Communication Master Plan
2015-2020

Blue Mountain
Community College

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Overview

In 2014, the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education directed the BMCC administration to conduct a strategic planning process to serve as a guide for the next five years. Over the course of a year, the College conducted a transparent and inclusive strategic planning process that included all employees and numerous stakeholders. The result of this process outlined a refreshed vision, mission, value statements, and core themes that serve as the foundation for the goals set forth in the strategic plan.

MISSION: To provide responsive and high-quality, innovative educational programs and services that promote personal and professional growth to strengthen our communities.

The second goal in the Strategic Plan calls for a "current and comprehensive BMCC marketing, communication and recruitment plan", and one of BMCC's values includes communication. These strategic identifications of communication as a necessary component of the Strategic Plan and BMCC's every day values demonstrate the value the College places on strong communication internally and externally.

One of the first objectives of this specific goal commits to the creation of a BMCC Communication Master Plan. The responsibility for the creation of this plan lies with the Vice President of Public Relations and the Public Relations Office at BMCC.

The BMCC Communication Master Plan for 2015-2020 serves as a primary tool to guide College personnel as they undertake communication and marketing activities. It examines college-wide communication efforts and makes recommendations for improvement. While numerous initiatives intended to improve communication and marketing efforts will be identified in this plan, implementation is likely to be based on a phased approach as available resources allow.

Please note that communication is fluid – this plan is a guide for strengthening communication and marketing efforts at BMCC, but the routes to accomplishing these goals may change with updated or new technology, new programs, different stakeholders, etc., over the course of the next five years.

Stakeholder Analysis

BMCC interacts with a variety of stakeholders, both within the College and externally. In order to communicate effectively with these stakeholders, BMCC must first understand who they are and what their relationships are with the College.

Students: BMCC serves around 8,800 students. Approximately 2,400 of these are credit-seeking, full-time students. Around 2,200 students receive their instruction via distance education at BMCC. The Pendleton campus serves approximately 5,000 students. BMCC's four centers also provide learning opportunities for students: Around 2,000 students utilize the Hermiston Center; around 440 students utilize the Milton-Freewater Center; around 700 students utilize the Boardman Center, and around 630 students utilize the Baker City Center.

Students communicate with one another primarily through text messaging and social media, including social networking sites like Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Tumblr, Vine, YouTube and SnapChat. Internally, the Associated Student Government communicates with other students regarding events, activities and information via BMCC student email, flyers/posters and information kiosks/monitors around campus.

Communication between the College and students has traditionally been via BMCC student email, the BMCC website (both on the main site and via the student portal), BMCC Facebook and Twitter pages, and flyers/posters around campus. The College also uses direct mail to students when appropriate. However, communicating effectively with students has been a challenge as many students do not check their student email accounts regularly or don't pay attention to posters on campus. So many forms of social media has also made it difficult to keep up with constantly changing technology.

Faculty: BMCC employs 58 full-time and 150 part-time faculty who serve as instructors and advisors in a wide range of academic disciplines. The Blue Mountain Faculty Association is the organized union that represents faculty members. Some faculty also serve as advisors for student organizations/clubs. Communication among faculty, as well as between faculty and College administration, occurs primarily via College email accounts. Information is also disseminated on the BMCC website, both on the main site and via the staff portal, as well as on BMCC's Facebook and Twitter pages.

An internal SWOT analysis revealed that faculty want more involvement and more communication from the College. Faculty representation has been added to the President's Cabinet, and faculty hold leadership roles on the College Coordinating Council and other BMCC committees.

Classified Staff/Exempt-Tech: BMCC employs 107 full-time classified and exempt-tech staff and 56 part-time staff. The classified staff are represented by the BMCC Classified Employee Association. Communication among staff, as well as between staff and College administration,

occurs primarily via College email accounts. Information is also disseminated on the BMCC website, both on the main site and via the staff portal, as well as on BMCC's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Board of Education: The BMCC Board of Education is comprised of seven members who set policy and oversee governance of the College. They meet monthly, rotating meetings around the main campus and center locations in an effort to allow community members, employees and students from different regions to attend meetings. Meeting agendas and minutes, as well as information about the Board members, are posted on the BMCC website. Board members receive information from the College administration primarily via email, as well as through phone calls from the President and updates during Board meetings. Board meetings now include spotlights on students and academic programs to give the Board members insight into what's happening within the College.

