University Relations Compact
FY2004-2005

University Relations Mission:
To Build Trust, Understanding, and Pride in the University of Minnesota

A. Introduction

University Relations supports the goals of the University of Minnesota through communications, constituency engagement, and the acquisition of financial resources. The unit works to foster good relationships and create understanding between the University and various audiences, public and private, and among individuals and groups within the institution. We do this by:

- Working with the President and others in central administration to determine the broad messages to be conveyed to internal and external audiences;
- Setting system-wide policies and the broad strategic framework for institutional communications;
- Building University pride through collaborative identity campaigns;
- Communicating with internal and external constituencies in person, by telephone, through more than 500 Web sites, during special events, in the mass media, and through our publications;
- Developing and implementing programs to connect alumni, donors, and friends to the institution and enabling them to serve the University and the University to serve them;
- Advocating for University goals, objectives, and needs to local, state, and federal governments;
- Gathering private gifts that supplement core funding; and
- Communicating external issues and concerns to the University community.

University Relations includes the following units:

- Alumni Relations/University of Minnesota Alumni Association (UMAA)
- Communication Services
- Government and Community Relations
- Information Services
- Marketing
- News and Public Information
- University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF)

The UMF and UMAA are both University departments and independent, non-profit corporations with independent boards of directors. They receive some funding from the University, but the majority of their funding comes from other sources including endowment income, fees charged on gifts received, advertising, and alumni membership dues.

The compact between the Senior Vice President for System Administration and the Vice President for University Relations for 2004-05 includes the following:

B. Update Major Long-Term Goals/Priorities from 2003-04

Positioning Initiative
Polling and other research suggests that the University is not taking full advantage of its role as the premier institution of higher education in the region. The Minnesota public thinks we are "really big and pretty good," but does not understand, in particular, the research enterprise of the University. The same research differentiates the University from other higher education institutions by the following characteristics:

- Urban location;
- Comprehensive offerings;
Community connections;
Real world education.

After gathering input from hundreds of stakeholders including key deans and faculty, senior administrators, prospective and current students, parents, high school guidance counselors, alumni and donors, and legislators and opinion leaders, we developed and tested a positioning statement for the Twin Cities campus that differentiates the University from its local and national competition; highlights our “personality;” focuses on our strengths; and is recognized, understood, respected, and believed by our target audiences. The positioning statement is as follows: “Only the U offers comprehensive educational and research programs with vital community connections designed for highly motivated students seeking preparation for the real world.” The goals of the campaign are to enhance the U’s reputation, allowing for greater resource acquisition, and to build pride about the University, both internally and externally.

Based upon this positioning statement and additional focus group research, we are using the tagline “Only at the U” to capture the notion that the University of Minnesota does many things that no other institution of higher ed does.

The advertising campaign that takes advantage of this differentiating tag line is being directed by a brand strategy group, led by University Relations and including representatives from Admissions, Athletics, the UMAA, the UMF, the Carlson School, the College of Continuing Education, the Academic Health Center and School of Public Health, the College of Human Ecology, and the Graduate School. The creative work and media purchasing, ordinarily contracted out to an outside advertising agency, is being done entirely “in-house” by University Relations staff, at considerable cost savings.

Beginning in January 2004, we launched a campaign that includes print ads, airport concourse ad, radio, bus sides, bus shelters and by fall, we will ad billboards.

University Relations set aside $125,000 for FY04 and FY05 to place print and radio ads that will run through this fall. We have received approval from the Budget Office to augment these funds by transferring $40,000 remaining in our Construction Communication budget for use in this advertising campaign as well. In addition, President Bruininks has authorized additional funding to support an expansion of the radio ad program.

Enhanced Web and Electronic Communications
Leveraging advances in technology and aligning internal resources to meet ongoing and future demands, University Relations reorganized its Web staffing model beginning in 2002 with the hiring and/or reassignment of four FTE. With this increased capacity, University Relations focused on several projects to improve Web and e-communications University-wide, raise awareness about the importance of the Web from a marketing and brand perspective, and realize efficiencies through the coordinated development of centralized resources. Part and parcel of this approach was the development of a high-level advisory board, the Web Integration Group (WIG), staffed by University Relations.

