

2013-2014 Academic Year Administrative Assessment Report

University Relations

Mission Statement:

The mission of the Office of University Relations is to support and promote Kean University's mission of access, excellence and opportunity by effectively recruiting and communicating with all university community members – students, faculty, parents, employees, alumni, donors, community members, stakeholders and policy makers. The office promotes the University mission by using current technology, communication vehicles and social media platforms that tell Kean's compelling story to potential students, faculty/staff and donors. Communication and branding efforts embrace and embody Kean's mission by consistently featuring people, programs and initiatives that reflect the university's commitment to a student-centered educational environment where diversity flourishes and is celebrated.

Vision Statement:

University Relations strengthens, enhances and expands Kean's brand recognition through the innovative use of media; by building partnerships and by thoughtfully and accurately communicating the message of campus leadership to all constituents. By combining a comprehensive understanding of Kean's mission and visions with the use of market research, the Office of University Relations will differentiate Kean University from competitive institutions and move to the forefront in higher education marketing and public relations. The office will firmly position Kean as a university of choice in New Jersey,

Goals and Objectives:

- A) To attract and retain more full-time, first-time undergraduate students, transfer and graduate students (SPG 2).
 - 1. SMART Objective A.1 Attract more students to Kean through increased marketing in our region and globally, with an emphasis on raising visibility, building reputation, using and improving on Kean's unique academic programs and approach to the classroom to promote the institution, and extending our marketing 'power' through diversified and innovative marketing techniques.
 - a. **Measures:** To measure our progress throughout the year, we will work closely with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in tracking the number of prospective students who register for Open Houses and apply online through a new email blast campaign that will be implemented in February, 2014. Website analytics will further measure the number of unique visitors and time spent on our web pages.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We expect to see a 2.5 percent increase in attendees in each Open House in the spring and fall, 2014.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** To achieve this objective, we plan to create, write, and design 50,000 email messages to prospective students in Spring, 2014, and another 50,000 messages in the fall. For the time being, we will continue with a portion of our traditional methods of advertising (newspapers, magazines, train and bus advertising) and expand our market reach into Philadelphia, Delaware and Staten Island.
 - d. **Data collected:** Approximately 80,000 customized email messages, 30,000 more than anticipated, were sent to prospective students in February, 2014. The message

was composed through cooperation between the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and University Relations. The April, 2014, Open House saw a slight increase, from 2,724 (in 2013) to 2,832. There was a slight decrease in attendees for the May Open House, from 1,418 in 2013 to 1,412 in 2014.

- e. **Actions taken:** Targeted emails to high school seniors and juniors will be sent out much earlier in the academic year, possibly beginning in October. There also will be more-aggressive follow-up communication with attendees.
2. SMART Objective A.2 Unique academic programs, such as sustainability, health sciences as well as our outstanding education programs will be promoted extensively integrated into marketing plan timeline to be determined by University Relations
- a. **Measures:** Progress will be measured by the number of prospective students applying to highlighted programs each semester. Surveys can likewise be used to gauge interest/ awareness students have of programs.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We expect to see a 2.5 percent increase in applications each semester.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** Program-specific emails will be written and designed over the summer, 2014. A new blast email campaign in the fall, 2014, will target high school seniors and juniors with information about these highlighted programs.
 - d. **Data collected:** Applications increased by 8 percent, and enrollments by 12 percent, in AY 2013-14, compared with 2012-13.
 - e. **Actions taken:** UR is compiling information about several programs, including the School of Global Business and the History Department, in preparation for a program-specific email blitz in Fall, 2014. UR also has created a new video campaign, “Ask Me Why I Love Kean,” to add a more-interactive feature to its marketing efforts.
3. SMART Objective A.3 Utilize innovative technology and strategies more effectively to generate engagement of prospective students
- a. **Measures:** To measure prospective student engagement, we will track the increase in followers seen in our social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube etc. We can trace the amount of views per video, visitors per page, and comments per post.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We expect to see an increase monthly and will use website analytics on the 1st of every month to ensure we are reaching our goal.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** Social networking will be employed to make connections with prospective students, provide them with interesting videos and facts about the programs and opportunities we offer and answer questions they

communicate directly. Our goal is a 10 percent increase in unique visitors to the Kean Xchange website.

