



THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The Texas A&M University System Communications Assessment

September 2013

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The Texas A&M University System Communications Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objective

The Texas A&M University System commissioned Hill+Knowlton Strategies (H+K Strategies) to assess the effectiveness of the Texas A&M System's current communications function in order to:

- Establish a benchmark understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Texas A&M System as it seeks to improve the volume and content of news media coverage
- Develop recommendations to help the Texas A&M System raise its profile as an authoritative source of scientific, academic, service and policy expertise across a variety of disciplines

Current Landscape

Texas A&M University, the flagship school of the Texas A&M System and one of the state's two flagships, along with the University of Texas, is recognized among its peers as one of the nation's top research universities, particularly in engineering and agriculture. Since 2001 it has been a member of the prestigious, invitation-only Association of American Universities (AAU), which has just 62 members. (University of Texas and Rice University are the only other Texas schools in the AAU.) It is also one of the nation's federally recognized land grant institutions.

Nevertheless, the Texas A&M System and its member institutions suffer from a deficit in news media attention. Except for sports, and occasionally for a state agency caught up in a larger news event, the Texas A&M System's member institutions receive relatively little media attention, especially when compared to the University of Texas System, its most obvious state and regional rival.

To help the Texas A&M System achieve its objectives, this assessment focuses on the causes and recommended remedies for the media deficit.

Summary of Recommendations

Below is a summary of the recommendations resulting from the communications assessment. These are discussed in more detail in the body of this report.

1. **Chancellor's Leadership is Essential:** The Chancellor should impress upon university presidents and agency executive directors that raising the media profile of the Texas A&M System in general — and its members institutions — is a priority.
2. **Empower System Communications Council:** The existing System Communications Council (Council), chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications, should assist in implementing these recommendations as appropriate.



3. **Enhance the Communications Function in the Office of Marketing & Communications by Creating a Collaborative News and Social Media Function at the System Level:** This initiative should serve to increase awareness of the research and discovery on all campuses, agencies, health science center and law school. In so doing, the Texas A&M System will be positioned to lead academia in both sourcing stories from within and distributing content in an integrated and comprehensive effort on a local, state, national and international basis.
4. **Define Strategic Media Targets:** To increase the impact of outreach efforts The News Bureau should assist Texas A&M System member institutions in defining strategic media targets.
5. **Conduct Media/Message Training:** External communicators in the Texas A&M community need help in understanding how to think and write like a journalist. A media relations and messaging training program should be developed – as soon as possible -- for communicators throughout the Texas A&M System and member institutions. The System Communications Council should consider bringing in outside media relations experts to assist in developing and implementing a media relations training course and corresponding modules.
6. **Strengthen the Media Relations Capabilities of Texas A&M University's Division of Marketing and Communications:** Texas A&M University must have a strong proficiency and understanding of recent media trends and their application to the external market. This must be the number one priority of the Division's leadership, in alignment with Recommendation 3.
7. **Leverage Football Exposure:** Take advantage of the heightened exposure Texas A&M University will receive during the fall 2013 football season. Leveraging this football exposure should be a key focus of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications for Texas A&M University, in consultation with the Texas A&M System Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications.
8. **Improve Effectiveness and Coordination of Texas A&M University Communications Professionals:** Texas A&M University should inventory its communications assets and establish policies, practices and procedures that will reduce unproductive or duplicative activity, create a sense of shared mission and allow for communications efforts to have greater overall impact.
9. **Develop System Communications Campaign Plan:** The System Communications Council should establish a system-wide external communications campaign plan inclusive of defined objectives, strategies, tactics and measurable benchmarks to raise the profile of the Texas A&M System and its members.



ASSESSMENT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Objective

Hill+Knowlton Strategies (H+K Strategies) was commissioned by The Texas A&M University System (Texas A&M System) to assess the effectiveness of the Texas A&M System's current communications function in order to:

- Establish a benchmark understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the Texas A&M System as it seeks to improve the volume and content of news media coverage
- Develop recommendations to help the Texas A&M System raise its profile as an authoritative source of scientific, academic, service and policy expertise across a variety of disciplines.

The purpose of this assessment and the resulting recommendations is to establish a framework for a communications function that supports the Texas A&M System objectives of attracting, retaining and developing:

- The best and brightest students;
- Experienced and effective administrators;
- Increased legislative support;
- Grant funding from government and foundation sources;
- Top tier graduate researchers; and
- Prestigious faculty who are leaders in their respective fields.

Methodology

Communications functions addressed in this assessment include: media relations, external communications, internal communications and administration communications. In order to review these functions, H+K Strategies examined the following:

- Texas A&M System and member institutions' communications infrastructure;
- Communications strategy development and planning processes;
- Tactical execution of communications activities; and
- Media relationships and coverage.

In-Depth Interviews

From January through June 2013, H+K Strategies conducted confidential, in-depth interviews with 67 individuals, including both internal Texas A&M System stakeholders and select external audiences. The interviewees included:

- Members of the Board of Regents and members of the Texas A&M System executive team
- Each of the 11 university presidents

- Seven vice chancellors, including the vice chancellors of agriculture, engineering, recruitment and diversity, federal and state relations, academic affairs, marketing and communications and strategic initiatives
- Select deans
- Executives from each of the seven state agencies within the Texas A&M System
- Employees engaged in media relations and communications at each member institution
- The Texas A&M University Athletic Director
- External audiences including communications consultants, the president of the Texas A&M Foundation and communications executives from other leading university systems

This report cites particularly insightful or illustrative comments from these interviews. However, they are unattributed because all interviewees were promised confidentiality. A full list of those interviewed is included in Appendix A.

In-Depth Media Analysis

To develop a complete view of the external media and public opinion landscape, H+K Strategies also conducted a comprehensive review of media coverage. H+K Strategies compared traditional news and social media coverage of the Texas A&M System to that of the University of Texas System to examine:

- Comparative trends in volume;
- Leading topics related to each university system;
- Leading sources of conversation on a local, regional and national level;
- Relative sentiment of the conversation about each university system; and
- Types of media that drive the conversation.

H+K Strategies also identified and analyzed media influencers for each system who help shape the substantive conversation about an organization and its peers. Insights gained from influencer monitoring and outreach can be leveraged to measure the impact of media coverage, events or outreach efforts. Finally, H+K Strategies compared the Texas A&M System's web presence with other university peers and analyzed its social media presence based on four basic criteria: design, content, organization and navigation.

For the full results of the media analysis, please see the In-Depth Media Analysis in Appendix F.

Desktop Research

H+K Strategies conducted background desktop research to examine public information related to the Texas A&M System and its positioning in the marketplace. This research included measures of the staffing, structure and execution of core Texas A&M System communication functions.

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REVIEW OF CURRENT LANDSCAPE

This section of the report focuses on the current environment within which the Texas A&M System operates. This information provides the context for many of the recommendations contained in subsequent sections.

The Positive Reality

Texas A&M University, the flagship school of the Texas A&M System and one of the state’s two flagships, along with the University of Texas, is recognized among its peers as one of the **nation’s top research universities**, particularly in engineering and agriculture. Since 2001, it has been a **member of the prestigious, invitation-only Association of American Universities (AAU)**, which has just 65 members. (UT and Rice University are the only other Texas schools in the AAU.) It is also one of the nation’s federally recognized land grant institutions.

*“We’re the **best kept secret on the planet**”*
-- John Sharp, Chancellor, Texas A&M University System

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*“**Excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect and selfless service** — those are the words that define Texas A&M and I wish everybody knew it.”*

The Texas A&M System is enormous: It has almost **123,000 students** in its **11 universities** — including one in Qatar that has spread the A&M brand into the Middle East — and almost **28,000 faculty and staff**. With its extensive network of agricultural and engineering extension services, it has a presence in

250 of Texas’ 254 counties. It manages a **unique structure of seven state agencies** providing agricultural, engineering, forest and transportation expertise recognized nationally. The agencies function as a way to connect private industry to the work being done within the Texas A&M System and to deploy the expertise developed within the academic setting in service to the citizens of Texas.

While the Texas A&M System’s institutions outside College Station are far smaller, individuals at many of them are doing work worthy of public recognition, whether it is in the classroom or the laboratory, at such places as Canyon, Kingsville, Commerce and San Antonio. Several of the Texas A&M universities are educating the rising tide of students from families of **Hispanic and African-American heritages** whose leadership and skills will be needed to ensure Texas’ future prosperity. And the Texas A&M System **produces the greatest proportion of the state’s teachers**, a contribution not widely recognized by the general public.

*For 2013, Texas A&M University is ranked No. 65 among the nation’s best universities by U.S. News and World Report, which calls it an “an **academic and athletic powerhouse** in Texas,” noting that it has **highly ranked graduate programs** in engineering, business and education and “is known as a **research institution**.”*

The **George Bush Presidential Library and Museum graces the Texas A&M University campus**. No less a figure than the former and highly respected Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, served as interim dean of the George Bush School of Government and Public Service, and

subsequently as president of Texas A&M University — and has loudly sung the praises of the university to audiences across the nation.

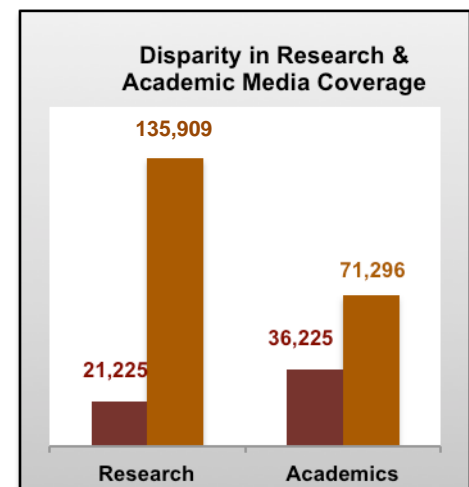
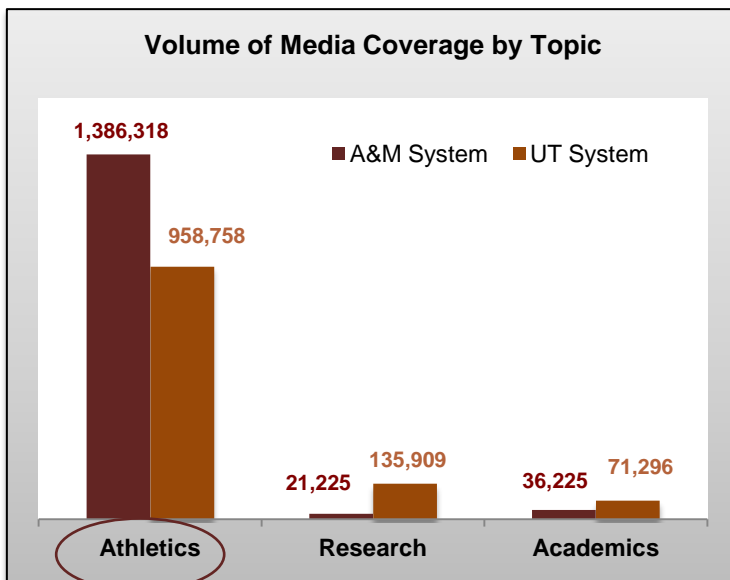
But while many within the academic and research worlds recognize the achievements of Texas A&M University and the growth of the Texas A&M System, many A&M admirers and supporters remain restless that the **public in general, and even many graduates, do not fully appreciate just how much of an academic powerhouse it has become.** (There appears to be no problem in establishing Texas A&M University’s athletic achievements.)

The Media Deficit

The Texas A&M System and its member institutions suffer from a **deficit in news media attention.** Except for sports, and except occasionally for a state agency caught up in a larger news event, the Texas A&M System’s member institutions receive relatively little media attention, **especially when compared to the University of Texas System,** its most obvious state and regional rival.