Since 2002, University Relations has successfully launched several new initiatives. Among these have been the University of Minnesota Web templates, housed online at http://webdepot.umn.edu. Through the development of Web templates, provided free to units throughout the University, University Relations has significantly increased consistency in design and user interface, standards in coding practices (to insure continued interoperability among University Web sites), and compliance with University policy throughout the umn.edu domain. Currently in use by well over 200 units, including several campuses, a majority of sites within the AHC, many colleges, and administrative units, this initiative has also realized significant cost savings.

In addition to the Web templates, University Relations has developed

- A centralized events database at http://events.umn.edu;
- An aggregated news and information site at http://www.umn.edu/umnnews/index.php with increased content and information for visitors seeking University information;
- An updated and expanded University departmental directory;
- Improved undergraduate and graduate catalogs site;
- A completely redesigned University of Minnesota homepage.
In addition, University Relations has been charged with primary project management responsibilities for the myU portal, working with project sponsors in the Provost’s office. This work continues to remain at the forefront for University Relations as the potential uses for new technology develops at an accelerating pace. We are currently working with OIT and others to provide centralized mass e-mailing capabilities that will enable units to send electronic communications to external stakeholders without contracting with private e-mailing firms, again with considerable cost savings. Enhanced Web and electronic communications are now an integrated part of the work that University Relations undertakes on behalf of the institution. Consequently, this initiative will no longer be part of the Compact process. Measures of effectiveness, as reported below, will continue to be used to gauge the impact, efficiency, and usefulness of these overall initiatives and our work within the realm of electronic and Web communications.

**Economic and Community Impact of University Activity**

The University of Minnesota is often referred to as the “economic engine” of Minnesota. We also take significant pride in the impact of the outreach activities of the University. However, survey research shows that the Minnesota public does not fully understand and appreciate the depth and breadth of University contributions to the state. Therefore, we are engaged in a number of activities to help us identify and articulate the positive community and economic impacts of the University. By gathering data, quantifying impacts, and developing compelling stories about University impact we will be better able to advocate for financial support from public and private sources.

The following are three key components of this project:

- In collaboration with the AHC, COAFES, and other colleges and units, University Relations is developing a Request for Proposal to conduct an economic impact study that will provide a rigorous and thorough analysis of the economic impacts of the University on the state. The study will quantify direct effects of the University such as institutional spending and faculty, staff, student, and visitor spending. It will also determine the volume of indirect or induced spending that is related to the operation of the University, including the secondary production-related impacts set into motion by the demand for goods and services attributable to the direct effects. The study will also consider other impact factors such as the enhanced productivity of the state’s labor force, the monetary benefits derived by the transfer of technology from the University to the private sector, and the positive impact made by out-of-state students who stay in Minnesota.

  We are convening a faculty advisory committee that includes representatives from the Academic Health Center, Agricultural Economics, Applied Economics, Economics, Geography, and the Humphrey Institute to assist us with selection of a contractor, monitoring of the data gathering, and evaluation of the final report and recommendations. With approved funding as requested below we expect to complete the study by the beginning of 2005, in time to for it to serve as of the University’s case for its biennial budget request.

- The District Database captures quantitative information about the University and its presence in each congressional and state legislative district. This data illustrates that the University’s impact is close-to-home and relevant to elected officials and local leaders. The information currently included is:
  - Number of alumni, students, and employees living in each legislative district;
  - Total salary dollars paid to University employees living in the district;
  - Total dollars paid by the University to vendors for goods and services, and names of the top vendors in that district;
  - Number of physicians who attended our medical school;
  - Number of veterinary perceptors (similar to medical residents) working and training there;
  - Number of physician assistants placed in each district through the Rural Physician Assistant Program;
  - Number of University dental clinics;
  - Selected Extension programs located there.
Other data will be added as we further develop this tool, such as the number of start-up companies from University technology transfers, the number of alumni who are executives in area businesses and available information about University outreach or public engagement activities that positively impact the area.

