



## SLCC STRATEGIC ENROLLMENT MARKETING PLAN

*Rallying People to a Better Future.*

February 15, 2016

### BACKGROUND

Salt Lake Community College is the state of Utah's largest community college. It serves over 60,000 students throughout its 10 different locations, offering over 120 areas of study. The school operates on a semester system and offers four associate degrees (AA, AS, AAS and APE) as well as certificates and diplomas. SLCC is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU) and offers credits that are transferrable to 4-year colleges and universities.

SLCC continually receives accolades and recognitions at both the local and national levels, including being ranked as the third largest producer of associate degrees in the nation by *Community College Week Magazine*; the eighth best community college for using technology to serve its campuses by the Digital Community Colleges Survey; and among the top best colleges for veterans by *EDGE Magazine*.

SLCC leverages business and community partnerships on both a local and national scale to realize its vision of being the premier comprehensive community college in the nation, including partnerships with Goldman Sachs, American Express and L-3 Communications to name a few.

Public relations efforts are currently an integrated part of overall marketing and communications efforts, with an aim to elevate SLCC's profile and participation in the local, regional and national conversation about quality higher education. The strategic messages that are currently being advanced are **transfer education, workforce education, completion performance and equity**.

As part of a multi-phased rollout, the SLCC.edu website was redesigned and launched on December 3, 2015, featuring enhanced responsiveness, a more intuitive, service-oriented structure, consistent messaging and measurement tools to improve the user experience moving forward. A redesign of MyPage, to be rebranded MySLCC, will roll out in 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2016.

### OPPORTUNITY OVERVIEW

With a solid track record of past success, Salt Lake Community College is well positioned to take its marketing and communications to the next level. The following represent unique areas of opportunity for SLCC enrollment, each of which were considered in the development of this plan:

- The Base
  - 70% of current students enroll directly from high school, 60% intend to transfer
  - Median age: 24, largest population of students are age 18-24

*Strategies and tactics should be mindful of keeping this base strong. Given its statistical significance, base provides most robust opportunity for growth.*
- Next/Millennial Generation (age 18-34)
  - Millennials make up more than a quarter of the population
  - In 10 years they will represent almost half of the nation's income, 75% of workforce

*Given their market share, and the fact that they make up the lion share of SLCC enrollment, Millennials represent a meaningful opportunity for growth.*
- Online and Social Media
  - Nearly two-thirds of American adults (64%) own a smart phone (85% ages 18-29)
  - 74% of online adults use social networking sites, 80% have used e-commerce
  - College students taking at least one online course nearly doubled over last 5 years

*Online/social is the go-to platform for higher-education information. Integration of communications to online/social will be critical to enrollment success.*
- Workforce Education and Training
  - 30% of new students enroll to gain workforce skills
  - Demand for specialized training is growing

*SLCC is poised to be a platform for students to receive specialized training & meet demands of business/industry & provide pathways to career mobility/advancement.*
- Latino Market/Underemployed/Age 35 +
  - Despite robust employment/economy, many Utah workers remain underemployed
  - In 2015, Utah's average weekly wage ranked a low No. 36 among the 50 states
  - Adult learners fastest growing segment of higher education market in U.S.
  - 15 % of current SLCC enrollments are Latino

*SLCC is poised to be a platform to help Utah residents move into meaningful fulltime employment and increase earning potential.*

## CHALLENGES OVERVIEW

While opportunity will be the focus of this plan, it is important to be mindful of challenges as we define our objectives and roll out a plan to implement and meet them:

- Budgets vs. Market Size
  - SLC the 33<sup>rd</sup> largest media market (DMA) in the United States (of 210 DMA's total)

*Current media budgets prohibit adequate reach and frequency in SLC DMA.*

- Full employment/strong economy
  - 3.4% unemployment among lowest in the nation

*Higher portion of market choosing employment over education.*

## OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the SLCC strategic enrollment marketing plan are to:

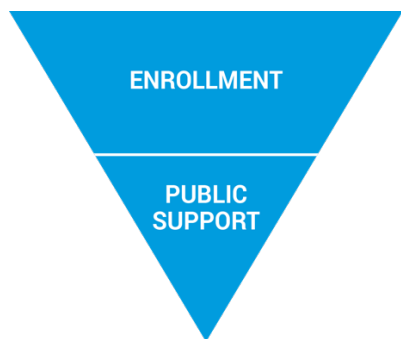
- Define message
- Define target audiences and distribution channels
- Increase awareness (and public support)
- Increase enrollment

People choose the brands they trust and support.