*“We are **missing out on an opportunity** to get more and better coverage about the **groundbreaking research** that’s going on, whether it’s in College Station, Kingsville or what have you.”*

In 2012 the Texas A&M System received **84 percent less coverage related to research** than the University of Texas System and **49 percent less coverage related to academics** than the University of Texas System. **Athletics dominated** media activity for Texas A&M, with this category making up 96 percent of coverage for the Texas A&M System. Share of topical coverage related to athletics was 14 percentage points lower for UT than for A&M, indicating that **UT receives media coverage on a broader spectrum of topics.** (See Appendix F, In-Depth Media Analysis, page 14.)



The media deficit, as it relates to academics and research, matters because the Texas A&M System’s member institutions compete with others of like ambitions, size and mission. They compete for the same best students, the same outstanding faculty and top administrators. They also



compete for state and federal grants and appropriations, grants and fellowships from foundations and other charitable organizations, and even for the opportunity to make landmark contributions to society, whether here in Texas or internationally. Recognition in the news media provides validation to the Texas A&M System's efforts and expertise for audiences outside the audience of the Texas A&M System's natural supporters, including students, faculty, staff and alumni.

The lack of attention certainly **cannot be explained by a paucity of research, academic achievement or neglect of public service duties.**

In fact, the Texas A&M System is widely respected among its peers for its combination of high-level engineering and agricultural research — its ivory tower work, so to speak — and its real world application of knowledge, especially as seen in the seven agencies associated with the Texas A&M System: the Texas A&M AgriLife Research, the Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, the Texas A&M Forest Service, the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service, the Texas A&M Transportation Institute and the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory

*"I don't know that we've been promoting ourselves at all. I think it's been **one of the most undervalued brands that one could imagine.**"*

Why The Media Deficit Exists

H+K Strategies' research identified five key underlying causes of the media deficit, listed in order of significance:

1. Lack of an integrated approach to media relations and external communications at Texas A&M University
2. Insular culture/tradition
3. Limited focus on strategically developing and promoting news
4. Missed opportunities
5. Location as a limiting factor

Each of these five causes is discussed in greater detail below.

1. Lack of an Integrated Approach to Media Relations and External Communications at Texas A&M University

As the Texas A&M System's flagship, **Texas A&M University will naturally be the member that leads in news content and media coverage.** Attention that flows to the university will benefit each of the member institutions by **raising overall awareness** among target audiences and by **providing opportunities for media exposure** that the smaller universities would otherwise not have. Therefore, it is critical that the Division of Marketing and Communications at Texas A&M University is both focused and functional.

*"I think that what **the SEC gives us is national visibility.** At the moment, **we're not using that effectively.**"*



Texas A&M University has demonstrated its **strength in certain brand marketing and licensing operations**, particularly with regard to the athletics program. However, the university **does not place sufficient emphasis on media relations** and developing a coordinated approach to telling the university's broader story to external audiences. What is missing is a framework that answers the following questions and then drives progress toward those answers: **Who are we and where are we going? How do we want to tell that story? Who do we want to tell that story to?**

The **lack of an integrated approach** to media relations and external communications across the university means that stories are not identified, pitched and developed in a coordinated fashion. Rather than “going for the jugular,” the university is “going for the capillaries.” And the media deficit makes clear the consequences of the current approach. Apart from the university's Division of Marketing and Communications, there are scores of additional staff members assigned to communications at the college, school and even departmental levels scattered throughout the university. But rather than pull in the same direction as a coordinated team, these communicators work diligently to tell their individual stories. These stories may or may not be related to the communications objectives of the university or system. There is no overarching narrative, outcome target, themes or coordination. This leads to inconsistent messaging, ad hoc outreach, limited follow-up and an overall ineffective media relations effort. **Building an integrated communications structure at Texas A&M University must be a priority if the Texas A&M System wants to achieve its communications objectives and take its rightful place among the nation's leading academic and research institutions.**

“We have to fend for ourselves. A lot of folks are only responsible for the success of their own particular [effort].”

*“A lot of the **departments have their own communication groups**, and we really **don't talk as a system** as well as we should.”*

The extent to which the functionality of the communications effort at Texas A&M University **will drive the ultimate success of any system-level communications program** cannot be overstated. A commitment to improving the effectiveness of the external communications function at Texas A&M

University will **require senior leadership and focus from the president of the university**. It will also **require a university-level Vice President for Marketing and Communications with a strong background in media relations and external communications**. The current opening in this position creates a significant opportunity for the university to make progress in this area.

2. Insular Culture/Tradition

Another reason for the disparity in media coverage is that the Texas A&M System's largest and most influential organization, Texas A&M University, has for years **cultivated a proud, but somewhat insular, attitude toward the outside world**, well expressed in a favorite saying about its culture: “If you're on the inside looking out, you can't explain it, and if you're on the outside looking in, you can't understand it.”

*“This is really heresy here — we have **too many Aggies** working in both places [the system and the flagship]. **We need diversity.**”*

Too often, however, the **outside world doesn't really care to understand, because it does not know just how much significant work is going on in the Texas A&M System**, especially at



Texas A&M University outside of Kyle Field. And too often, opportunities to raise the profile of Texas A&M University, which can benefit the entire system, are either missed or not fully exploited.

3. Limited Focus on Strategically Developing and Promoting News

The Texas A&M System and its universities and agencies already have the capacity to issue press releases and respond to phone calls from the news media. **What's missing is an active, even aggressive, effort to identify and develop potential stories within the Texas A&M System's**

"There needs to be some kind of a program where we all understand the techniques necessary to ensure that there is a systemic label put to everything that we do."

components and then actively court reporters and editors most likely to have an interest in publishing those stories or doing their own reporting on topics brought to their attention. Much of the communications efforts today seem **focused on internal audiences**, including students, faculty and staff, as well as alumni; and on producing newsletters,

announcements, websites and social media (Twitter, Facebook) that may well be accessible by outsiders but are not aggressively pushed to the attention of relevant reporters, editors or other influential outsiders.

Many of the communications officials at the various universities work diligently to **promote stories to their local news outlets**. However, **few of them have a professional news media background** helpful in recognizing potential stories, knowing how to develop them and then how to pitch them. More stories should get the kind of effort that the 25 by 25 announcement did — a press conference featuring the Chancellor or other high-level university officials. Even if an announcement does not merit a press event in the state Capitol, as the 25 by 25 initiative did, other events can be staged, as appropriate, in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio or other cities. Such events need not require the Chancellor's presence, but even events of a much smaller scale than 25 by 25 should feature senior administrative leaders and prominent faculty.

"I just haven't really thought of the System or of looking to the System because I think of the communication strategies as primarily being local."

"One of the things that concerns me is that we really don't have a communications strategy, nor do we have any agreed upon strategic messages and communications goals."

The default mode, however, seems to be rather passive: to wait for a dean or some other university official to push for more publicity for a particular project, research or announcement, such as winning a major grant, and then issue a press release and hope that a media outlet will see it and pick up on it. But even if they did get more aggressive, communications

officials would still have their usual work putting out newsletters, updating a website and whatever other chores their superiors assign them.

Another complication is that, while there is a System Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications, the **Texas A&M System itself provides little or no regular push from the top to get out news about its member institutions**. This is not the result of negligence; the Texas A&M System marketing and communications staff is quite small compared to other university systems' staffs, notably including that at the University of Texas. The Vice Chancellor of Marketing



and Communications is an expert in branding and marketing, and the individual institutions have benefited from that expertise. However, his small staff lacks anyone with professional expertise in media relations. (See Appendix D, Review of Peer Systems' Communications Structures.)

4. Missed Opportunities

It appears that Texas A&M University **relies heavily on the tamuTimes** as a vehicle for pushing out stories about significant events and announcements both at the university and system levels. While

“The university itself is a long way ahead of our communications about it. I think that is what a lot of us find frustrating.”

tamuTimes is the main online publication/emailed newsletter for Texas A&M University's news and information, **it should not be viewed as an independent channel from which the general media will seek stories** for more in-depth reporting and wider distribution. Instead, pieces placed in the **tamuTimes should**

essentially be seen as reaching internal audiences, not critical influencers outside of the Texas A&M System.

➤ **The U.S. AID announcement:**

An example is the Nov. 9, 2012, announcement by the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S. AID) that Texas A&M University had been selected as one of nine universities to participate in a new Higher Education Solutions Network, charged with finding new ways to spur development throughout the world. Texas A&M University issued a press release that was prominently featured in the tamuTimes.

The announcement got virtually no coverage in Texas media, but might have had the press release featured the fact that the university was selected alongside elite schools including the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of California at Berkeley, Michigan State University and Duke University. Those schools — chosen from a group of 500 applicants — were noted in the tamuTimes story and press release, but were buried in the ninth paragraph. Nor, apparently, was there much effort to promote the announcement by aggressively reaching out to appropriate media to highlight it. The lack of attention was unfortunate, especially given the teamwork that will be involved in the project itself: the university's Department of Agricultural Economics, the Bush School of Government and Public Service and the School of Rural Public Health in the Texas A&M Health Science Center.

“Communications has not been well cared for historically in this organization.”

The U.S. AID announcement could have been touted much more heavily, not only in news media but pushed through social media and even paid advertising.

Please see analysis of the announcement of the U.S. AID Higher Education Solutions Network in Appendix C.

➤ **The 25 by 25 Announcement:**



A lesser example is the 25 by 25 announcement that Texas A&M University intends to have 25,000 students enrolled in engineering by 2025. The announcement was launched at a press conference in the state Capitol, received solid play in the news media, particularly in Texas, and was taken seriously. But after the first day or two of coverage, there was little or no follow-up on the significance of this announcement to the university or state’s future. There appeared to be no institutional effort to keep the news alive and, at this point, there is no plan to push for more attention. (That lack of planning no doubt reflects in part the newness of the plan itself, which we understand is still evolving.)

These two examples, U.S. AID and 25 by 25, illustrate another reason for the gap in attention between A&M and UT and other peer schools: The **lack of a systematic program or office** charged with identifying and then promoting to the outside world, particularly through the news media, information that would both be of interest to the public and win for the university and its students, faculty and staff the recognition they deserve for outstanding and socially useful work.

5. Location is a Limiting Factor

The biggest institution in the system by far, Texas A&M University in College Station, **does not sit at the center of one of the state’s major media markets.** Most of the other universities in the

*“We **don’t** have the coordination amongst all of those essential, decentralized pieces **to tell a unified story**”*

Texas A&M System are much smaller and reside in smaller markets, such as West Texas A&M University (about 10 miles south of Amarillo), Texas A&M University-Kingsville and Texas A&M-Texarkana. Those schools that are in larger media markets, such as Texas A&M-San Antonio or Texas A&M University at Galveston, are either

still relatively new or narrowly specialized. Even the Texas A&M System’s state agencies, with their statewide constituencies, are based in Brazos County, not Austin.

Furthermore, the **Texas A&M System offices themselves are in College Station.** Whether the Texas A&M System might benefit from having its offices in the state capital or in nearby Houston, a business-driven city with global reach, is not an issue for this study. But the fact is that even in today’s communications-rich society and economy, the **lack of a physical presence in a major urban area makes it more difficult for the Texas A&M System to remain present in the minds of media influencers.**





RECOMMENDATIONS & RATIONALE

The following recommendations are designed to enable the Texas A&M System, inclusive of its members, to raise its profile as an authoritative source of scientific, academic, service and policy expertise across a variety of disciplines. Organized by priority, the recommendations reinforce each other in the execution of a cohesive communication plan.