- University spokespeople need compelling stories and specific examples of ways the University partners with and serves the people of the state. For FY 04, University Relations produced the first annual Community Impact Report, which focused on University activities involving children and families in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area. The second annual Community Impact Report, to be completed in July, will showcase University research and outreach activities throughout the state related to water — hydroelectric power, agricultural run-off, lake remediation, and safe drinking water, just to name a few. Subsequent reports will highlight other multidisciplinary areas in which the University plays a unique role in serving the state.

**Enhanced Federal Advocacy**

The University's federal funding is as critical as the allocation it receives from the state. In fact, federal funding is at the point of exceeding state funding for the first time. Federal funding helps the University attract top graduate students, engage in ground breaking research, develop new technologies, devices and knowledge, and reach out to share that knowledge with citizens of Minnesota.

University Relations plays a key role in advancing the University's research, outreach and teaching missions by helping to secure additional federal financial support and promoting a favorable legislative and regulatory environment. We do this by communicating directly with federal officials and staff to build broad understanding and active support for the University's federal agenda and activities. We also assist deans, faculty members, and administrators as they pursue sponsored research funding.

- We began this past year to position the University as a leader in national higher education organizations, and will expand this effort to bring greater visibility to the institution. University Relations staff chaired an Association of American Universities working group, and served on the Steering Committee for the Science Coalition, whose mission is to expand and strengthen the federal government’s investment in university-based scientific, medical engineering and agricultural research. University Relations also participated in other AAU, NASULGC, and Science Coalition committees.

- We are also working with Deans and senior faculty members to leverage their leadership in national professional organizations.

- During FY04. University Relations worked extensively with leaders throughout the University, including Academic Health Center leadership and the Vice President of Research’s Research Administrators Group to coordinate the overall federal agenda. In addition, in coordination with the deans and chancellors, we created the Gold Book, the first unified inventory of federal issues at the University. It is intended to serve federal policymakers and their staff as a basic resource, to give them a better understanding of the University’s concerns as well as identify for them the University’s expertise in a vast array of subjects.

- The St. Paul Federal Advocacy Task Force was created to help identify federal issues, increase coordination between colleges related to contact of federal officials, and initiate creative and leveraged advocacy strategies.

- University Relations worked with the Minnesota Student Association this year in a federal advocacy effort around tuition price control.

- We also used opportunities to communicate more broadly within Minnesota about the importance of federal funding to the University and the state.

- We incorporated messages about the University’s federal funding into publications that are distributed to state policymakers; every member of the Minnesota legislature received information about the University’s federal research awards and the important work that those funds support. We used speaking venues to state opinion and business leaders to also deliver these messages.

- The University again hosted each member of the Minnesota congressional delegation in at least two visits to a U of M campus.

- We hosted dozens of congressional staff visits to campus and organized more than 275 visits to congressional offices in Washington.
We also hosted several congressional receptions, including five congressional briefing breakfasts.

For FY05 University Relations will expand its federal legislative advocacy role. As a result of receiving new central funding for this effort, we have just hired a second federal relations officer, which will double our ability to advocate for federal funding, monitor national higher education issues, and assist University faculty and leaders to advance their federal agendas. We will be able to keep the University community better informed about federal issues that impact higher education and the University.

C. New Long-Term Goals/Priorities

On-campus Gopher Football Stadium
The campaign to secure public and private funding for an on-campus Gopher football stadium will require a sustained effort over the next several years. University Relations is planning and implementing internal and external communications and legislative and public relations activities in support of this long-range priority. We are managing media, print publications, a website, the grassroots advocacy campaign, and legislative lobbying for the effort, and participating in the fundraising planning. In addition, Vice President Gardebring is part of the administrative leadership team and chairs the stadium communications committee. University Relations has a .5 FTE dedicated to staffing stadium communications.

During the past year we: have worked with Athletics, the President’s Office, the Sr. Vice President and Provost’s Office, Budget and Finance, University Services, the UMF and others to lay the groundwork for gaining legislative funding, public support, and private giving.

University Relations managed the production of the feasibility study, advocacy and marketing materials, and other collateral materials.

We planned and implemented grassroots advocacy activities, including email alerts, presentations, stadium information tables at events, and a campaign to recruit a list of stadium supporters.

We developed a graphic design template for all stadium activities and materials to increase awareness through consistency of look and presentation.

We developed and maintain the stadium website.

