

## **Executive Summary**

### **Integrated Communications Plan—Enrollment 2013**

With the start of the fall 2013 semester, an emphasis on enrolling more students has become a top priority for the enrollment management and public relations/marketing functions of the College. Enrollment for the fall 2013 semester was at 1,362 as of Aug. 21. We need to increase that enrollment to around 1,500 due to the way budgets are now calculated at the state level (two-year versus three-year enrollment averages). Mini-semesters and development class sessions are underway to make up for the short fall in enrollment. In an effort to assist with an enrollment campaign, we created an Integrated Communications Plan. HCC wants to be known for its quality education in all program offerings in the Roanoke Valley and seeks to highlight its offerings during the 2013-14 academic year and thereafter.

The Integrated Communications Plan is a nine-step plan that includes a situation analysis, recommendations, a schedule, a budget and an evaluation plan. This process brings together advertising, branding, marketing and public relations. It is comprehensive, strategic and results-oriented, and can positively impact enrollment management.

In order to analyze the situation, we took a look at HCC's background, internal and external environments and public perceptions. We then identified nine key publics for this campaign including:

- Current students
- Prospective students
- Donors
- Alumni
- Local, state and national elected officials
- Media
- High school guidance counselors and principals
- Employees
- Employers

Next, we developed goals and objectives for the campaign. These included: to generate more awareness about HCC, to recruit more students for HCC, and to generate more public and private funding for HCC. Then, we developed objectives for our key publics. As we progress through the objectives of the plan, we proceed from awareness to acceptance to action.

Next, we looked at strategies. A strategy is defined as what an organization can do and say on any particular issue. We developed a set of strategies for each of our key publics. For example, for our current students, the set of strategies included: to work at the highest possible level of quality to maintain communication with current students, to communicate about current students' interests rather than the needs of HCC, to develop alliances and coalitions within the Roanoke Valley to benefit current students, to use proceeds from specific events to establish academic scholarships to benefit current students, to take advantage of the many newsworthy activities in which current students engage and to involve current students in special events focused on academic expansion.

Message sources are the key people who should make various appeals to the key publics. Our message sources for this campaign are:

- Dr. Ervin V. Griffin Sr., HCC president and chief executive officer
- Dr. Deryl Davis Fulmer, HCC vice president of academic affairs

- Dr. Dianne Rhoades, HCC vice president of institutional advancement and HCC Foundation Inc. executive director

Message appeals can be rational or emotional. We have reviewed enrollment material and found that the information was mostly rational in nature. We plan to include some testimonials from students and alumni to cater to those publics who prefer an emotional appeal. These key messages should be included in all communications. It is vital to communicate with all of our key publics and to be consistent in that communication. Repeated messages are needed in order for our publics to get the message. In fact, it takes people hearing a message seven times before they can retain the information.

There are multiple ways to communicate with diverse populations and we have to acknowledge that all publics are important. The tactics for this campaign include: annual reports, banners, contests, e-newsletters, event listings, feature releases, general brochures, guest editorials, guest speakers, letters, letters to the editor, media advisories, meetings, newspaper ads, newspaper inserts, news fact sheets, news interviews, news releases, online advising, outreach events, parent orientation, postcards, promotional items, radio ads, social media, special events, website, YouTube videos and HCC videos.

In order to measure effectiveness of the campaign, we have to evaluate it. Some of the evaluation measures for the different publics include tabulating requests for information, reviewing survey results, tabulating letters, e-mail messages and phone calls expressing interest, counting the number of current students who express interest in enrolling in the College, tabulating the number of interactions with donors, tabulating responses to media requests, calculating the media impressions and comparing the number with the number of media impressions in previous years, and conducting a content analysis of print and broadcast media coverage, among others.

The plan will be reviewed as we proceed through the academic year. More advertising, depending on the budget, can be purchased to highlight different key points in the year such as early registration, mini-semesters and developmental classes.