

September 26, 2022

MEMORANDUM

TO: M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

FROM: Barbara Mendoza, Senior Associate Vice President for Marketing & Communications
Working Group Chair *Barbara Mendoza*

SUBJECT: Implementation Memo – Working Group # 41

Recommendation to be Implemented: Streamline digital presence and contracts.

Strategic Considerations:

The primary charge of this working group is to identify duplication and inefficiencies of the university's online presence and digital software usage through a review of all websites, social media accounts, contracts and subscriptions.

This working group proposes moving forward with the following four recommendations:

1. **Websites:** Due to the preexisting decentralized model, key public entry point websites do not provide a clear and consistent view of the university's mission to provide high-quality academic programs and state-of-the-art research. Centralizing this functional area will ensure clear and consistent brand messaging across units through the standardization of technologies and processes used to build and maintain websites. Staff reorganization is projected to streamline the day-to-day administration of website updates and upkeep while ameliorating cyber security and federal accessibility compliance.
2. **Social Media:** Centralize and consolidate social media accounts. Reducing the number of accounts across the university will allow teams across campus to have a more robust channel strategy, "follower" management and eliminate underutilized accounts that cause brand confusion for the end user.
3. **Contracts:** The Division of Marketing & Communications (MarComm) conducted a census at the beginning of the Spring 2022 semester. This exercise revealed that different colleges, schools, and divisions across campus are paying for the same software. MarComm can leverage economies of scale and reduce various platforms that produce the same results by eliminating duplicate contracts and software varieties. Some examples of this include web hosting, social media management platforms, Photoshop-type software, etc.
4. **Training:** MarComm staff and other university community members have lacked training and continued education to represent the university brand effectively and appropriately. A proposed solution will be to engage Texas A&M's Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness (HROE) and Organizational Development to facilitate mandatory Texas A&M brand training.

These strategies focus on improving and having a cohesive digital presence, making our websites comply with state and federal accessibility requirements while providing a consistent user experience to internal and external website visitors. Achieving these goals will elevate and strengthen the university's brand and experience.

Logistical Issues Addressed:

1. The new organizational structure for MarComm will enable the consolidation of software licenses and digital contracts.
2. Updated processes for purchasing software licenses will be implemented.
3. New social media functional structure to improve accountability and reach of social media accounts across the university.
4. A budgetary review is needed to identify the impact of centralization on software purchases and licensing (web hosting funds move with centralization, for example).
5. Upon completion of the audit, we will create a channel strategy for the different types of communication.

Major Challenges Encountered and Resolutions:

1. Through centralization of the five major service-oriented areas, some duties performed by employees will become orphaned. The day-to-day marketing and communications functions must continue without interruption during the transition. Newly identified orphaned duties may negatively impact already strained teams. A plan is being developed to address the influx of orphaned duties.
2. Stakeholders may be reluctant to relinquish direct oversight of websites and social media accounts. The current decentralized model increases the potential for abandoned or neglected websites. This creates a significant risk to Texas A&M's digital security.
3. Space limitations will prohibit functional teams from centralizing into consolidated locations. MarComm will use a phased approach to centralized functional teams and engage with Facilities to assist with strategic planning. Investing in the right technology for working with teams across campus will be imperative.
4. Centralization of software will raise questions of ownership and budget allocation. MarComm will work closely with Technology Services, Colleges, Schools, other divisions, and the Texas A&M System to align on the budget and ownership of consolidated licenses.

Key Logistical Issues to be Completed and Timeline:

1. Conduct census across all university MarComm staff. **February 2022.**
2. Engage with Purchasing on extracting information for existing partners. **November 2022.**
3. Move all web development personnel to the new organizational structure. **January 2023.**
 1. Engage facilities to assist with space planning.
4. Connect with existing partners and account owners to evaluate usage and service. **Spring 2023.**
 - a. Assess web-related contracts, such as hosting and content management systems, for consistent software licensing agreements.
 - b. Audit social media accounts on purpose, reach and effectiveness.
 - c. Begin consolidation of duplicate software licenses.

5. Document web policies and procedures (and make them available online) and propose Rules/SAPs for website governance and responsibilities **June 2023**
6. Upon completing a SaaS (Software as a Service) analysis and based on defined gaps, begin RFP for identified software. **Fall 2023**
7. Once the software alignment is completed, staff training will be conducted. **Spring 2024**
 - a. University MarComm
 - b. Colleges & Schools
 - c. Other Divisions

Approved:



M. Katherine Banks, Ph.D.
President

October 10, 2022

Date