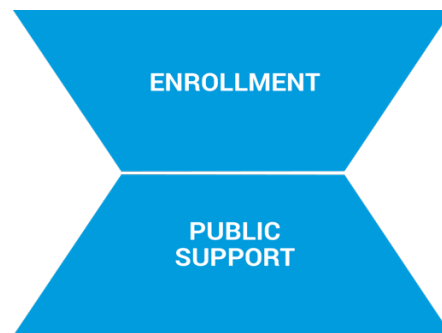
Enrollment and public support should both be viewed as integral (and balanced) components of a sound higher-education marketing plan. By only speaking to potential students, a prime opportunity to build support among constituents, who might never enroll in a course at SLCC, is lost, but whose support is integral to SLCC's success.

Experience has shown us that by giving enrollment and public support a more balanced weight, each strengthens the other. When we deliver solid evidence that SLCC is a good investment, our stakeholders feel better about supporting it and people in general, feel better about using it.

Higher education is not the only industry where this relationship holds true. Numerous studies have shown that companies and organizations that invest in building up their reputation and public support, as opposed to focusing 100 percent of marketing efforts on sales promotion demonstrate greater returns on investment.



Typical Higher Education Marketing Model



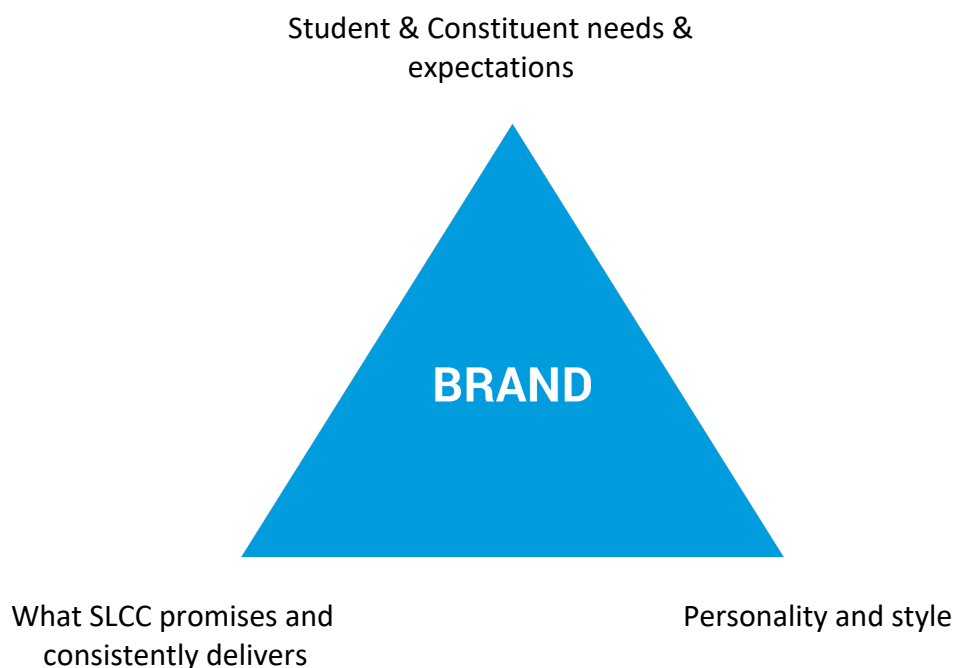
Balanced Higher Education Marketing Model

## BRAND OVERVIEW

The first step in elevating the SLCC brand, is precisely defining what SLCC means for current and potential students, as well as potential supporters. Armed with a clear identity (which is rooted in key benefits), SLCC can then define its diverse set of audiences and focus its efforts on its primary objective, **increasing enrollment**.

NOT JUST A LOGO.

What is the SLCC brand? The expression of SLCC VALUES. The articulation of the RELATIONSHIP between SLCC and our key audiences.



The aim will be to continue to build a brand for SLCC that:

- Creates a clear position that leverages SLCC's core strengths (core themes/values)
- Helps define and deliver a consistent brand experience through every interaction
- Motivates its diverse base of constituents
- Aligns and motivates faculty and staff to achieve SLCC's goals (brand comes from inside out)
- Establishes a motivating and defensible position regardless of unforeseen changes in services, technology, demographics, consumer behavior, market needs, government and regulation
- Rewards the decision to choose or support SLCC over alternate options.

## BRAND PLATFORM *(What is SLCC?)*

We engage and support students from all walks of life in educational pathways leading to successful transfer and meaningful employment; making a significant impact on the quality of life in the communities in which we serve.

## KEY MESSAGE *(What should our advertising say?)*

With more than 120 areas of study [breadth], SLCC will help **you** create a clear path to your education and career goals.

## KEY BENEFITS

*Flexibility, affordability, choice, and a personal experience*  
create a unique pathway to education & career goals.

## TONE/BRAND VOICE *(How should we say it?)*

Excited, fun, and a bit proud. SLCC is a boon for students and the community.