Alumni: BMCC has been in existence since 1963, and therefore has a large number of alumni. Up until 2014, the College had an alumni director who disseminated information to donors via targeted mailings, but the position has remained vacant since that time. BMCC maintains an alumni database, but communication with alumni is minimal and typically occurs by word of mouth, College website, BMCC social media channels and through donor relations.

Community Members: BMCC serves 18,000 square miles in three counties in eastern Oregon. This means there are a wide range of community members with a variety of interests who live in the BMCC area. Our community members are also taxpayers who approved a $23 million bond in 2015, so communication with these stakeholders is extremely important to maintain trust and transparency. Our community members are also interested in the academic programs BMCC offers, as well as non-credit community education classes, College Community Theater, athletics, the art gallery, and other events on campus, so it's important to disseminate information to the general public on a regular basis. Currently, the community receives information via local media (press releases are sent to local print, radio and television media), the BMCC website and social media pages, the reader board at the Pendleton campus and Milton-Freewater center, and word of mouth. These community members could be potential students, so keeping them informed of what's available at the College is essential.

Business/Industry: BMCC provides students with an affordable education that leads to family wage jobs in our region. That means BMCC must have a strong understanding of what the local industries' and business's needs are in our community so that the College can adequately prepare students for the workforce. Each career-technical education program facilitates an advisory committee with industry representatives to gather feedback on programming, instruction and equipment. In addition, BMCC administration regularly attends local Rotary meetings, and other industry meetings in the region, such as the Pendleton Progress Board.

State Legislators: BMCC is fortunate to have a positive relationship with the state legislators who represent our service area. Throughout the Legislative session, BMCC hosts public bi-monthly video conferences with these legislators to inform them of bills and legislation that could affect the College and its students, as well as receive feedback and information from what's going on in Salem. The BMCC President is in regular contact with our local legislators as well.

Media: BMCC regularly sends press releases, photos and information to local media outlets, including print, radio and television stations. The BMCC Public Relations Office serves as the liaison between the College and local media. The College has traditionally been very responsive to media requests, and overall perception of the College through the media is positive, as is the majority of the coverage. BMCC Public Relations works to be proactive with the media to stay ahead of the message and issues. BMCC also participates monthly on the local morning radio talk show to provide updates on College happenings.

High School Students: The BMCC Recruitment Office targets its efforts primarily at high school students. Many local high school students choose to come to BMCC to start a transfer degree, while others want to complete a certificate or career-technical education to jump into the local workforce. Many high school students already have a glimpse into BMCC through Early College Credit programs such as dual credit and Eastern Promise. It's important to communicate with these students and their parents so that BMCC is always at the forefront when they think about higher education.

Current Communication Channels

BMCC utilizes an assortment of communication tools to communicate with the aforementioned stakeholders. No one tool ever replaces another; people like to be communicated with in a variety of ways, so the College needs to provide information through multiple methods to accommodate those preferences.

BMCC Website: BMCC's website, www.bluecc.edu, hosts a plethora of information for every stakeholder. The website went through a complete redesign in 2014. The technical backend management is managed by the webmaster in Information Technology, while content is managed by individual programs and the Public Relations Office. The PR Office is responsible for making sure content is consistent and current throughout. Maintaining current information on specific program pages has been a challenge. The website also includes portals for both staff and students to access additional information specific to them. However, these portals are not secured by a login; anyone from the public can access them if they wanted to.

Press Releases: BMCC's Public Relations Office publishes press releases regularly and posts them on the website, social media pages and sends to employees and local media outlets via email. Press releases range in topic from achievements, new programs, upcoming events, and other updates from the College.

Social Media: BMCC maintains pages on both Facebook and Twitter. Posts are made daily, sometimes more than once a day. Posts include information about what's happening at the College (which directs readers back to the website), as well as information and reminders for students, staff and community members. These posts often include photographs and memes to engage the audience.

Email: BMCC utilizes a global email list of employees to send mass communication to the internal College community. These emails are sent daily and inform employees of upcoming events, personnel changes, news, and other information. Email is also utilized to communicate with students through their BMCC email accounts. Staff regularly communicate with one another via email.

