Rutgers Constituency Research Project

NEW BRUNSWICK
ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 17, 2005
Introduction

Objectives

The Constituency Research Project supports a key objective stated by President McCormick:

“To build relations and win the hearts and minds of New Jerseyans, we need a firmer grasp of what state residents want and expect from their state university.”

- First attempt to get a sharply focused snapshot of how Rutgers is perceived by a broad range of internal and external stakeholders – a 360° perspective.

- Benchmark research will enable Rutgers to develop, refine and target its communications and outreach programs to strengthen its ties around the state. Follow-up studies can track progress.

- This strategy research is tightly focused on perceptions and communications issues. Other research efforts may be needed to drill down on individual issues.
# Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Std Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NJ Residents</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>+/-3 percentage pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutgers Faculty</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>+/-4 percentage pt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Field Dates: April 27-May 26, 2004)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutgers Staff</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>+/-4 percentage pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Field Dates: April 27-May 26, 2004)</td>
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<td>Business Executives</td>
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<td>(Field Dates: March 5-March 25, 2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>High School Teachers/Guidance Counselors</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>+/-6 percentage pts</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Field Dates: May 12-June 4, 2004)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parents of Prospective Undergrads</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>+/-6 percentage pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Field Dates: March 26-April 5, 2004)</td>
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## Samples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Std Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents of Undergrad Students</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>+/-3.3 percentage pts</td>
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<td>(Field Dates: May 13-June 9, 2004)</td>
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<td>Prospective Undergrad Students</td>
<td>Mail/Internet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rutgers Alumni</td>
<td>Telephone</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>+/-3 percentage pts</td>
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<td>(Field Dates: March 10-April 11, 2004)</td>
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<td>Future Alumni (Juniors &amp; Seniors)</td>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>1,315</td>
<td>+/-2.7 percentage pts</td>
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<td>(Field Dates: April 14-April 28, 2004)</td>
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</table>
Recommendations to Rutgers

- Rutgers needs to better differentiate itself from the other publicly funded schools. Rutgers is “THE” state university of New Jersey, not just “A” state university in New Jersey.

- Rutgers needs to sharpen its messages. Given the University’s decentralized approach to managing communications, better coordination is needed to convey some common messages about the University. Rutgers needs to pay more attention to the integrity of its brand, e.g., proliferation of logos.

- Rutgers needs to strengthen its messages, especially to key external audiences. While Rutgers has never engaged in an institutional advertising campaign, data and research suggest there is little to be lost and much to be gained by doing so now.

- Rutgers has strong brand equity among state residents, executives and alumni. That strength needs to be leveraged and mobilized. The state legislature has to see evidence of that strength.

- Rutgers has three, separate campus brands among external constituents. At the core is a need for mission differentiation among the three campuses and a decision from a policy perspective as to which of the unique aspects for each campus the University wishes to promote.

- Rutgers needs to address crime and safety and attempt to put a different face on life in its host cities. An external partnership needs to be forged with the cities of Newark, Camden and New Brunswick/Piscataway—the fates of the campuses and their location are hitched together.
Recommendations to Rutgers

• A major step in increasing funding is to spread the word that New Jersey has under-funded higher education and not provided sufficient capacity, with severe consequences for residents. Hence, New Jersey is one of the country’s major “exporters of college students.”

• A strong effort must be made among internal constituencies to pull together. All internal constituencies have a shared stake. Internal constituencies are the ambassadors of Rutgers message.
Research Shared Broadly
Presentation, Media & Web

- UR Committee
- Board of Governors
- Board of Trustees
- Board of Overseers
- President’s Cabinet
- Administrative Council
- Communications Advisory Committee
- Rutgers Communicators Network
- University Relations Staff
- Focus Story
- Report on President’s web page

- New Brunswick Faculty Council
- Task Force on Undergraduate Learning
- Newark Campus Leadership
- Newark Campus Communicator’s Council
- Camden Campus Leadership
- External media
- President’s Kitchen Cabinet
- Foundation Staff
- Alumni Leaders (in progress)
- Academic Dept. Chairs
Cabinet to Address Key Operational Issues