Recommendation 1

Chancellor’s Leadership is Essential: The Chancellor should impress upon university presidents and agency directors that raising the media profile of the Texas A&M System in general — and its member institutions — is a priority.

- 1 A. The Chancellor should initiate bimonthly conference calls with the university presidents and agency directors to discuss potential news stories and related communications. A member of the newly created News Bureau – see description below – will also participate and weigh in as needed, with the goal of identifying, and facilitating discussion around, potential news stories.
- 1 B. In addition, the Chancellor should regularly contact individual university presidents and agency directors, as he deems appropriate, for updates on issues and potentially news worthy initiatives pertaining to that university or agency. The News Bureau will be tasked with following up on news tips/story leads provided by the Chancellor’s office.
- 1 C. Institution of a branded radio program, featuring the Chancellor, that makes use of the University’s existing media assets (KAMU -- FM radio/TV) in College Station. Envisioned as a weekly, managed program, the Chancellor could use his regular address to talk about news, people or events, as he deems appropriate, with the goal of spotlighting the University and other member institutions. News could include, but not be limited to: breaking news, accomplishments by students and faculty, R&D projects, Texas/world affairs, and more. At the Chancellor’s discretion, guests – from across the System – could be invited to join him on the program. Digital feeds, with links to student publications and other media outlets, could be considered.

Rationale:

Nothing focuses the attention of commanders and troops like direct engagement with the general, and the same is true within an academic/public service institution. **Enhancing the profile of the Texas A&M System and member institutions through increased media coverage will require a near daily commitment of system leadership.** Over time, asking this question should become routine: “Is this newsworthy and can we use it to enhance the public’s perception and understanding of the institution?”

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Recommendation 2

Empower System Communications Council: The existing System Communications Council (Council), chaired by the Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications, should assist in implementing these recommendations as appropriate.

- 2 A. Leveraging the Council will ensure input from each of the member institutions.
- 2 B. The Council should add a representative from the System Office of State and Federal Relations, as it is essential to keep government affairs personnel informed on news making initiatives that may have a bearing on their work with elected officials.
- 2 C. To facilitate collaboration and coordination among member institutions, the Council should convene monthly conference calls to identify, prioritize and develop news stories that highlight new initiatives and accomplishments within the Texas A&M System. As with the Chancellor’s call, a News Bureau representative will also participate, with the goal of mining for news leads/story ideas.

Rationale

Throughout the in-depth interviews, communications personnel at member institutions expressed a strong desire for monthly meetings/calls of the Council to share information on planned communications initiatives. The Council is the appropriate venue for developing and driving communications initiatives designed to raise the profile of all members within the Texas A&M System. By adding a seasoned news professional to the mix, these calls could help to more quickly identify credible news stories, while also educating and sensitizing communications personnel to the components of news/storytelling that resonate with working journalists.



Recommendation 3

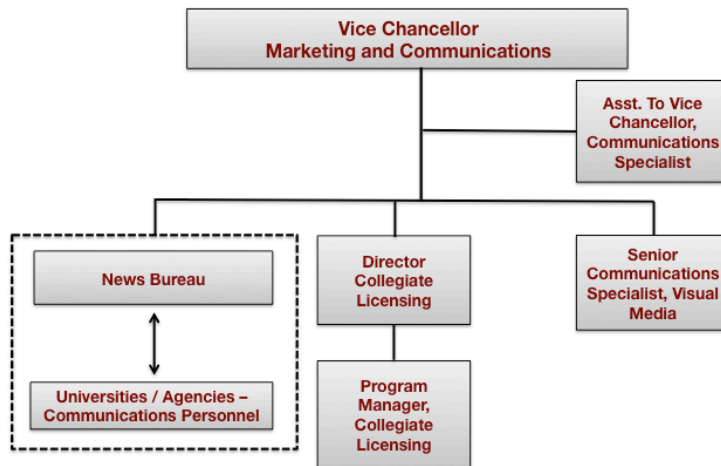
Enhance the Communications Function in the Office of Marketing & Communications by Creating a Collaborative News and Social Media Function at the System Level: This initiative should serve to increase awareness of the research and discovery on all campuses, agencies, health science center and law school. In so doing, the Texas A&M System will be positioned to lead academia in both sourcing stories from within and distributing content in an integrated and comprehensive effort on a local, state, national and international basis.

Current Texas A&M System Office Organizational Structure

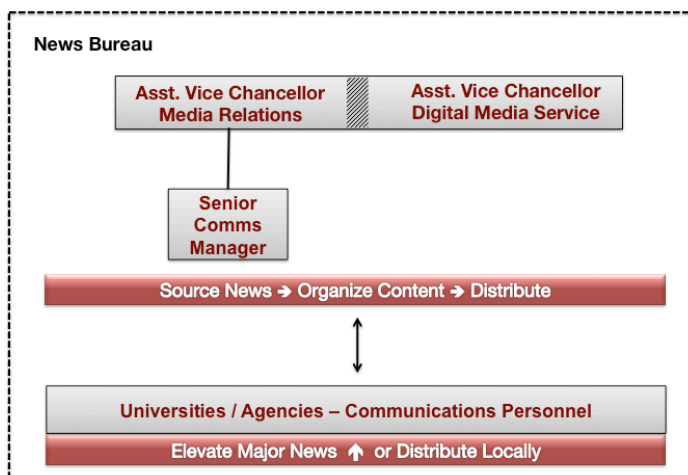
At present, five professionals staff the System Office of Marketing and Communications:

- Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications
- Assistant to the Vice Chancellor/Senior Communications Specialist
- Senior Communications Specialist Visual Media
- Director Collegiate Licensing (shared services with 20 percent Texas A&M System)
- Program Manager Collegiate Licensing

The System Office of Marketing and Communications (System Office) is organized according to the below diagram. As the review of communications organizations within other major university systems revealed, the System Office is substantially smaller by comparison and lacks both news service support and adequate digital functionality. To address these two deficiencies, H+K Strategies recommends that the System Office expand to include a News Bureau (as outlined in the additional box below) dedicated to traditional media outreach and digital media integration.



The proposed addition of the News Bureau to the current organizational structure would be as follows:



While other university systems are utilizing digital tools in the new media environment, their communications divisions often remain essentially siloed. This is not an optimal arrangement for effective integration and management of media assets, talent and messaging.

H+K Strategies recommends that the Texas A&M System:

- 3 A. **Create and Staff a News Bureau:** The News Bureau should integrate traditional and digital media operations. The Bureau should employ a team of press and



communications professionals who have significant experience as reporters and/or editors in print, online and/or electronic news media. To drive enhanced media coverage of the Texas A&M System and its institutions, the Bureau should focus on external communications, continually identifying and developing stories of interest to the news media.

- 3 B. **Support System Institutions:** The Bureau should also work with the communications staffs of member universities and state agencies to support them in story development and content creation and dissemination.

Texas A&M System News Bureau

Although the Texas A&M System has extensive reach throughout Texas, it lacks major institutions in most of the state's largest metropolitan areas, including Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth and Austin. This absence makes it too easy for media in these markets to overlook newsworthy developments by member institutions of the Texas A&M System. A properly staffed Bureau will raise the profile of the Texas A&M System and its community by executing traditional and digital outreach to major media markets within the state and, when appropriate, nationally or globally.

Additional Staffing Required

H+K Strategies recommends that the Texas A&M System make the following hires to support the roles and responsibilities described below. Ideal candidates for all proposed positions should have a solid background in news and deep experience in identifying, reporting and writing stories. Staff of the Bureau should maintain open, ongoing communication with each member institution, and make on-site visits regularly. Staff members should also be active on social networking channels, with the aim of building relationships with digital influencers on behalf of the Texas A&M System. As with any news organization, staffers will be expected to stay abreast of the news landscape, in all forms.

- **Assistant Vice Chancellor of Digital Media Service:** The Bureau will include a digital media service led by the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Digital Media Service. This individual should have in-depth experience using social media for organization communications and engagement. This position would report to the Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications and office in the Bureau. Responsibilities should include:
 - Serve as liaison between the Bureau and the digital strategy personnel of all member institutions of the system
 - Collaborate with the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Media Relations and the Senior Communications Manager to maximize press release material through digital platform promotions



- Identify and cultivate relationships with key digital “influencers” including bloggers, journalists, niche online social communities and users of digital platforms like Twitter
 - Oversee creation and promotion of web materials through existing system and member institutions’ social media and digital platforms
 - Monitor stories getting the most traction online and collaborate with the Senior Communications Manager to elevate the content through traditional media channels
 - Work to ensure that member institutions’ websites and social media platforms are deployed in coordinated efforts to promote worthwhile announcements and stories to news media
 - Mine and develop interesting content for media consumption and create content specific to news stories pitched to media
 - Work alongside graphic designers, videographers and photographers within Texas A&M University to create interactive, digital content for the following deliverables: blog posts, interviews (written or video) with key system players, tweet and Facebook post composition, etc.
 - Notify the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Media Relations and the Senior Communications Manager of new or interesting leads to pursue
 - Once messaging and tools are identified, collaborate with the Senior Communications Manager to assist Texas A&M System member institutions in developing and executing an editorial content calendar
- **Assistant Vice Chancellor of Media Relations:** This position would report to the Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications and office within the Bureau. This person will work with the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Digital Media Service, and thus should have strong experience in building media relationships, pitching news stories and leveraging digital media to maximize exposure for traditional media stories. This individual will also receive support from the Senior Communications Manager. Other responsibilities include:
- Work closely with Texas A&M System leaders and communications personnel at member institutions to attract increased media attention
 - Find and develop interesting stories pertaining to member institutions to share with reporters
 - Maintain primary portfolio supporting the Chancellor, Texas A&M University, the Texas A&M Health Science Center and the state agencies
 - Focus on establishing and maintaining relationships with reporters at state and national news organizations



- Leverage system and university relationships with media partners such as Texas Monthly and Texas Tribune to enhance digital content and dissemination
 - Build relationships with trade publications, such as Chronicle of Higher Education and others, to increase national news exposure for Texas A&M and member institutions
- **Senior Communications Manager:** This position would report to the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Media Relations. Responsibilities include:
- Organize story submissions in order of priority for media dissemination and distribution
 - Create and maintain News Bureau editorial calendar
 - Establish and maintain relationships with the Austin-based state press corps
 - Identify and develop news stories from Texas A&M System universities and state agencies beyond College Station
 - Look for opportunities for compelling human interest stories as well as major announcements from member institutions
 - Develop and maintain relationships with reporters, touching base periodically to alert them to stories, larger concept ideas and/or offers to speak or visit with subject experts from the Texas A&M community
 - Identify media outlets and reporters who are assigned or interested in covering Texas A&M System news
 - Collaborate with the Assistant Vice Chancellor of Digital Media Services to elevate popular online news stories through traditional media channels
- 3 C. **Further Recommendations:** H+K Strategies recommends the following be considered to further the marketing and communications goals of the Texas A&M System.
- **Increase Support for Digital Media Service:** Once the digital media service within the Bureau is in place and functioning, the Texas A&M System should examine the need for additional staff with deep experience in digital media. The H+K Strategies In-Depth Media Analysis found that the majority of media activity for the Texas A&M System took place on social channels, with Twitter and Facebook activity comprising a combined 90 percent of coverage for the organization overall. This dynamic reflects the way that students and sports fans, as a core constituency demographic, use media to talk about their interests. (For additional detail, see Appendix F, In Depth Media Analysis.)
 - **Institute a Comprehensive Social Media Approach for the System:** A thorough internal review of the social media platforms of each member institution should be conducted with findings presented to the System



Communications Council. In addition, best practices among the members' social media programs should be identified and replicated where possible across all institutions.