Wolf Call/BMCC Alert: New in the fall of 2015 is the Wolf Call (non-emergency) and BMCC Alert (emergency) communication systems. These systems allow the College to send communication to students and employees – or subgroups of each – via email, text message, voice message (phone call), and social media, all in one step. This new system will help to create communication efficiencies in the Office of Public Relations and Registrar's Office. In addition, all employees and students automatically receive these messages, so there is a better chance at reaching them with the information through one or more of the methods. However, students and employees do have opt-out options. Messages sent through Wolf Call and BMCC Alert is selective so as not to overwhelm recipients.

Printed Publications/Materials: BMCC publishes a variety of publications each year. The quarterly term course offerings mailer is sent to every mailbox in the College district four times each year to keep the public updated on what's going on at BMCC and to provide a list of courses available and how to register. BMCC also publishes the annual Academic Catalog with full course listings, degree information, career pathways and other information critical to a student's success at BMCC. Starting in 2016, this catalog will shift from a printed resource to an online catalog. The BMCC View Book is aimed at potential students, and is used primarily by the Recruitment Office to show prospective students what BMCC has to offer. The College also prints an annual "At-A-Glance" document that highlights BMCC's enrollment and demographic information, as well as data related to tuition, financial aid and degree programs. Academic programs also publish informational brochures and flyers, as do other programs throughout the College to help inform stakeholders of the services BMCC offers.

Advertising: BMCC advertises regularly on local radio stations with spots that feature current students, alumni and information regarding registering at BMCC. Periodically, these ads will feature upcoming events at BMCC. BMCC also contracts with the Walla Walla Union-Bulletin for digital advertising that reaches readers in the northeast Oregon and southeast Washington region. BMCC advertises in the East Oregonian and Hermiston Herald newspapers periodically to announce upcoming events.

KUMA Coffee Hour: BMCC has a regularly scheduled monthly spot on the local radio morning talk show, KUMA Coffee Hour. BMCC representatives are scheduled by the Office of Public Relations to talk on the show about upcoming events at BMCC, issues in higher education, bond project updates, and other news.

Bulletin Boards: BMCC students, employees and community members post a variety of flyers and posters on campus and center bulletin boards. All posters/flyers must first be submitted to the Public Relations Office for approval. These bulletin boards are often used to announce upcoming events, educational opportunities, club/student group information, local rentals and items for sale.

Reader Boards: BMCC regularly updates a reader board on the main driveway up to the Pendleton campus with upcoming events. BMCC Milton-Freewater also utilizes a reader board to keep the community updated. When appropriate, BMCC requests use of other local reader boards, such as the convention center or banks, to advertise upcoming events.

Communication Challenges

Throughout the summer and fall of 2015, BMCC vice presidents conducted an internal SWOT analysis with employees for academic planning, strategic enrollment management, and communications. While improvements have been identified in communications related to the amount of information going out to employees, students and other stakeholders, as well as the larger variety of methods of communication, employees also identified areas that are still a challenge.

- Distance/Diversity: BMCC's large service area and diversity of stakeholders – particularly students – makes it a challenge to reach everyone with the information they need.
- Too much information: While employees and students appreciate receiving a wide variety of information, they'd prefer it somehow be consolidated to avoid too many email messages or repetitive information.
- Website: While the BMCC website has improved immensely from its previous format, there are still navigation challenges for users, as well as inconsistent updates on program pages. Time to update the information on these pages continues to be a challenge.
- Notice of personnel changes: Things can often change quickly at BMCC, and our employees have indicated they don't always feel up to speed on personnel changes or new hires.
- Student Emails: While every BMCC students is provided with a BMCC email account, many students neglect to check the account regularly, which means they often miss out on important information. BMCC needs to adapt to how it communicates with students to include methods that are more convenient to them. The new Wolf Call and BMCC Alert systems could help with this challenge.
- Financial: Funding is always an obstacle for communications. New communication tools often cost a lot of money, and BMCC can only allocate so much each year to new initiatives. Targeting funds toward specific goals is critical to stretching dollars.
- Data: BMCC needs to utilize more data in its processes so that we're spending dollars on targeting specific outcomes rather than generalizing.

Communication Goals & Strategies

Goal #1: Improve communication internally to the College with current students and employees.