Working with other administrative units, we have helped coordinate internal and external consultations and meetings to ensure the process is transparent and consultative.

We have led media relations activities including news conferences, earned and placed media.

The Government Relations team has led the effort to gain support for a campus stadium at the legislature.

During FY05 we will maintain a sustained communication and public relations campaign designed to build student, faculty/staff, alumni, donor, legislative, and public support for the stadium.

Leadership Communication Plan – 2004-2005
University Relations has developed and will implement a comprehensive leadership communications strategy that is designed to generate public, opinion leader, and legislative support for adequate funding to preserve and enhance the core strengths of the University. The plan is based upon University Relations public opinion research and includes an environmental scan, key messages, tactics and an implementation roadmap. Such a strategic effort is more necessary than ever, in light of the current public context: minimal public support for additional higher education funding, a demand for accountability in the form of demonstrable outcomes, and skepticism about the University’s management of public money. Our advocacy strategy must define the University’s impact on the state, distinguish its value, and differentiate it from other education institutions. We must communicate that the University is unique as the only research university in Minnesota, that its research mission is valuable to individuals and to the state, and that without adequate state support, this value will be lost.

While this campaign will incorporate many of the tactics we have used before, it will differ in several ways. First, we will begin earlier—in fact, we have already begun to incorporate key messages into our communications and enlist internal support from institutional leaders. Second, we have a better
understanding than ever before of what the public and opinion leaders need to hear. As a result of more extensive and targeted public opinion polling and focus group research, we know where public opinion is “soft” and can respond accordingly. Third, our strategy will rely more heavily on using institutional leaders to personally deliver our messages to key individuals and groups. Research shows that even highly engaged audiences need to hear messages repeated several times, and that audiences respond most favorably to specific examples and stories relevant to them. Central to this strategy is an invigorated relationship with the business community.

Strategies will include the following, among others:
- Increasing University visibility and participation in organizations that reach key audiences;
- Leveraging existing communications vehicles to promote campaign messages;
- Leveraging key events to disseminate campaign messages;
- Creating campaign ambassadors among faculty, staff and student leaders;
- Mobilizing external ambassadors to reinforce campaign messages;
- Using paid media to differentiate the University from other higher education institutions through the branding/positioning initiative;
- Mobilizing faculty, staff, students and friends to make support for the University an election campaign issue in districts throughout the state.

In addition, community visits, grassroots activities, third-party endorsements, paid and earned media, direct mail, web and electronic communication, and existing printed publications will all be used in support of this initiative.

D. Diversity Assessment and Planning

University Relations units are responsible for many of the institutional communications that reach the largest numbers of internal and external audiences. Therefore, the ways in which we represent the University in print publications, videos, advertisements, websites and more significantly affect the impression people have of our institution’s commitment to diversity, community, and multiculturalism. We take this responsibility seriously and endeavor to project an image of the University as a welcoming, inclusive environment. In the News Service, for example, a staff member works closely with the ethnic press to share University news with communities of color.

We mirror this commitment in our own unit. We have adopted a set of core values and evaluate our unit and individual performance against these values. One of the four values is, “A respectful and inclusive environment: University Relations values open and direct communications; different work styles, personalities, and cultures; and collegiality and cooperation.”

The UMAA and UMF select board members who represent a diverse and multicultural perspective. We have 18 full-time staff of color and many of our student employees are also from diverse backgrounds. Due to budget cuts over the past two years we have not made many new hires, so our opportunities to further diversify the staff have been limited.

E. Outreach and Civic Engagement

In many ways all of University Relations’ work is directed toward outreach and civic engagement. The majority of our communication products are for external audiences, and even our internal communications are intended to help students, faculty, and staff serve as ambassadors for the institution. M, E-news, UMNnews and other print and electronic communications combine articles about University activities, student achievements, and faculty scholarship with helpful, news-you-can-use information based upon University research. M is the only University communication that reaches all 390,000 University alumni, as well as faculty and staff.