- o **Develop Mobile Engagement:** Considerations, such as optimizing content and message delivery for mobile users, will also help drive success of social engagement and information disseminations. (For additional detail, see Appendix E, Strategies for Mobile Engagement.)
- o **Continue Collegiate Licensing Function:** Examining the roles and responsibilities of the collegiate licensing personnel at the System level were not a part of H+K Strategies charge. Therefore, H+K Strategies is not making any recommendations as to changes in this regard.

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Recommendation 4

Define Strategic Media Targets: To increase the impact of outreach efforts The News Bureau should assist Texas A&M System member institutions in defining strategic media targets.

- 4 A. Through a collaborative effort among the members of the System Communications Council and the News Bureau, specific media outlets and their respective reporters should be identified and special attention paid to them when pitching stories.

Rationale

As the media analysis showed, coverage of the Texas A&M System was concentrated in local or regional publications tied to cities or regions in which member institutions have a strong presence. The Texas A&M System should benefit from a disciplined and dedicated communications campaign to raise its profile. Defining desired outcomes will help to appropriately focus resources and priorities. Tracking coverage in designated media targets over time will enable the Texas A&M System to better identify opportunities, which will, in turn, lead to sustained success in the media marketplace.

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Recommendation 5

Conduct Media/Message Training: External communicators in the Texas A&M community need help in understanding how to think and write like a journalist. A media relations and messaging training program should be developed – as soon as possible -- for communicators throughout the Texas A&M System and member institutions. The System Communications Council should consider bringing in outside media relations experts to assist in developing and implementing a media relations training course and corresponding modules.

- 5 A. The System Communications Council should identify specific training needs for communicators, particularly those charged with external communications responsibilities within the member institutions.
- 5 B. The System Communications Council should consider creating online training videos on key aspects of media relations, including identifying news worthy initiatives,

framing messages and storytelling. In addition, the program should provide messages to promote the system as a whole.

Rationale

Through the in-depth interview process it became clear that many individuals charged with communications responsibilities have not had formal training or previous experience in journalism. Because much of the focus of external communications about academic or research initiatives has been dominated by a focus on content (factual, but colorless) rather than telling a compelling story (inspiring).

Communicators throughout the Texas A&M System need assistance in understanding that journalism is about the audience first — determining what audiences will care about and then tailoring the story to engage people where they are. It's audience-centric and channel agnostic. It's about connecting, not marketing. The best journalism inspires, has impact and earns trust.

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Recommendation 6

Strengthen the Media Relations Capabilities of Texas A&M University's Division of Marketing and Communications: Texas A&M University must have a strong proficiency and understanding of recent media trends and their application to the external market. This must be the number one priority of the Division's leadership, in alignment with Recommendation 3.

- 6 A. To bring a fresh perspective to the university's communications function, the vacant position of Vice President for Marketing and Communications should be filled with an external hire possessing a strong background in media relations.

Rationale

Professionals driving the current communications function have core strengths in marketing and licensing. But there is a notable lack of relevant expertise in media relations — this is no small void, particularly given the major changes that have swept the media industry in recent years. And the whipsaw continues. Through its hiring decision, Texas A&M University's leadership should show, by bringing in a seasoned media pro, that it is addressing the significant opportunity costs that result from this deficit.

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Recommendation 7

Leverage Football Exposure: Take advantage of the heightened exposure Texas A&M University will receive during the fall 2013 football season. Leveraging this football exposure should be a key focus of the Vice President for Marketing and Communications for Texas A&M University, in consultation with the Texas A&M System Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications.

- 7 A. The theme, messaging, design and production of the 30-second television advertisement used during Texas A&M University football games should not be under the singular purview of Texas A&M University's Division of Marketing and Communications. No single paid advertisement for Texas A&M University will reach a



larger audience than this particular spot. In recognition of its importance, Texas A&M University should seek input from the Chancellor in developing the advertisement.

Rationale

Throughout the in-depth interviews, the media exposure and public attention that Texas A&M University received during the school's first football season in the Southeastern Conference was consistently mentioned as a major plus.

In a September 2012 post in *tamuTimes* about the university's 30-second advertisement shown during football games, Texas A&M University's Vice President for Marketing and Communications stated, "... this commercial aims to introduce audiences to the core of the Texas A&M brand, which is embodied by the 12th Man. These themes of service, leadership, loyalty and discovery define the unique educational opportunities offered at Texas A&M." However, the vast majority of persons interviewed for this analysis expressed strong dissatisfaction with the theme of the advertisement. Many interviewees said the advertisement simply reinforced a constrained and misleading image of the university as one dominated by military tradition and loyal football fans (the 12th Man), rather than as a major American university also known for its academic excellence, world-class research and extensive public service.

Given the magnitude of the television audience watching Texas A&M University football, the messaging, tone and image projected by the university advertisement shown at half-time should command close scrutiny from the highest levels of the university and the Texas A&M System.

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Recommendation 8

Improve Effectiveness and Coordination of Texas A&M University Communications

Professionals: Texas A&M University should inventory its communications assets and establish policies, practices and procedures that will reduce unproductive or duplicative activity, create a sense of shared mission and allow for communications efforts to have greater overall impact.

- 8 A. Texas A&M University's Vice President for Marketing and Communications should identify the various communications personnel (of which there are more than 100 with at least some responsibility), platforms and outlets currently in place throughout the university. This will allow him or her to better understand the communications assets and activities and to identify and address any deficits facing the university.
- 8 B. The Vice President for Marketing and Communications should standardize the policies governing external media relations and ensure that there is a general shared awareness and approach to media outreach and related activity such as press releases. This should include advance notice to the Texas A&M System Office of Marketing and Communications and Texas A&M University's Division of Marketing and Communications when departments or colleges plan to release news to external audiences.
- 8 C. The Vice President for Marketing and Communications should institute regular communications and coordination among the various communications personnel.

This effort should focus on establishing shared objectives, leveraging the work being done by others to maximize impact, and ensuring that the full communications team has a shared understanding of messages and media targets that further the university's objectives.

Rationale

In addition to the personnel housed in Texas A&M University's Division of Marketing and Communications, there are more than 80 additional university employees with at least some communications responsibility scattered throughout the university. These individuals lack sufficient guidance, coordination and oversight that would allow their activities to drive success against overall university communications objectives. The A&M community has many media assets, including KAMU in College Station, which could also be leveraged more constructively.

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Recommendation 9

Develop System Communications Campaign Plan: The System Communications Council should establish a system-wide external communications campaign plan inclusive of defined objectives, strategies, tactics and measurable benchmarks to raise the profile of the Texas A&M System and its members.

- 9 A. The plan should consider all external activities, including but not limited to media relations, governmental relations, alumni relations and student relations.
- 9 B. The plan should outline a process for developing cohesive editorial content, messaging and calendar that can be used to promote the goals of the Texas A&M System and its members.
- 9 C. Once developed, the system-wide communications campaign plan should be presented to the Chancellor and the Board of Regents for approval.
- 9 D. The objectives and strategies developed by the System Communications Council should be reviewed quarterly against defined metrics and adjusted where necessary.

Rationale

To raise the profile of the Texas A&M System will require a coordinated and comprehensive campaign that defines clear goals, identifies and prioritizes target audiences and describes the tools/communications channels to be used and the activities to be performed. The plan should clearly define responsibilities and roles and include specific timelines and metrics in order to gauge success.

In addressing the need for establishing a strategic approach to external communications, there is no need to reinvent the wheel by organizing a new committee within the overall Texas A&M System. On the contrary, the existing System Communications Council is well positioned to develop a communications campaign plan and be given responsibility — and authority — for its implementation.





Appendix A

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

| First | Last | Title |
|---|------------|--|
| Board of Regents | | |
| Phil | Adams | Regent |
| Richard | Box | Regent |
| Elaine | Mendoza | Regent |
| Cliff | Thomas | Regent |
| Texas A&M University System Executive Team | | |
| Frank | Ashley | Vice Chancellor of Recruitment and Diversity |
| Ray | Bonilla | General Counsel |
| Guy | Diedrich | Vice Chancellor for Federal & State Relations |
| Brett | Giroir | Vice Chancellor for Strategic Initiatives |
| James | Hallmark | Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs |
| Jon | Mogford | Chief Research Officer |
| Steven | Moore | Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications |
| John | Sharp | Chancellor of the Texas A&M University System |
| Scott | Sudduth | Director of Federal Relations for A&M System |
| University Presidents | | |
| Emily | Cutrer | President, Texas A&M University - Texarkana |
| Dominic | Dottavio | President, Tarleton State University |
| Maria | Ferrier | President, Texas A&M University - San Antonio |
| Dan | Jones | President, Texas A&M University - Commerce |
| Ray | Keck | President, Texas A&M International University |
| Flavius | Killebrew | President, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi |
| R. Bowen | Loftin | President, Texas A&M University |
| Marc | Nigliuzzio | President, Texas A&M University - Central Texas |
| Patrick | O'Brien | President, West Texas A&M University |
| E.J. | Pederson | President, Texas A&M Health Science Center |
| Robert | Smith | CEO/President, Texas A&M University at Galveston |
| Steven | Tallant | President, Texas A&M University - Kingsville |
| George | Wright | President, Prairie View A&M University |



| State Agency Executives | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|
| M. Katherine | Banks | Vice Chancellor and Dean of Engineering; Director, Texas Engineering Experiment Station |
| Tammy | Beckham | Director, Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory |
| Tom | Boggus | Director, Texas A&M Forest Service |
| Dennis | Christiansen | Director, Texas A&M Transportation Institute |
| Mark | Hussey | Vice Chancellor and Dean for Agriculture and Life Sciences |
| Craig | Nessler | Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Research |
| Gary | Sera | Director, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service |
| Doug | Steele | Director, Texas AgriLife Extension Service |
| Communications Employees | | |
| Brian | Blake | Public Relations Director, Texas Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) |
| Bob | Bruggeman | Communications Manager, Texas A&M Texarkana |
| Cheryl | Cain | Executive Director, Texas A&M University - Kingsville |
| Cathy | Cashio-Bertrand | Director of Communications, Texas A&M University at Galveston |
| John | Chivvis | Associate Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Communications and Information Technology |
| Jason | Cook | Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Texas A&M University |
| Debbie | Field | Associate Vice President for Marketing and Communications, TAM-HSC |
| Gloria | Gallardo | Director of Communications & Public Affairs, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi |
| Pam | Green | Director of Communications, Texas A&M University College of Engineering |
| Steve | Harmon | Director, Office of Public Relations & Marketing, Texas A&M International University |
| Trent | Hill | Vice President for Institutional Advancement, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi |
| Janice | Horak | Asst. Vice President of Marketing and Communications, Tarleton State University |
| Terri | Huff Parker | Division Head, Marketing and Communications, Texas A&M Transportation Institute |



| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--|
| Alan | Kurk | Director, Texas A&M AgriLife Communications and Information Technology |
| Marilyn | Martell | Asst. Vice Chancellor for Public Affairs, Texas A&M University College of Engineering |
| Randy | McCauley | Director of Marketing and Communications, Texas A&M University - Central Texas |
| Carrie | Miller | Director, Marketing, Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi |
| Linda | Moon | Communications Manager, Texas A&M Forest Service |
| Noah | Nelson | Director of Media Relations, Texas A&M University - Commerce |
| Sheleah | Reed | Director of Public Relations, Prairie View A&M |
| Marilu | Reyna | Executive Director, Texas A&M University - San Antonio |
| Ann | Underwood | Director of Communications & Marketing, West Texas A&M University |
| Texas A&M University Deans | | |
| José Luis | Bermúdez | Dean, College of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University |
| Andrew | Card | Dean, George H.W. Bush School |
| Jerry | Strawser | Dean, Mays Business School |
| Influencers | | |
| Ed | Davis | President, Texas A&M Foundation |
| Eric | Hyman | Athletic Director, Texas A&M University |
| External Audiences | | |
| Alexis | DeLee | Crosswind Communications |
| Thomas | Graham | Crosswind Communications |
| Other University Systems | | |
| David | Giroux | Executive Director of Communications and External Relation, University of Wisconsin System |
| Ram | Kapoor | Executive Director of Digital Communications, University of California Berkeley |
| Jason | Simon | Executive Director of Marketing Communications, University of California System |
| Mike | Uhlenkamp | Director of Media Relations and New Media, California State University System |



Appendix B

THEMES & HIGHLIGHTS FROM IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Introduction

As part of research to inform the broader communications assessment conducted by Hill+Knowlton Strategies (H+K) on behalf of the Texas A&M University System (the System), H+K conducted 57 confidential, in-depth interviews with internal System stakeholders as well as with select external audiences. While all responses must be kept strictly confidential, this Appendix is meant to highlight the key themes identified in the course of those interviews.