Strategy 1.1 Develop weekly internal Timber Talk E-Newsletter for staff		Target
Tactics/Activities	**Lead – CWZ**	**Measure – February 2016**
Implement e-newsletter	CWZ	November 2015
Timber Talk read by 50% of recipients weekly • Utilize Outlook read receipt data • Review number of inquiries/feedback	CWZ	February 2016 (evaluate whether to continue)
60% of employees find Timber Talk useful • Survey employees via online survey	CWZ	February 2016
60% of employees feel more informed about BMCC happenings • Survey employees via online survey	CWZ	February 2016 August 2016 February 2017

Strategy 1.2 Create consistent branding throughout the College		Target
Tactics/Activities	**Lead – CWZ**	**Measure**
Correct use of logo formats college-wide • Educate employees about importance of protecting college brand, professionalism • Identify when to use which logo format (i.e., mountain logo, wolf logo, Students First logo)	CWZ	80% of college documents utilize correct logo formats by 2020-2021
Standardize email backgrounds & signatures • Educate employees about why we need to standardize and public image	CWZ	Standardization in place by 2016-2017
Consistent design for college publications • Educate employees about importance of protecting college brand, professionalism	AL/CWZ	50% consistent design by 2017-2018 75% consistent design by 2020-2021
Update Administrative Procedures for Brand Management	CWZ/AL	Fall 2016
Conduct a BMCC brand refresh • Inclusive process to include all stakeholders • Educate employees/students about process and need for refresh • Update logo on all College documents, signage, apparel, etc.	CWZ	Refresh complete by fall 2017 Key documents, signage updated by Fall 2017 Remaining logos replaced by 2019

Goal #2: Improve communication externally to the College with stakeholders, potential students, alumni, business/industry, community members and others, as well as increase traffic and usage of BMCC website and social media pages.

Strategy 2.1 Migrate annual academic catalog to Digarc Acalog system		Target
Tactics/Activities	**Lead – AL**	**Measure**
Work with Digarc Acalog customer rep to migrate 2015-16 catalog into system	AL	February 2016
Work with catalog stakeholders within college to update content for 2016-17 catalog	AL	Spring 2016
Implement 2016-17 catalog	AL	Summer 2016
Measure effectiveness of online system • Print requests in copy center • Website analytics • Outreach data • Advisor/Success Coach usage data • High School counselor usage data • Survey of counselor, faculty and advisor/success coach preferences	AL	Winter 2016 75% decrease in requests for printed catalog 5% increase in visits to website program pages
Begin Phase II of Acalog to implement interactive features, i.e., video testimonials	AL/CWZ	2018-2019

Strategy 2.2 Utilize available data for target-specific marketing		Target
Tactics/Activities	**Lead – AL**	**Measure**
Identify baseline data working with Office of Institutional Effectiveness	AL	Summer 2016
Set targets for billboard advertising	AL	Fall 2016
Set targets for digital marketing	AL	Fall 2016
Work with admissions to add an element to admission application that asks how a student heard about BMCC	AL	Summer 2016
Utilize website analytics, IPEDS data, completion data and social media insights to help guide priorities for program promotion	AL	Winter 2017

Strategy 2.3 Establish BMCC Key Communicator Network		Target
Tactics/Activities	**Lead – CWZ**	**Measure**
Develop purpose, goals	CWZ/CP	Spring 2016
Identify potential membership • At least 25 members to start • Membership from Umatilla, Morrow, Baker counties	CWZ/CP	Summer 2016
Begin meeting quarterly	CWZ	Fall 2016
Develop Key Communicator e-newsletter	CWZ	Fall 2017

Strategy 2.4 Maintain an up-to-date website		Target
Tactics/Activities	Lead – CWZ	Measure
Update website administrative procedures to reflect current standards	CWZ	Fall 2016
Work with academic and non-academic programs to update program pages with current/accurate content	CWZ/AL	Fall/Winter 2016
Create consistent landing pages for each program	CWZ/AL/Webmaster	Spring 2017
Increase visits to program pages by 5%	CWZ/AL	Winter 2016 Increase by 10% by Winter 2017
Site Improve reports indicate at least 90% accessibility	CWZ/AL/Webmaster	Fall 2016
Site Improve reporting shows less than 5% misspellings and broken links	CWZ/AL/Webmaster	2020-2021
Increase total time spent on website (analyze using website analytics) by 10%	CWZ/AL/Webmaster	2020-2021