- Campus safety.
- Students cite inability to get the courses they want.
- Students rate quality of academic advising poorly.
- In general, students rate quality of career counseling relatively low.
- Students give low marks to dormitory housing.
- Faculty ratings are relatively low in some areas:
  - RU compared to other institutions in the U.S.
  - Willingness to recommend RU to prospects.
- Each Rutgers campus has its own identity.
- College guides ranked 3rd most used source of information about Rutgers.
University Relations to Address Communication Findings

• Key Communications Issues
  • Rutgers has high public awareness, but is not differentiated well.
  • Research and service contributions are poorly understood and under-rated.
  • Many logos and diverse messages have not helped Rutgers define or distinguish itself.
  • Messages need to tie strengths to issues most important to constituents.
  • Faculty, students and staff are primary information sources.
  • Need to clearly define the Rutgers name.
  • Modify communication program to focus on most effective channels and methods.
  • Low understanding/little concern for under-funding of higher education.
  • Rutgers has three distinct campuses. Consider public positioning strategies for each.
Using the Results to Develop a Comprehensive Communications Campaign

Rutgers Proceeding Along Multiple Paths

- UR Review of:
  - Activities of other colleges/universities
  - Publications Audit
  - Advertising Policy
  - Logo Audit

- Determine Costs and Budget:
  - How much would the Campaign cost?
  - How will we fund a 5 year effort?

- Determine Key Messages:
  - Promise
  - Institutional Messages
  - Distinguishing Strengths of Regional Campuses
  - Colleges & Schools

- Select a Vendor to develop a Comprehensive Communications Campaign
What We’ve Learned from Other Institutions

• Institutions are in various phases
• Research leads to different objectives at different places
  • Student recruitment/student profile
  • Public and private funding
  • In-state/regional reputation
  • Out-of-state stature
  • College ranking
• Budget commitments for campaigns vary
• Commitment from the top is critical to success.
• Mix of Strategies and Tactics (advertising, public relations, direct mail, outreach)
• Evaluation
Draft Comprehensive Communications Program Plan

Objectives

• External
  • Differentiate Rutgers from other New Jersey colleges and universities by increasing understanding and appreciation of the benefits Rutgers provides.
  • Link Rutgers’ research and service activities to benefits to students in the classroom, residents in their communities, and national and global concerns.
  • Demonstrate Rutgers’ connections to New Jersey citizens and its involvement in matters most important to them.
  • Improve Rutgers’ reputation among New Jersey leaders to increase public and private support.
  • Define and promote unique strengths of each Rutgers campus.
  • Improve Rutgers’ reputation among academic leaders across the nation.

• Internal
  • Improve communications to faculty, staff and students about the university’s strengths and the accomplishments.
  • Instill pride in Rutgers among our students, faculty and staff.
  • Provide materials and tools to faculty, staff, students and alumni that help them to be informed ambassadors for Rutgers.
  • Facilitate better coordination and collaboration among those responsible for communication functions at Rutgers in an effort to sharpen, strengthen, and better integrate the university’s external messages and visual representation.
Draft Comprehensive Communications Program Plan

• Challenges
  • Rutgers culture has tremendous autonomy in the communications process
    • 145+ logos and marks
    • Multiple slogans and taglines
    • Decentralized budgets and multiple funding sources
  • Central & unit-level communication staff may have different priorities
  • Internal buy-in will be critical to success
  • Rutgers needs to “catch-up” to current marketing trends
  • High cost of media in NJ markets
  • Funding marketing may draw internal and external criticism
Draft Comprehensive Communications Program Plan

• Opportunities
  • Constituency Research has outlined communications challenges effectively
  • Research provides a common set of reliable data from which many areas can work
  • Enthusiasm has never been higher for Rutgers to better manage its image and reputation
  • Research shows that Rutgers’ has a “window of opportunity” to be the source of statewide pride for New Jersey
For more information on the Constituency Research Project:

- Constituency Research Project Final report:
  
  http://www.president.rutgers.edu/constituency_research.pdf

- Rutgers Focus:

  Feb 2004

  http://ur.rutgers.edu/focus/article/Two+new+programs+to+help+Rutgers+strengthen+its+ties+to+the+state/1250/

  Oct 2004

  http://ur.rutgers.edu/focus/article/Constituency+Research+Survey+marks+turning+point+for+Rutgers/1417/

- Office of the Vice President for University Relations: 732-932-1769