The interviewees included:

- Members of the Board of Regents and members of Texas A&M System executive team
- Each of the eleven university presidents
- Seven vice chancellors, including the vice chancellors of agriculture, engineering, recruitment and diversity, federal and state relations, academic affairs, marketing and communications and strategic initiatives
- Select deans
- Executives from each of the seven state agencies within the A&M System
- Employees engaged in media relations, as well as those involved in internal communications at each campus or agency
- The Texas A&M University athletic director
- External audiences including communications consultants and the president of the Texas A&M Foundation

The in-depth interviews surfaced 9 key themes, discussed below. These are:

1. Strategic Plan for System-Wide Communications Needed
2. Member Institutions Expressed Desire for Increased Coordination and Collaboration on Communications Efforts
3. Siloed Communications Operations
4. Opportunity Exists to Increase System Support to Member Institutions
5. Media Relations Training Would Benefit Communications Departments and Staff Across the System
6. Member Institutions Would Benefit From Greater Strategic Focus on External Media Relations
7. Member Institutions Would Benefit From Access to Updated Communications Tools and Technology
8. Member Institutions Emphasize Desire to Maintain Unique Identities
9. Social Media Utilization Varies Across System’s Member Institutions





1. Strategic Plan for System-Wide Communications Needed

Most of those interviewed said the absence of a strategic communications plan for the A&M System and its members has opened a gap between the public perception of Texas A&M and reality. According to one interview participant, “The University itself is a long way ahead of our communications about it.”

Texas A&M University’s television advertisements shown during football games were consistently cited as an example of this phenomenon, with one interviewee stating: “It was this bucolic, you’re in the country, and it’s nice and quiet and the Corps was waving the flags and you were going to the football games. That’s all good. Nothing wrong with that. It’s our tradition. It’s our history. That’s our passion. That’s not who we are as an institution academically.”

“We’re portraying a university that’s 15, 20, 25 years out of date, and that’s what people think about us.”

The same individual asked: “Is their reputation built on their pride and their uniqueness and their history? Or is it built on innovation, problem solving, really smart people who can adapt to things that need to be solved in this world? We’re holding on to, from a communications perspective, holding onto pride.”

A term commonly referenced while discussing the A&M reputation — or more specifically, that of Texas A&M University — was “conservative.” While discussing the University’s image, one participant who is fairly new to the institution explained, “When I would tell people that I was interviewing and told people I was coming here, their response was, ‘Isn’t that a military school? And don’t only farmers go there?’”

Asked to describe what the brands of various universities represent, a senior administrator responded, “Harvard — prestige and elite. Stanford — innovation and IT. Georgia Tech — technology transfer and education.” When the same question was asked regarding the Texas A&M brand, respondents were fairly consistent in pointing to “service.”

In describing what the Texas A&M System brand should stand for, several interviewees referenced one or more of Texas A&M University’s core values: Excellence, Leadership, Selfless Service, Integrity, Loyalty and Respect. Among these, service, leadership and excellence were seen as key System brand attributes, with integrity, loyalty and respect seen as virtues that describe the depth of passion among System administrators, faculty, staff and students.

Several interviewees noted that among both state and national audiences there appears to be a lack of awareness of the diversity offered within the System, which notably includes a historically black college and multiple Hispanic-serving institutions. One interviewee said: “You just want to talk to students who have never been to College Station or A&M. They are picturing cows walking around. They don’t have a really good idea of what it is. I compare that to the A&M System. They don’t know the expanse ... We produce the largest number of teachers in this state. They don’t know all of the different inventions and work all the agencies are doing to really help for the public good. They just don’t know.”



What is the A&M System’s role? What should it be?

When asked whether the A&M System maintained a strategic communications plan, nearly all interview participants answered that they were not aware of one. One interview participant said the

“This is really heresy here – we have too many Aggies working in both places [The System and University]... we need diversity.”

A&M System continues to hire people with “phenomenal tunnel vision” who tend to not think broadly enough about the organization’s strategic direction or ultimate reputation.

According to one interviewee, “We don’t know what our brand is ... I’m not sure how we view ourselves.” That individual continued, “I’m not sure that anyone has stepped back to say, ‘What is the brand? What are we trying to project? Do the symbols of our System mean what we intend them to mean?’ I

don’t believe there has been any discussion in that regard. I will also say that a lot of the discussion is skewed towards A&M College Station, which I think is a big mistake.”

Interviewees highlighted the confusion among the members of the A&M System as to its role, specifically questioning whether it aimed to play one of advocacy or one of purely administrative support. Many concluded that the System’s role in relation to each of its member institutions was undefined. Several interview participants said the System’s current external communications effort appears to focus primarily on Texas A&M University in College Station. One interviewee noted, “The decision I think has been made is that we’re focusing on Texas A&M, so the A&M System communications people are somewhat redundant to what Texas A&M is doing.” Meanwhile, another participant, citing the dual role, stated, “I think it’s almost a schizophrenic brand.” And another said, “We’ve got a board that’s supposed to be representing the full A&M System, and we start off every board meeting with a ‘Howdy.’”

Is there a need for an A&M System-wide strategy and brand?

Several high-level interview participants emphasized the utility of a System-wide brand, with one saying, “The System needs to be helping those other regional universities grow and expand their quality at the same time.”

Another expanded on the comingling of Texas A&M University and A&M System responsibilities and messages, explaining: “I just don’t see how you differentiate between the System vision, thought, strategy and A&M College Station thought and strategy when you have people playing dual roles and the System’s offices are here in College Station.”

“You can’t come up with a cohesive communications strategy when you don’t know what you’re trying to be.”

Others disagreed, saying that they do not “see value in marketing the System.” One communications professional said: “The average Joe person that the components within the System are trying to market to quite frankly don’t give a flip about the umbrella company.” Another addressed the different goals and audiences of various member institutions, saying, “I’m not sure even that we would want to be marketed with [another institution]. I think it is great, but it is just so different. I mean, we are a top 10 institution, and they are ... great, but they have a certain market that is important.”



2. Member Institutions Expressed Desire for Increased Coordination and Collaboration on Communications Efforts

Approximately 231 people are employed in some form of communications across The Texas A&M University System inclusive of its member institutions. At Texas A&M University, individual colleges have their own communications staff, resources, goals and agendas. The Division of Marketing and Communications at Texas A&M University has 28 full-time employees while another 87 full-time communications positions are spread across the various colleges and departments on campus. This organizational structure has at times resulted in strategic confusion and potential staffing redundancy. Several persons interviewed said that in instances where the University's communications staff has sought to impose consistent messaging, it has not solicited feedback from internal stakeholders and has focused on surface-level message cohesion and logo-based branding — not long-term strategy.

"I wish the communications teams had a little bit better peripheral vision."

A similar phenomenon exists at the System level. The lack of cross-System coordination detailed in previous sections means that the System misses opportunities to cross-promote announcements or emphasize message-based storytelling. While this organizational structure has allowed the various campus communication staffs to tailor their strategies to the needs of their own stakeholders and local communities, it has cost the A&M System the opportunity to help frame its overall reputation on a statewide or nationwide basis.

3. Siloed Communications Operations

Communications staff from selected colleges at each university and the state agencies reported a lack of coordination and collaboration among the various entities regarding communications strategies and tactics. Several communications managers from the non-College Station universities described the benefits of using the A&M System office as a sounding board for ideas and input, but explained that this type of interaction usually takes place on a one-off basis and does not incorporate or impact the greater strategy of the System. Communications managers also referenced the benefits of bundled services (including access to media monitoring software and advertising opportunities), explaining that these shared services were an area in which the System could provide a great deal of value.

"Nobody's at the head of the train steering the ship"

Similar comments were made when communications staff discussed their engagement with the A&M System during times of crises, explaining that it usually occurs as part of an effort to keep the System updated on campus happenings but, again, is more informative than collaborative. Some individuals identified crises as opportunities for System communications personnel to support other institutions' communications operations, either through coordination or through providing trained emergency managers.



A number of individuals also referenced the benefits of touching base with their counterparts at other A&M institutions or agencies, especially when pertaining to benchmarking research and insight into managing communications challenges and opportunities. However, the state agencies expressed a very different experience than the universities, with most agencies feeling much more disconnected from the A&M System and other communications staff.

“Everybody wants to focus on protecting their own turf.”

Communications staff at all universities described monthly conference calls that used to be hosted by the A&M System office for all university communication leaders, as well as occasional in-person meetings that formerly took place on an annual or biannual basis. Most communication managers said they found these events helpful and a prime opportunity to get to know their colleagues across the A&M System, learn from each other and coordinate messages.

4. Opportunity Exists to Increase System Support to Member Institutions

Throughout the in-depth interview process, an overwhelming majority of participants expressed concern that the purpose of the communications assessment was to build a case for centralizing media relations and related communications at the System level. While this was never the stated or implied mission of the assessment, the fact that so many interview participants expressed anxiety about such a possibility reflects the highly decentralized structure of the System components. As one high-ranking interviewee noted, “A&M does not function as system. The A&M System really operates like a confederation.”

“A&M does not function as a system. The A&M System really operates like a confederation.”

Most senior-level employees we interviewed at the universities and agencies within the A&M System displayed an elevated pride-of-ownership ownership as to how they develop and disseminate their key messages to the public. These employees stressed their opinion that the System’s assuming ownership of the communications function would be a detriment to each university or agency, because each member institution sees itself as having its own audience and message and requiring its own independent staff. Additionally, employees at the member institutions not based in College Station referenced a perceived comingling of the System’s goals and the goals of Texas A&M University, implying that an over-reliance on the A&M System would lead to a conflation of their institutions with the university in College Station.

“One thing that the A&M System will do for us is, I think it will open doors that probably wouldn’t be open if I went myself.”

In general, officials at non-College Station campuses expressed pride in having the A&M name and saw it as distinct advantage in enhancing their own university’s prestige. But they also emphasized that they were not Aggies, that their schools had developed their own identities, traditions and history, and some were concerned that any attempt to develop a System brand with attendant messages could lead to their being seen as simply branches of the College Station campus, even if that were not the intention.



The concern about losing their unique identity aside, it was equally evident that the universities and state agencies would welcome more coordination and support from the System level and help securing more media attention. Communications personnel consistently referenced the need for monthly coordination and collaboration via conferences calls initiated and chaired by the vice chancellor for marketing and communications. These monthly calls, which in recent months have been discontinued, are seen as essential.

5. Media Relations Training Would Benefit Communications Departments and Staff Across the System

Inclusive of universities and state agencies, about 230 employees across the Texas A&M System are associated with some form of marketing or communications. Of those, about 160 have “communications” responsibilities, which may or may not focus on external audiences and the media. While many communications staff members have strong backgrounds in marketing or digital design, few are trained or experienced in news media-focused communications strategy, message development, story formulation and the art of “pitching” stories to the press. This has led to an over emphasis on graphics branding (i.e. logos) without appropriate attention to identifying and developing news worthy stories and the best avenue for disseminating them.