These vehicles and the University’s top-level web pages also provide contact information and ways for our constituents to become involved with the University. For example, our Events web calendar provides searchable data about as many as 500 University events each month. The umn.edu homepage, which gets an average of 120,000 hits per month, organizes information in a user-friendly way that allows readers to access thousands of University web sites to find people, places, programs, and products they need.
In the past year more than 43,000 alumni and friends participated in UMAA activities, and alumni serve as mentors for students. Our grassroots legislative network, which now has 13,000 members, provides alumni and other University supporters opportunities to advocate for the University with elected officials. The UMF reaches out to alumni, corporations, foundations, and other individuals and organizations to seek financial support.

Our Community Relations unit interacts regularly with the communities surrounding our campuses. We plan joint University/community activities such as last fall’s picnic in Van Cleve Park to welcome new University students to the Como neighborhood. We work with developers seeking to partner with the University on public/private housing developments. We enlist students, faculty, and staff in neighborhood projects such as the annual Beautiful U Day cleanup and gardening efforts.

F. Enrollment Management

N/A

G. Facilities Issues

N/A

H. Other Financial Issues

Information Services and ISO Funding

Information Services was reassigned from the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to University Relations in FY00 because providing general University information and connecting callers with University resources is more closely related to the mission of our unit than it is to that of OIT. However, Information Services funding continues to come from Networking and Telecommunications ISO income through internal phone service billing. This arrangement is not optimal for management effectiveness. University Relations is responsible for delivering adequate funding so Information Services can provide high quality service to the University community and the general public, but is not involved in the process of setting rates for the ISO that generates the funding. We suggest exploring alternate allocation models, including using O & M dollars to fund this operation.

I. Compact Development

This compact was developed with input from all directors in University Relations, The directors, in turn, solicited ideas from their staff. It was developed in concert with the Workplan submitted to President Bruininks and in consideration of institutional priorities.

J. Data Profile

Summary of Outcome and Evaluation Measures

University Relations continues to track the following outcome and evaluation measures of effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction:

- Count story placements in local and national media (in FY04 achieved an average of 631 newspaper articles and 208 magazine or journal features about the University per month).
- Measure the dollar value of this earned media placement (average value of $2.64 million per month).
- Count average daily traffic to U of M homepage (120,000/day, up from 44,000 in FY02).
- Count monthly traffic to umn.edu domain (the umn.edu domain received 2.1 million unique visitors in the month of March, up from 1.8 million in February and 1.2 million just six months ago).
- Count growth in number of registered users on myU (currently 29,980 registered users, up from 15,000 in calendar year 03).
- Track progress made toward fundraising goals, gifts received to date, alumni giving, and investment results. See UMF annual reports and BOR documents.
- Track membership numbers for Legislative Network (increase from 4,000 in FY03 to 13,000 in FY04) and for the number of letters and e-mails sent to legislators in support of the U by Network members (8,000 this session).
We have adopted a comprehensive development process for our Web and electronic communications initiatives that includes the use of standard information architecture practices including focus groups, usability testing, etc. Consequently, testing and measurement occurs throughout the development process and focuses on user and institutional needs at the same time ensuring standardization and compliance with University policies and Web best practices. In addition, we continue testing (with users as well as on a variety of platforms and operating systems) after sites have been launched to ensure they continue to meet user needs and remain interoperable. We have added a variety of steps to our development process to ensure the latter, including the standardized use of the World Wide Web Consortium’s (W3C.org) validation tools for both HTML and XHTML based Web pages, testing accessibility compliance, standardized coding, and interoperability.

To measure the effectiveness of University Relations’ Web and electronic communications initiatives, we have adopted several key methods and best practices to gauge user satisfaction, usage rates, adherence to Web standards, and ease of use. In addition to what follows, we will assess the effectiveness of our homepage through semi-annual user surveys.

We have continued to utilize Nielsen//NetRatings, the industry standard in measuring Web traffic, demographic information of users, etc. Nielsen not only provides insight into our own pages and trends in usage but also allows us to engage in competitive analysis across the public and private sectors. White papers provided through the application keep us informed about industry trends as well.

Finally, University Relations staffs the top-level Web feedback resource that receives roughly 60 emails per day from visitors. We track and analyze the types of emails received and address issues that arise as visitors encounter problems during their Web experience. This is invaluable as we continue developing and refining the University of Minnesota’s Web site.