## WE ARE



Approachable &  
Friendly



Evolved



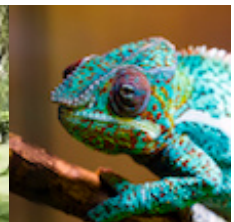
Thrifty (value)



Inclusive



Disciplined



Adaptable

## WE ARE NOT



Aloof &  
Pretentious



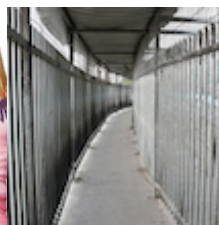
Conventional



Cheap



Exclusive



Rigid



Resistant

## TARGET AUDIENCES

Marketing higher-education products isn't like marketing other products. Higher education has its own unique mix of social, informational, service and lifestyle challenges. Higher education brands serve numerous different audiences, each with different expectations. These differing expectations require that each individual audience receive unique, customized marketing messages, that of course blend into the overall whole.



Current/Prospective students of critical importance for enrollment:

Current Students | High School Students | Parents | University Students | Latinos  
Campus-Area Residents | Working Adults/Underemployed | Veterans

## STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

The best product or service is only as good as its level of awareness and trial. With the right resources in place and a plan to deliver on a consumer promise, SLCC is perfectly positioned to concentrate its efforts on “reaching out” to select target audiences in innovative and meaningful ways.

Following are over-arching strategies and tactical recommendations that will contribute to increased enrollment and public support:

### INTEGRATION OF MARKETING TO ONLINE AND SOCIAL

Strategy: The website is the first contact most people will have with the SLCC brand, and for most, that experience will start with a mobile device. An online and “mobile first” strategy is recommended, with integration of more traditional forms of strategic engagement to compliment (TV, radio, event). After all, nearly 9 out of ten SLCC students currently own a smart phone, and for nearly all, **it is the primary way for us to reach them, and for them to reach us**:

“It all starts here...”



Target Audiences: current and prospective students w/ behavioral interest in higher education

Demographics: male/female, age 18-34, with an emphasis on 18-24, middle-lower income, some education

#### Tactics:

- Create landing pages for specific enrollment audiences, programs, and campaigns.
- Create consistent content and messaging on all digital channels to create a seamless experience for website visitors.
- Use retargeting campaigns to follow-up with visitors exploring the College online.
- Use appropriate messaging on digital channels: short, concise, and digitally appealing.
- Optimize ads for lead generation and optimize online assets for conversion (application).
- Continue to design SLCC.edu pages, content, and visual elements that perform well on all screen types. Develop from mobile to desktop.

## **SUMMER 2016 PRE-ENROLLEMENT CAMPAIGN**

[See plan A + media/tactics flowchart]

## **FALL 2016 PRE-ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGN – In Progress**

[See plan B + media/tactics flow chart]

## **SPRING 2017 PRE-ENROLLMENT CAMPAIGN**

[See plan C + media/tactics flow chart]

## **PUBLIC IMAGE CAMPAIGN**

[See plan D + media/tactics flow chart]

## **LATINO MARKETING AND OUTREACH**

[See plan E + media/tactics flow chart]

## **PUBLIC RELATIONS, MEDIA RELATIONS, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP CAMPAIGNS**

When confronted with a marketing challenge, oftentimes the first question is no longer just what message and media will be best to effectively deliver our message, but also, what partners can enhance our message, and help deliver that message for us.

Comprehensive and integrated online, social, media/earned media and public relations strategies will increase the reach of our campaigns. Adding the right strategic partnerships can take our campaigns to a new level, find meaningful integration into the community, and increase the reach and frequency of our messages beyond what budgets typically would allow – and add a credibility to our message that will result in both strong public support & enrollment.

[See plan F + media/tactics flowchart]



## MEASUREMENT

It's helpful to evaluate promotional efforts and look for opportunities to increase the return on our marketing investments. In order to receive ongoing feedback on the success of the various tactics as outlined in this plan, the following measurement tools are recommended:

- Enrollment data (dept.'s, list mgt., recruiter) evaluated on an ongoing basis to inform marketing/communications efforts
- Performance results will be provided for all online tactics (website, display, search, social) and evaluated monthly to capture trends and optimize effectiveness
- Consider post-campaign stakeholder research to compare to baseline to gauge effectiveness
- Daily PR reports will be provided tracking all broadcast, print and online activity related to SLCC.

## CONCLUSION

While the economic upturn and nearly full employment in Utah pose challenges for enrollment, the strategies and tactics as outlined in this plan, including increased media presence, targeted audiences, integrating marketing to online & social media and strategic partnerships will increase the reach and effectiveness of our campaigns.

Consistent and relevant messaging, that focuses on the **breadth** of SLCC's offerings and unique benefits (comprehensive, flexible, affordable, personal) will be critical to our success, and will help differentiate and elevate the position of SLCC in a competitive market environment.

## NEXT STEPS

- Plan review and approval
- Additional/granular tactical recommendations
- Implementation

## ATTACHMENTS

Individual campaign plans A-F + media/tactics flowcharts  
Baseline stakeholder research, September 2015  
Sample of post buy-analysis for online tactics, Spring 2016