Strategy 2.5 Improve & expand use of social media to promote BMCC		Target
Tactics/Activities	Lead – CWZ	Measure
Create administrative procedure and update guidelines for College social media pages and usage	CWZ/AL	Fall 2016
Increase Facebook page "likes" by 10%	CWZ/AL	Fall 2017
Consolidate/minimize unofficial Facebook pages	AL	Fall 2017
Work with ASG/Ambassadors to create and maintain BMCC Instagram and Pinterest accounts	AL	Fall 2016

Strategy Explanations

Online Academic Catalog: In 2016, BMCC will implement an online academic catalog to phase out the use of a printed catalog. Not only will this new format save on design and printing costs, but it will be more interactive for students. This tool can accommodate not only course information and details about degree/academic programs, but also can include embedded video testimonials from current/former students in specific academic programs, links that will take users directly to program information, online applications and financial aid resources, and can help a student map out a career pathway at BMCC. Analytics from the program will provide detailed data about how the catalog is used, which programs are receiving more direct hits and how many students are applying directly from the catalog, among other data.

Timber Talk E-Newsletter: Beginning in the fall of 2015, the Public Relations Office will begin sending a weekly e-newsletter to all employees and Board members called "Timber Talk." This concise e-publication will serve as a clearinghouse of weekly updates for employees to help reduce the number of global staff emails sent each week. The e-newsletter will include announcements (i.e., new hires, program updates, bond project updates, activities, professional development), news (including press releases sent in the past week and links to news articles referencing BMCC), upcoming events, and a "did you know" section to highlight a person, program or resource at BMCC.

Utilizing Data for Target-Specific Marketing: The Director of Marketing in the Public Relations Office will coordinate with the AVP of Institutional Effectiveness and Institutional Research Coordinator to access data regarding BMCC student demographics, programs and outcomes in an effort to allocate marketing resources to specific areas of need. This data will help the Director of Marketing prioritize marketing funds and projects. In addition, data from Google Analytics and SEM Geeks – the digital marketing firm with which BMCC contracts – will also provide insights as to Return On Investment on our online advertising efforts, including social media.

Establish BMCC Key Communicator Network: BMCC will establish a group of stakeholders called a Key Communicator Network to create a two-way communication system with the public. The KCN is a network of opinion leaders and stakeholders who establish this solid two-way communication among organizations and their public. These opinion leaders and stakeholders talk to many people who tend to listen to what they have to say. They keep in touch with BMCC officials and immediately report questions, concerns, rumors, etc. The KCN will meet quarterly – hosted by the College – to disseminate information to stakeholders so that these community members can help spread positive and accurate messages around the community, and so that the opinion leaders and stakeholders can bring to the table any questions, concerns, etc., they're hearing from the public.

Consistent Branding: BMCC utilizes several iterations of its general logo, mascot logo, Foundation logo and Students First logo. The Public Relations Office will work to create consistency and accuracy among use of these logos to make sure they fall within BMCC's brand guidelines. In

addition, the Public Relations Office will create brand awareness to maintain a positive image of BMCC in the community and statewide. This may include standardizing email signatures for employees to create a consistent and professional look to messaging, as well as standardizing design for brochures, flyers, and other publications.

Up-to-Date Website: The Public Relations Office will work to create a system for keeping content on the BMCC website current and user-friendly. Utilization of the Site Improve program to gather data on misspellings, broken links and out-of-date information will aid in this process. In addition, the Public Relations Office will work with other employees to keep the events calendar current. The Public Relations Office will work with the webmaster to accomplish these goals.

Communications Surveys: In an effort to fully understand the ways in which students and employees want to be communicated with, the Public Relations Office will conduct communication surveys every two years. This will help determine the best ways to disseminate information and stay current on new communication tools.

Targeted/Strategic Advertising: The Public Relations Office will be more strategic with its advertising, focusing the majority of efforts on radio advertising since research has shown it reaches the widest audience. More dollars will be spent on radio ads and fewer dollars on print ads. These ads will be program-specific or target a specific demographic (i.e., non-traditional students). Event advertising will still occur on radio and in print ads.

Billboard Advertising: There are numerous billboards along highways and interstates in the BMCC service area, and these can be utilized to target messages to specific groups of people traveling in those areas. For example, a billboard on Highway 11 near the state line would target students considering attending Walla Walla Community College to show what BMCC has to offer instead.

Program-Specific Materials: The Public Relations Office will work to develop materials – printed and electronic – for each academic program at BMCC. These materials will all follow the same branded template to create a consistent look and message from the College.