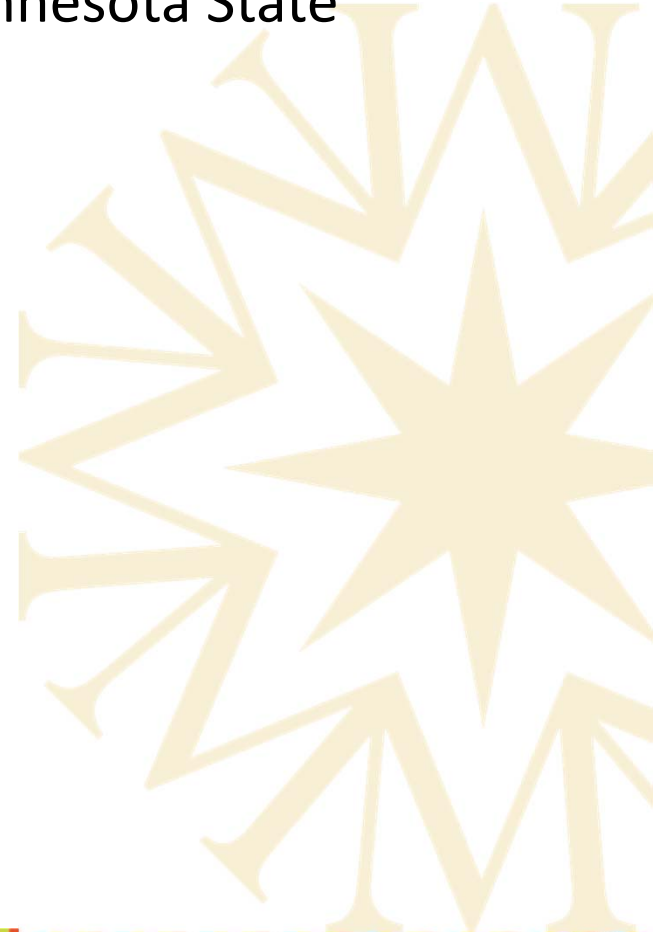
Project Timeline

| Deliverables | | Timing |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Phase I: Branding and Positioning Audit (includes review of current positioning and competitive benchmarks) | | June |
| Phase II: | Qualitative Research | June – July |
| | Quantitative Research | Aug. – Mid-Sept. |
| Phase III: Positioning and Brand Strategy Options and Brand Platform Testing | | Late Sept. – Nov. |
| Phase IV: Final Presentation and Recommendations Report | | Early Dec. |



Questions For Discussion

1. Does this effort advance the board's expectations about the need for a stronger brand strategy for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities?
2. Is this approach on the right track?
3. What suggestions do you have?





Thank You

Earl Potter, President
St. Cloud State University

Sue Collins, President
Northeast Higher Education District

Carmen Shields, Director of Marketing and Development
Advancement Office

Mary Jacobson, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
Anoka Ramsey Community College and Anoka Technical College