- d. **Data collected:** The number of Kean Twitter followers has increased from fewer than 2,000 in 2011 to 6,490 today, outpacing overall usage of Twitter among 18 to 24 year olds. The percentage of new visitors to Kean XChange increased from 33.6 percent in AY 2012-13 to 62.3 percent in AY 13-14. There were 4,664 new “likes” on Kean’s Facebook page.
 - e. **Actions taken:** Wire frame layouts were developed as part of a redesign of Kean XChange and will soon be implemented. In addition, UR is creating a mobile app (for both smartphones and tablets) for recruiting purposes aimed at both prospective students and parents. It will essentially be a digital version of our viewbook, but with links, embedded videos and other interactive features (such as campus tours, virtual tours of dorm rooms, and an option to send questions directly to admissions). The app will also set up push notifications, in order to send reminders about Open Houses or other admissions events, deadlines, and other opportunities. We will encourage prospective students to download the app, and will be able to collect data through Google analytics about clicks within the program. Admissions counselors can also have it loaded onto their iPads for when they go on the road.
4. SMART Objective A.4 Utilize Kean’s diversity and commitment to global perspectives in all marketing, advertising, and recruitment efforts.
- a. **Measures:** To gauge student interest/ awareness in Kean’s diversity and global perspectives, we will conduct surveys in coordination with where ads are run. We will also work with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to track applicant demographic and interest shown in programs featuring global learning.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** Beginning in AY 2014-15, 100 percent of our advertising, both in traditional and digital venues, will highlight Kean’s diversity through images and testimonials. Demographic data of applicants will be analyzed to ensure that Kean continues to draw from broad segments of society.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** University Relations will continue to promote Kean’s diversity and commitment to global perspectives in all advertising. We will place an emphasis on our School of Global Business, EPAS accreditation, Kean-Wenzhou campus etc. Additionally, we will expand our marketing to reach new audiences by utilizing European magazines, and local foreign language newspapers.
 - d. **Data collected:** The Global Business School received 75 applications for fall admission in its inaugural academic year.
 - e. **Actions taken:** We will continue with a print and online advertising campaign emphasizing the Global Business School’s unique program. We will add auxiliary advertising to increase our focus on Kean-Wenzhou.

5. SMART Objective A.5 Renew marketing initiatives, including web-based recruitment tools, for our Kean/Ocean, Wenzhou-Kean, the broader international community and other centers in the state.
 - a. **Measures:** Google analytics and indexing provided from a hired firm will dictate who is landing on our website, how long they visit, what they are looking for and how many unique page views we receive monthly.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** Analysis will be reviewed on the 1st of every month and resources will be adjusted and allocated accordingly for six months.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** A Search Engine Optimization firm has been hired to improve our online advertising. We will map out the specific types of people we are aiming to reach and the firm will place ads geared towards that audience.
 - d. **Data collected:** There was a 56 percent increase in new viewers to certain sites and an 83 percent increase in new sessions. Overall, Kean.edu received 11,559,508 page views during the 2013-2014 assessment period, with 20.7 percent of these views from new visitors.
 - e. **Actions taken:** An SEO/SEM marketing campaign was launched for the Global Business School website. These results were seen after just one month of launching the SEO/SEM plan. UR is now putting a large-scale plan into action for the main kean.edu site.
6. SMART Objective A.6 Determine a baseline of awareness for Kean by which to measure the effectiveness of marketing efforts.
 - a. **Measures:** Baseline established by a brand awareness survey conducted in the tri-state area.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** Initial survey to be completed by summer, tracking will continue annually.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** A team will analyze the surveys of brand awareness, and the results of that analysis will guide marketing efforts in the 14-15 academic year. We will continue to develop and employ market surveys to ensure that we are reaching our target audience and successfully delivering essential information.
 - d. **Actions taken:** UR has sent out surveys to Kean alumni and initiated focus groups to determine the effectiveness of marketing efforts. The focus groups will take place over the summer and 3,500 alumni have been invited. Their input will be used to guide our marketing, especially for the Global Business School.
7. SMART Objective A.7 Expand community based partnerships and entrepreneurial initiatives that will attract more people to the campus (i.e. Morris Avenue Corridor, Ursino, Liberty Hall Museum, and Conference Services).

- a. **Measures:** We will monitor the number of events and attendees at campus events.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We expect to increase the number of campus visitors by 3 to 5 percent yearly and will use summer semesters to plan an event calendar for the year.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** Our office will work closely with other departments in event planning. We will assist in organizing and promoting events in Liberty Hall, the Center for History, Politics & Policy, Theatre Management and Programming and affairs planned by the Foundation office. We also will mount an aggressive campaign of outreach during events such as the New Jersey Historical Commission's two-day conference at Kean in the fall.
 - d. **Data collected:** UR partnered with the NJ Historical Commission to create one-minute videos to commemorate the 350th anniversary of New Jersey's founding, bringing more than 10,000 new viewers to Kean's YouTube page in just a few months. The Center for History, Politics, and Policy increased its sponsored public events schedule from two in AY 2012-13 to four in AY 2013-14. These events brought approximately 900 visitors to campus, compared with 200 in 2013-14.
 - e. **Action taken:** UR has agreed to implement Phase II of the video project with the Historical Commission, set to start July 9. The CHPP already has initiated a series of roundtable policy discussion groups in the Green Lane Academic Building to continue to attract new or repeat visitors to campus. The first roundtable of the new academic year is scheduled for July 21.
8. SMART Objective A.8 Increase student engagement in residential, social, recreational, and co-curricular programs.
- a. **Measures:** Website analytics and the number of participants at events will measure student engagement, with the goal of a 10 percent annual increase in visitors to Kean Xpedition.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We plan to increase engagement each semester with a major push in the first month of fall and spring semesters.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** Kean Xpedition will be used as a marketing and social media campaign that encourages students to interact with each other and with the Kean community at large.
 - d. **Data collected:** More than 2,000 visitors logged on to the Kean XPedition website during AY 2013-14.
 - e. **Actions Taken:** UR increased the variety of XPedition programming and forged a partnership with digital marketing agency EIGHTY6 to better address the regulatory challenges of promotional social media gaming.