“I think the greater communication challenge is to decide what other audiences are you trying to talk to and how do you talk to them? And that’s where I don’t see a lot of expertise or creative thinking...they’re more administrators than they are communicators.”

Additionally, several colleges and departments within the Texas A&M University in College Station have asserted their independence by performing many communications functions themselves (as opposed to relying on the University’s communications staff). This has contributed to growth in their communications staff, and many of those staff members do not have strategic communications backgrounds.

6. Member Institutions Would Benefit From Greater Strategic Focus on External Media Relations

Each System member institution has a unique story to tell, but it does not appear that many of the entities are maximizing the impact of these stories. News is generally shared via press releases,



“I need help with national pitching. That is a key thing for me. That’s the weak part of my organization, and we need to work on that.”

website posts and social media shares and is infrequently targeted to leverage existing news events or trends. Because many of the communication departments have ongoing responsibilities and deadlines, it is often challenging to follow up on stories and create new angles to extend the impact of

a story. Additionally, while most A&M System members have worked to build strong relationships with local media outlets, they struggle to penetrate the larger media markets where they could reach a larger audience, or lack the resources or experience to even try.

7. Member Institutions Would Benefit From Access to Updated Communications Tools and Technology

The communication staffs of the universities outside College Station as well as the state agencies appear to be running lean operations and have been unable to invest in communication tools to help them work more efficiently and effectively. Almost all

of the communication managers interviewed cited the need for updated technology, including open source content management systems and traditional and social media monitoring tools. When asked how the System could provide support, the communication

“Colleges and departments have their own set of communicators, but I think access to resources at a level that is affordable would be really helpful.”

managers often mentioned bundled pricing for these types of communication tools. This also suggests a need for an expertise in these tools at the System level, which could be used to train and assist System entities in their own deployment and utilization of these tools.

8. Member Institutions Emphasize Desire to Maintain Unique Identities

A recurring theme throughout the interviews was the acknowledgement of the strong name recognition of “A&M,” especially in Texas. Although many A&M System members agreed the A&M name strengthened the legitimacy of their own university or state agency, almost all were still

“If it looks like y’all want to promote A&M College Station, yeah, there’s going to be a lot of pushback.”

concerned about the brand confusion that occurs because of the strong affiliation of the name “A&M” with the College Station campus. In one instance, a university communication staff member described the challenges of

explaining to potential donors the difference between their university and Texas A&M University, expressing concern that doing so would become more difficult if communications strategies were centralized across the System. Another individual described having to correct reporters who attributed the university’s research to the College Station entity. While many individuals described the reputational benefits of being part of the System, almost all made it clear that they have their own individual identities and unique culture that they wish to maintain in order to stay relevant to their local stakeholders.



9. Social Media Utilization Varies Across System's Member Institutions

There does not appear to be a consistent use of social media across the various institutions and agencies. The amount of engagement on Twitter, for example, ranges from active tweeting from university presidents to solely pushing out material and research rather than engaging key influencers such as reporters and public policy makers at the state and federal levels. Among participants, there appears to be a general consensus that best practices from the System on how to approach and improve social media would be of benefit. Though not the case with all institutions, social media appears to be an afterthought, or at least not a strategic priority, for several universities and agencies officials, who noted there is often a lack of time or personnel dedicated to fostering an online dialogue. Participants also referenced the lack of access to affordable tracking tools to monitor online conversations such as Sprinklr, as well as media outreach with programs like Radian6. While some member institutions do have access to various tracking tools, others said that while the resources would be helpful in external relations, they were not within their allotted communications budget.

"My sense is we are not using social media anywhere near the degree that perhaps we should."



Appendix C

COVERAGE OF THE USAID HIGHER EDUCATION SOLUTIONS NETWORK

Overview

On Nov. 8, 2012, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the launch of the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) at an event in Washington, D.C. The announcement was made by USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. (Transcript available at <http://1.usa.gov/SR3tqV>)

USAID issued a [press release](#) Nov. 9, 2012, about the announcement, describing HESN as “a new groundbreaking partnership with seven top American and foreign universities designed to develop innovative solutions to global development challenges.” As part of the initiative, USAID provided \$26 million across the seven institutions. The seven universities that received grants through the USAID HESN included:

- Duke University (Duke)
- Makerere University in Uganda
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)
- Michigan State University (MSU)
- Texas A&M University (Texas A&M)
- University of California Berkeley (Berkeley)
- William & Mary

The following provides key findings regarding the media coverage of the announcement of the USAID HESN in November 2012. For the purposes of this research, we specifically looked at coverage related to the U.S.-based universities (not Makerere University in Uganda).

Key Findings

Overall, the USAID HESN story did not generate a large amount of coverage, with individual universities receiving attention in local outlets based on their individual press releases and announcements. MIT and William & Mary received the most unique media hits, which were all in local publications. Additionally, MSU and William & Mary both received coverage by the Associated Press. It does not appear that the USAID HESN story received coverage in any higher education trade publications.

As seen in Appendix 2, most universities focused their press releases and announcements solely on their own initiatives and partnerships with other universities and NGOs related to their grants. Texas A&M and Duke were the only universities to call out the other HESN member universities in their individual announcements.



It should be noted that USAID issued a [press release](#) March 20, 2013, describing the progress made on its overall USAID Forward initiatives, once again mentioning HESN and the seven member universities. This suggests that there could be opportunities for the HESN universities to leverage its partnership with USAID for ongoing announcements regarding progress and successes related to their USAID grants.

Findings related to the coverage of each university and the USAID are as follows:

Berkeley: Berkeley issued a press release, but only received coverage in the university's student newspaper, The Daily Californian.

Duke: Duke published two articles on its news site, Duke Today, as well as had a feature article in the student newspaper, The Chronicle. The release though garnered coverage in regional publication, The Herald-Sun.

MIT: MIT issued a press release and garnered regional coverage in the Boston Globe's Political Intelligence blog, the Boston Herald and online news site BostInno. Additional coverage appeared in the student newspaper, The Tech, as well as the MIT Sociotechnical Systems Research Center website.

MSU: MSU issued a press release that garnered coverage in the Lansing State Journal and the Associated Press (out of East Lansing). Additionally, the release was reposted on the MSU Research website and MSU College of Education website.

Texas A&M: Coverage appeared in TAMU Times and student publication, The Battalion. Also of note, coverage of A&M during early November focused on the buildup to the Alabama and A&M game, which took place on Nov. 10, 2012.

USAID: The USAID released a press release; however, coverage for the USAID HESN was fairly limited. Coverage appeared in Science Magazine's Science Insider blog, the Department of State's IIP Digital site, as well as on the website for DAI—an international development company.

William & Mary: William & Mary issued a press release, sparking coverage in a number of regional outlets including the Daily Press, the Richmond Times-Dispatch and the Virginia Pilot, as well as the Associated Press. Coverage also appeared on the website of Development Gateway, a nonprofit focused on IT and communications. Also of note, W&M received mention in a press release from the University of Texas at Austin, which stated UT would be a "key partner in a five-year, \$25 million grant."



University Announcements and Coverage

The following table provides a quick look at the announcements made by each university and the USAID, along with the media outlets that covered the stories.

| University/ Agency | Date | Headline | Outlet that Covered/Picked-Up Story |
|--------------------|--------|---|---|
| Berkeley | Nov. 8 | USAID invests up to \$20 million in UC Berkeley's global development initiatives
http://bit.ly/QuRbFT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Daily Californian |
| Duke | Nov. 9 | Duke receives \$10M grant from USAID to fund social entrepreneurship program
http://bit.ly/13Yq3ME | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duke Today • The Chronicle • The Herald-Sun |
| MIT | Nov. 8 | MIT a linchpin of a major new USAID program
http://bit.ly/UvNeJf | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boston Herald • Boston Globe – Political Intelligence blog • BostonInno • The Tech • MIT Sociotechnical Systems Research Center |
| MSU | Nov. 8 | MSU to lead global food system innovation center
http://bit.ly/XsDaxw | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lansing State Journal • Associated Press |
| Texas A&M | Nov. 9 | Texas A&M selected by USAID for key role in solving international development challenges
http://bit.ly/Ut00IA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Battalion |
| USAID | Nov. 9 | USAID launches new network to engage students and universities in solving international development challenges
http://1.usa.gov/Y6sTgp | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science Magazine • DAI News • U.S. Department of State – Bureau of International Information Programs |
| William & Mary | Nov. 8 | W&M receives \$25 million award for Center for Development Policy
http://bit.ly/Uc97XX | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated Press • The Daily Press • The Richmond Times-Dispatch • Development Gateway • The Virginian Pilot • University of Texas (press release) |



Appendix A

Below are the specific headlines for each media outlet that covered the USAID announcement for each HESN university.

Berkeley

- **UC Berkeley News Center (press release)** – Nov. 8 – USAID invests up to \$20 million to UC Berkeley’s global development initiatives (<http://bit.ly/QuRbfT>)
- **The Daily Californian** – Nov. 18 – UC Berkeley awarded \$20 million from USAID (<http://bit.ly/U6wKDu>)

Duke

- **Duke Today (press release)** – Nov. 8 – Duke receives award for social entrepreneurship accelerator (<http://bit.ly/WIN02N>)
- **Duke Today** – Nov. 13 – Duke joins partnership to promote innovative solutions to pressing development problems (<http://bit.ly/10DtJxy>)
- **The Chronicle** – Nov. 9 – Duke receives \$10M grant from USAID to fund social entrepreneurship program (<http://bit.ly/10DtJxy>)
- **The Herald-Sun** – Nov. 9 – Duke receives \$10 million award from USAID (<http://bit.ly/16Ctmqu>)

MIT

- **MIT Press Release** – Nov. 8 – MIT a linchpin of major new USAID program (<http://bit.ly/UvNeJf>)
- **Boston Herald** – Nov. 8 – MIT lands \$25M to develop tech to fight poverty [no longer available on Boston Herald website] (<http://bit.ly/XubcXn>)
- **Boston Globe (Political Intelligence blog)** – Nov. 9 – MIT wins USAID award to help developing countries (<http://bo.st/Zgot2K>)
- **BostonInno** – Nov. 10 – MIT receives \$25 million to help create & evaluate technologies for developing countries (<http://bit.ly/Y3dPdI>)
- **The Tech** – Nov. 13 - \$25 million for international development initiatives (<http://bit.ly/PRPfwX>)
- **MIT Sociotechnical Systems Research Center** – Dec. 5 – MIT partners with U.S. agency for international development (<http://bit.ly/12padtx>)

MSU

- **MSU News (press release)** – Nov. 8 – MSU to lead global food system innovation center (<http://bit.ly/XsDaxw>) [Reposted on MSU Research [website](#) and MSU College of Education [website](#)]
- **Lansing State Journal** - Nov. 8 – MSU gets \$25M grant for food production research, anti-poverty effort (<http://bwne.ws/YAU01f>)
- **Associated Press** - Nov. 8 – MSU gets up to \$25 million for food system effort (<http://bit.ly/16yn5uf>)



Texas A&M

- **TAMU Times (press release)** – Nov. 9 – Texas A&M selected by USAID for key role in solving international development challenges (<http://bit.ly/Ut00IA>) [Reposted on A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences [website](#)]
- **The Battalion** – Nov. 9 – Texas A&M named partner in global solutions network (<http://bit.ly/RqhdOz>)

USAID

- **USAID (press release)** – Nov. 9 – USAID launches new network to engage students and universities in solving international development challenges (<http://1.usa.gov/UryKdn>)
- **Science Magazine (Science Insider blog)** – Nov. 8 – A “DARPA” approach to U.S. foreign aid (<http://bit.ly/PJdAok>)
- **DAI News** – Nov. 19 – USAID launches program to tap the brainpower of university students (<http://bit.ly/YYevEG>)
- **U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Information Programs** – Nov. 9 – USAID engages universities in development solutions (<http://1.usa.gov/Y3hF6D>)

William & Mary

- **William & Mary News and Events (press release)** – Nov. 8 – W&M receives \$25 million award for Center for Development Policy (<http://bit.ly/Uc97XX>)
- **Associated Press** – Nov. 8 – Colleges to help track where foreign aid goes (<http://bo.st/RmDKM5>)
- **The Daily Press** – Nov. 8 – William & Mary receives \$25 million award for new AidData center (<http://bit.ly/SVEQAU>)
- **The Richmond Times-Dispatch** – Nov. 9 – William and Mary gets \$25 million grant (<http://bit.ly/12pitK7>)
- **Development Gateway** – Nov. 9 – Announcing the \$25 million AidData Center for Development Policy (<http://bit.ly/XYYeFp>)
- **The Virginian-Pilot** – Nov. 10 – It’s a beautiful day when a company adds 130 jobs (<http://bit.ly/ZhdLJt>)
- **University of Texas (press release)** – Nov. 13 – UT researchers receive \$25 million grant from USAID to increase global aid transparency (<http://bit.ly/ZCNAwR>)



Appendix B

The following table shows which schools mentioned the other HESN universities in their individual announcements about USAID?

| University | University announcement mentions other HESN universities? |
|----------------|--|
| Berkeley | No, but mentions other partners for university's specific initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of California San Diego • Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory • Makerere University in Uganda • Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (India) • University of Washington • University of Michigan • Portland State University |
| Duke | Yes, press release mentions other HESN universities. |
| MIT | No, but mentions other partners for university's specific initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado State University • Franklin Olin College of Engineering • University of California at Davis • Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana • University of Sao Paulo in Brazil • International Rescue Committee • Mercy Corps • Oxfam America • Partners in Health • UNICEF • World Food Program |
| MSU | No, press release does not mention other HESN universities. |
| Texas A&M | Yes, press release mentions other HESN universities. |
| William & Mary | No, but mentions other partners for university's specific initiative: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brigham Young University • University of Texas at Austin • ESRI • GIS technology company |



Appendix D

REVIEW OF PEER UNIVERSITY SYSTEMS' COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT STRUCTURES

Overview

The communications function for The Texas A&M University System is currently housed in the System Office of Marketing and Communications. Among the office's responsibilities are:

- Coordinating print and electronic media relations;
- Writing, editing and issuing news releases;
- Maintaining media relationships; and
- Enhancing the visibility of the A&M System and its members.

At present the office has a staff of five:

- Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communication
- Senior Communications Specialist/Assistant to Vice Chancellor
- Director Collegiate Licensing (Shared services 20% A&M System)
- Senior Communications Specialist/Visual Media
- Program Manager Collegiate Licensing

The office also retains the services of Austin based Crosswind Media and Public Relations. Crosswind primarily provides tactical media relations support on specific issues and events as assigned by the Vice Chancellor with particular focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) initiatives.

To better understand the communications function across other higher education institutions and how the A&M System compares, Hill+Knowlton Strategies reviewed the structures of communications departments for the following university systems:

- California State University System
- University of California System
- University of Texas System
- University of Wisconsin System

Key Findings

Based upon our research, we have identified the following key findings that provide benchmark information in comparing the communications function of the A&M System with those of the university systems we reviewed. We compared variables such as staffing size, responsibilities,

presence of newsrooms and accessibility to information for journalists and outside observers on each system’s website.

- I. All of the university systems have robust communications staff and have **dedicated public affairs or media relations staff** to respond to reporter inquiries and foster relationships with the media.
- II. Each system is unique in its structure, with the communications function often housed within a larger tiered structure. Examples of the types of structures include:
 - o **Public affairs departments are often housed within a larger division**, such as external relations or university relations and advancement, which allows the public affairs staff to easily collaborate and coordinate messaging with other team members also focused on a variety of types of interactions with the public. For example, the University of Texas System office of external relations is the larger umbrella under which the office of public affairs is housed.
 - o External relations divisions, or similar divisions, can also be **divided into a public affairs department and a marketing communications department**, as seen in the University of California System.
- III. Although the size of public affairs departments varies from system to system, **the number of staff members typically ranges from five to nine, within a larger communications office**. The California State University System, University of California System and the University of Texas System all have communications staff with more than 30 employees.
- IV. University systems consistently **make information for campus communications contacts easily accessible** online, which is also a strength of the A&M System’s website.
- V. Several schools have online newsrooms where one can **categorize press releases by topic or by institution**, making it easy for journalists to search for material. The University of California System also maintains an experts list on its newsroom website that is easily accessible for reporters and others.

Overview of Communications Staff

| System | Department Name | Total Comm. Staff | Public Affairs Staff | Key Takeaways |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------------|----------------------|--|
| Texas A&M University System | Office of Marketing and Communications | 5 | 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More staff focus on marketing than media relations |



| System | Department Name | Total Comm. Staff | Public Affairs Staff | Key Takeaways |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---|
| California State University System | Office of Public Affairs | 41 | 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of university relations and advancement department, along with six other departments Senior staff dedicated to media relations Focus on pushing information through releases, blog posts and generated stories |
| University of California System | Public affairs & media relations | 42 | 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of the communications department and greater external relations division with six departments Clearly defined roles between marketing and public affairs staff Newsroom provides list of UC experts by topic and institution |
| University of Texas System | Office of Public Affairs | 31 | 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part of office of external relations Collaborates with three departments—development, business/community relations and Center for Enhancing Philanthropy Clearly defined role descriptions Press releases can be sorted by topic and institution |
| University of Wisconsin System | Communications & external relations | 7 | 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive director serves as spokesperson Senior staff dedicated to media relations Lists descriptions for each role Tied closely to government relations |

By comparison, with a staff of 28 people, the Division of Marketing & Communications at Texas A&M University is considerably larger and more robust than that at the System. The following details the staffing for the Texas A&M University office:

- Vice President for Marketing and Communications
- Executive Assistant to the Vice President
- Communications Services Department (7 staff positions)
- News Services Department (5 staff positions)
- Business Development Department (4 staff positions)
- Marketing Services Division (11 staff positions)

Supporting Research

The following pages provide more in-depth information about each university system’s approach to the structure of its communications department as described on their websites.

The California State University System Observations



The general CSU System communications structure is organized much like that of the University of Texas System, but does not appear to be as streamlined or well defined. The public affairs department is housed within the University Relations and Advancement division, along with six other departments: advocacy and state relations, campus advancement, communications, external relations, federal relations, and system wide advancements. The communications department appears to be focused on branding and messaging strategies through print, digital and vision campaigns, while the public affairs department leads communications efforts focused on media and external audiences.

| Communications Office Structure: California State University System | |
|--|---|
| Department Name | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Office of Public Affairs• Within the university relations and advancement division |
| Number of Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 public affairs• 41 total staff in university relations and advancement |
| Staff Titles and Roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assistant vice chancellor, public affairs (Claudia Keith)• Director of media relations & new media (Mike Uhlenkamp)• Media relations specialist (Erik Falls)• Web communications specialist (Stephanie Thara)• Public affairs assistant (Liz Chapin) |
| Listed Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leads efforts to communicate the value, mission and contributions of CSU to audiences• Leads communications efforts focused on media• Provides support and coordination for campus communications• Coordinates social media outreach• Integrates communications support for internal and external communities• Oversees communications initiatives to articulate system-wide policy issues |
| Website Access | The public affairs page is accessible through the CSU System website through the “Administration” link. |



| Communications Office Structure: California State University System | |
|--|--|
| News Center | <p>The CSU System Newsroom includes press releases, produced stories and blog posts—listed chronologically—focused on topics such as research, budget decisions and academic achievements.</p> <p>In addition, the public affairs team maintains a series of blogs and newsletters including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget Central – resource for budget news• Voices and Views blog – educational and student focus• Daily Clips blog – aggregator of CSU clips• Science and CSU – science-related research and initiatives• Commitment to Sustainability – website for CSR efforts• CSU Leader – bi-monthly e-newsletter on CSU News• CSU Greensheet – media resource guide on CSR |
| Communications Page Layout | <p>The CSU System public affairs page emphasizes the System’s student commitment and CSU produced materials, rather than a news-edge focus.</p> <p>The page provides links to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsroom• Media Resources• About the CSU• Blogs and Newsletters• Contact Us |



Example 1: CSU System Public Affairs Newsroom

CSU The California State University
WORKING FOR CALIFORNIA

Home | Search GO

- Students
- Faculty & Staff
- Teaching & Learning
- Administration
- Alumni, Parents & Donors
- Business, Community & Gov't
- Public Affairs

PUBLIC AFFAIRS THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY

Public Affairs Home

- Newsroom
- Media Resources
- About the CSU
- Blogs and Newsletters
- Contact Us

Current News Releases and Stories 2013

| Date | Headline |
|-----------|---|
| 3/27/2013 | This Way for a Healthier Planet: Blog |
| 3/21/2013 | Engineering at Full Throttle: Story |
| 3/21/2013 | Saving California's Indigenous Languages: Story |
| 3/21/2013 | Explore History and Research at CSU Libraries: Story |
| 3/21/2013 | CSU Leader: March 21, 2013 |
| 3/19/2013 | CSU Prioritizes Student Access and Success in Balanced Budget Plan: Release |
| 3/14/2013 | Academic Senate Celebrating Five Decades: Story |
| 3/7/2013 | Expanding the Transportation Industry: Story |
| 3/7/2013 | Bringing Words to Life: Story |
| 3/7/2013 | Honoring Women Leaders of the CSU: Story |
| 3/7/2013 | Helping Preserve Wildlife: Story |
| 3/7/2013 | CSU Leader: March 7, 2013 |
| 3/5/2013 | Sixteen CSU Campuses Named to President's Community Service Honor Roll: Story |

Example 2: CSU System Public Affairs Team

CSU The California State University
WORKING FOR CALIFORNIA

Home | Search GO

- Students
- Faculty & Staff
- Teaching & Learning
- Administration
- Alumni, Parents & Donors
- Business, Community & Gov't
- Public Affairs

PUBLIC AFFAIRS THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY


Public Affairs Home

- Newsroom
- Media Resources
- About the CSU
- Blogs and Newsletters
- Contact Us


Contact Public Affairs

CSU Public Affairs leads efforts to communicate the value, mission and contributions of CSU to a diverse and broad number of audiences. The department leads communications efforts focused on the media, provides support and coordination for campus communications units, coordinates social media outreach and integrates communications support for internal and external communities. Public Affairs oversees a number of communications initiatives to articulate systemwide policy issues, and is part of the University Relations and Advancement Division.