B) To provide world-class external opportunities to members of the Kean University community, thereby widening our community beyond the physical campuses, by substantially augmenting our academic, cultural, economic and community partnerships at three distinct levels: the local; regional and national; and international (SPG 5).

1. SMART Objective B.1 Create new advertising campaigns to capture all potential markets (students, parents, alumni, and area residents) at all campuses

- a. **Measures:** Surveys and focus groups will be used to measure brand awareness among target audiences.
- b. **Timeline and Milestones:** At the end of each academic year we will analyze the data and refresh the campaign for the next year.
- c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** Identify specific audience and markets for advertising campaigns. Conduct study at end of 2013-2014 AY to measure advertising effectiveness.
- d. **Data collected:** 40 percent of attendees at Open Houses saw on-line advertisements for the event. This figure is drawn from surveys conducted throughout the year. Surveys also indicated that would-be students were interested in Kean because of its affordability and because of quality academic programs.
- e. **Actions taken:** UR has begun a more-aggressive shift to on-line advertising and is de-emphasizing print ads. We also will develop new strategies that highlight centers of excellence and emphasize affordability.

2. SMART Objective B.2 Continue to cultivate relationship between Kean Union and the City of Elizabeth.

- a. **Measures:** Increase by the number of collaborations formed with various agencies and not-for-profits in the city of Elizabeth.
- b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We expect to see a 5 percent increase in partnerships and projects annually.
- c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** UR staff will build on current relationships with the city to ascertain where further growth is possible.
- d. **Data collected:** UR has created 10 videos for the city of Elizabeth to promote its 350th anniversary. UR also has taken on production of the Mayor's television show, "Our Town," beginning July, 2014. Through the CHPP, two key partnerships were formed with Elizabeth-based institutions: Trinitas Hospital, which co-sponsored an event on domestic violence in campus, and the 350th anniversary committee of the city of Elizabeth, which co-sponsored an event in the Green Lane Academic Building in June. These two events generated a total of approximately 100 visitors to campus.

- e. **Action taken:** The CHPP will plan another event in conjunction with Trinitas in the new academic year and will expand its outreach to include county officials based in Elizabeth.
3. SMART Objective B.4 Offer Kean Union campus as meeting and conference space for local businesses and professional groups
- a. **Measures:** We will work closely with the Office of Conference & Event Services to track the number of reservations made for space rentals as well as generated income.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** We expect to increase the number of campus visitors and space rentals by 5 percent annually.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** Start launch of campaign to bring more local businesses to Union campus.
 - d. **Data collected:** There were 104 bookings for campus facilities through the Office of Conference and Event Services in AY 2013-14, an increase of more than 5 percent over the previous year.
 - e. **Action taken:** UR will work with Conference and Event Services to market the 6th floor of the Green Lane Academic Building as an additional site for events.

C) To become a globalized university: uniquely global, uniquely Kean (SPG6).

1. SMART Objective C.1 Promote where possible international recognition of Kean programs through professional accreditation routes, international branding and marketing, international ranking.
- a. **Measures:** We will measure the success of our international branding and marketing by the number of international students gained, and applicants to Kean Wenzhou and the School of Global Business.
 - b. **Timeline and Milestones:** Progress will be measured by the number of prospective students applying to highlighted programs each semester. Surveys and SEO tracking can likewise be used to gauge interest/ awareness students have of programs.
 - c. **Implementation plan for this objective:** We will create promotional materials to be used in international magazines, college fairs and expositions.
 - d. **Data collected:** 89,700 of kean.edu's site visits during the 2013-2014 assessment period were from current and prospective students in China.
 - e. **Action taken:** Through Kean XChange and outreach to Chinese media, UR continues to work to increase brand awareness for Kean Wenzhou. The School of Global Business recently partnered with IMRA, a London based research academy. University Relations actively promoted the Kean IMRA conference via UK media. UR's international media outreach program led to coverage via Reuters, one the UK's most prominent media outlets.