PUBLIC AFFAIRS TEAM



Claudia Keith
Assistant Vice Chancellor,
Public Affairs
ckeith@calstate.edu
(562) 951-4800



Mike Uhlenkamp
Director of Media Relations &
New Media
muhlenkamp@calstate.edu
(562) 951-4834



Erik Fallis
Media Relations Specialist
efallis@calstate.edu
(562) 951-4064

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

401 Golden Shore, 6th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802-4210
Phone: (562) 951-4800
Fax: (562) 951-4861
publicaffairs@calstate.edu



The University of California System

Observations

The public affairs team, along with the communications department in general, for the University of California System is far more robust than that of the A&M System. The total communications team consists of more than 40 staff, which ranges from creative services to media relations. Meanwhile, the public affairs team includes the public affairs director, media director, three media specialists and two executive communications specialists who appear to work collaboratively to respond to reporter inquiries, coordinate media interviews with journalists, track coverage and develop “strategies for communicating system-wide initiatives and priorities to the public.” The System newsroom also maintains an updated database of releases, which produces a significant amount per month. For instance, in April 2013, the UC Newsroom has already published 16 releases for the first five days of the month compared to zero released by the A&M System for the first five days of April. The newsroom republishes a selection of releases from its member institutions; however, it is unclear how the press releases are selected to be included on the newsroom site. Releases are largely focused on research findings in a variety of science disciplines, as well as announcements regarding events such as the Global Food Systems Forum, created by the University of California’s Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Announcements on events, philanthropy and faculty:

- UC Global Food Systems Forum
- UC California Breast Cancer Research Program event
- UC Davis – faculty awards
- UC San Diego – philanthropy announcement
- UCLA School of Dentistry – grant funding announcement

Announcements on research findings:

- UC Davis – biochemistry research
- UC Davis – biology research
- UC Davis – cancer research
- UC Santa Cruz – animal research
- UC Irvine – climate change research
- UC Irvine – psychology research
- UC San Diego – physics research
- UC San Diego School of Medicine – health research
- UC San Diego, UC San Francisco – neurology research
- UC Los Angeles – neurology research
- UC Riverside – psychology research

As stated in the public affairs department’s responsibilities, the team develops and coordinates strategies for system-wide initiatives to the public. Examples of current initiatives include the following: Project You Can to increase fundraising efforts system wide; Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan to cover educational and student fees for low income state residents; Working Smarter to cut costs administratively; and UCPath to transition the UC System to a single payroll and human resources system to save the university \$100 million a year.



| Communications Office Structure: University of California System | |
|---|--|
| Department Name | <p>Communications (within external relations division)</p> <p>Consists of two departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing communications • Public affairs & media relations |
| Number of Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 public affairs • 42 total staff in communications with 4 positions currently vacant) |
| Staff Titles and Roles | <p>Refer to organizational chart for large breakdown, but offices are divided into the two sub departments:</p> <p>Marketing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing communications director • Production manager (2 reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Traffic coordinator ○ Admin assistant • Integrated communications director (9 reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manager, content strategy ○ Principal editor/writer ○ Web editor ○ Research coordinator ○ Student affairs coordinator ○ Health/ANR coordinator ○ Academic affairs coordinator ○ Web editor ○ Web editor 2 • Creative director (12 reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Senior designer ○ Designer 1 ○ Designer 2 ○ Designer 3 ○ Production designer (contract) ○ Art director ○ Senior interactive designer ○ Web designer ○ Web developer ○ Multimedia director ○ Multimedia producer ○ Senior producer (contract) • Internal communications director (5 reports) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Managing editor ○ System coordinator ○ UCOP coordinator |



| Communications Office Structure: University of California System | |
|---|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Employment/labor coordinator ○ Web editor <p>Public Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Public affairs director ● Media director <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Media specialist 1 ○ Media specialist 2 ○ Media specialist 3 ● Executive communications specialist 1 ● Executive communications specialist 2 ● Executive communications coordinator ● Executive assistant |
| Listed Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Builds awareness of UC’s value and its impact on the lives of people in California and beyond ● Works with campus colleagues, office of the president leaders and clients to respond to critical issues; convey the breadth and depth of UC’s leadership in teaching, research and public service; and foster pride and engagement in the UC community ● Manages UC’s external facing websites, oversee internal communications and produce online/print resources ● Manages media relations and executive communications for the UC Office of the President, serving as the primary link to the news media <p>More specifically, the public affairs team takes the following actions on behalf of the office of the president:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responds to reporters’ queries ● Drafts and distributes statements, releases and talking points ● Organizes media briefings ● Coordinates and staffs media interviews with journalists ● Tracks coverage of UC and system-wide issues ● Produces daily news clips ● Develops strategies for communicating system-wide initiatives and priorities to the public |
| Website Access | <p>The external relations department is listed under the governance section of the UC System website, more specifically within the office of the president. However, the communications office is one of six departments within external relations, which also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Alumni and constituent affairs ● Federal governmental relations ● Institutional advancement ● IMPAC (issues management, policy analysis & coordination) |



| Communications Office Structure: University of California System | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• State governmental relations |
| News Center | <p>The UC Newsroom is also listed under the governance-office of the president section, as well as in a separate and additional link on the side of the UC System home page. However, it is not directly linked from the public affairs site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UC Newsroom fully integrates the System’s use of Twitter, Facebook and YouTube• Lists news releases by “Hot Topics” and through archives• Within the archives, releases are categorized by topics such as general news, budget, diversity, academic subjects or regents• Lists contact information for UC “Office of the President: Media Relations” and directs the media to follow up with the individual contact listed for each story• The “Find People” link allows journalists or outside observers to find directories for each institution• Maintains a “UC Experts” list, easily accessible, for faculty and staff on a variety of topics from politics to earthquakes |
| Communications Page Layout | <p>The UC office of the president communications page is divided into several categories of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview – breakdown of departments, scope of work and provides staff directory and organizational chart• Staff & Contacts – lists staff for the executive office, public affairs, marketing communications and campus communications contacts• What We Do – tips for working with the office, breakdown of public affairs versus marketing• Resources – project request forms, brand guidelines, social media guidelines, web redesign forms |



Example 1: UC System Public Affairs Webpage

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA Office of the President

Jobs | People Search

HOME MISSION ORGANIZATION INITIATIVES

UCOP > External Relations > Communications > What we do > Public affairs

Communications

OVERVIEW STAFF & CONTACTS WHAT WE DO RESOURCES

Public affairs

Media relations and executive communications

We help advance UC's institutional goals by crafting strategies to deliver compelling messages through targeted public events and media coverage.

Our **executive communications** team drafts speeches, remarks and statements for UC leadership that help convey the value and impact of UC. Our **media relations** team provides the primary link between the Office of the President and the news media.

We work closely with communications and other UCOP colleagues to:

- respond to reporters' queries
- draft and distribute statements, news releases and talking points
- organize media briefings
- coordinate and staff media interviews with journalists
- track coverage of UC and systemwide issues
- produce daily news clips
- develop strategies for communicating systemwide initiatives and priorities to the public

KEY CONTACTS

- Steve Montiel, who directs the media relations team, reports to Peter King, public affairs director.
- Staff include Dianne Klein, Shelly Meron and Brooke Converse, all media specialists.
- Please refer all media requests to the media relations line: (510) 987-9200.

SEE ALSO

- All public affairs staff
- Before you call
- Back to what we do

Example 2: UC Newsroom

UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA It starts here

Systemwide home | A-Z index | Find people | Contact | UC Experts Search Newsroom Search UC News Pages

UC Newsroom RSS Hot Topics Archives Publications UC en Español Videos Twitter About

Campus and Lab News

UC Santa Cruz
Sea lion is first non-human mammal known that can keep a beat to music
Roman bobs head to sounds and is first non-human mammal shown to have rhythm.

Systemwide
Check the box, fund cancer research
Funding UC cancer research programs is as easy as checking a box on your state income tax return form.

Multicampus
UC researchers part of Obama initiative to map the brain
Idea proposed last year by scientists, including Berkeley Lab's Paul Alivisatos and UC San Diego's Ralph Greenspan.

UCDMC
Fatty acid metabolite shows promise as cancer fighter
Study shows it cuts off the supply of oxygen and nutrients that fuel tumor growth and spread of the disease.

UC Davis
Greenhouse gases from farmland underestimated
Researchers find that amount nitrous oxide rises when oxygen in soil is limited, contrary to previous assumptions.

UC Davis
Scientists discover how cells distinguish friend from foe
Proteins activate body's immune response by sensing hostile bacteria.

Top Feature

BETTER LIVING THROUGH MINDFULNESS

Psychiatry
Health, cognitive benefits of awareness
Research examines the many ways we benefit from reducing distraction, focusing on the present.

More Top Features

Office of the President News

General News
Global food summit addresses feeding world's billions
Experts tackle issues of climate, sustainability, hunger in the coming decade. Listen in via webcast.



The University of Texas System

Observations

The greatest difference between the UT System and A&M System communications offices is the organizational structure at the system level. For the UT System, the office of public affairs is housed within the office of external relations, which is also responsible for three additional offices: development and gift planning services (16 staff), community and business relations (four staff), and the center for enhancing philanthropy (two staff). The role of the office of external relations is to assist the 15 UT institutions with fundraising programs, provide support for trust and endowment management, coordinate all interactions with media and external community on behalf of the System, as well as organize functions and programs for the chancellor and UT System. The four offices focused on external relations appeared to be coordinated across the website, as well as in their messaging regarding their interaction with the public. Additionally, the UT System office of public affairs appears to be more substantially staffed with nine team members, which includes a range of roles from executive director to senior communications writer and a videographer.

| Communications Office Structure: University of Texas System | |
|--|--|
| Department Name | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of public affairs Within the office of external relations |
| Number of Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9 (does not include vice chancellor) 31 staff within office of external relations |
| Staff Titles and Roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Executive director of public affairs (Jenny LaCoste-Caputo) Assistant director of communications (Meagan Abendschein) Assistant director of public affairs (Karen Adler) Web developer (Preston Broadfoot) Online communications Editor (Noelle Heinze) Public affairs specialist (Spencer Miller-Payne) Videographer (Charlie Palafox) Assistant director of online communications (Michael Trevino) Senior communications writer (Tom Zigal) |
| Listed Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serves as a liaison between the UT System administration and members of the news media and the general public Provides strategic communication, executive communication and news and public information services for the UT System board of regents and the UT System executive offices Works closely with and provides counsel to the 15 UT institution chief public affairs officers Manages web and broadcast communications that build its brand and keep its constituents and communities informed, educated and engaged |



| Communications Office Structure: University of Texas System | |
|--|--|
| Website Access | <p>From the UT System home page, the office of public affairs is accessible through two main tabs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• News – links to the News Center, which provides a link to a subpage for the Public Affairs website• Offices – lists the seven executive offices within the UT System, which includes the offices of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Academic affairs○ Health affairs○ Business affairs○ General counsel○ Government relations○ External relations (includes public affairs)○ Strategic initiatives |
| News Center | <p>The “News” tab is prominent on the UT System home page and links to the News Center—a collection of press releases, news archive, media resources, economic impact sheets and a link to the public affairs webpage.</p> <p>Press releases are arranged chronologically; however, there is an option to sort by institution or by category such as budget, chancellor, research or education. Additionally, the site links to the UT System’s Twitter page, as well as lists all of the public affairs team members for the System.</p> |
| Communications Page Layout | <p>The office of public affairs page is fairly simple in its layout, emphasizing the push on news with a large graphic. There are four categories linked on the sidebar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contact Us – lists all members of the UT System Office of Public Affairs• Campus Public Affairs Offices – lists a communications contact for each academic and health institution, as well as the contact for the UT System• Graphic Resources – links to typeface and seals• Style Guidelines – guidelines to ensure consistency across official publications and news outlets |



Example 1: UT System Office of Public Affairs page

THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM
Nine Universities. Six Health Institutions. Unlimited Possibilities.

Search the site

News Institutions Leadership Offices Students Giving

Home > Offices > Public Affairs

Public Affairs

Print Friendly Page Send Page

Public Affairs

- Contact Us
- Campus Public Affairs Offices
- Graphic Resources
- Style Guidelines



The UT System Office of Public Affairs serves as a liaison between the University of Texas System Administration and members of the news media and the general public. The office provides strategic communication, executive communication and news and public information services for the UT System Board of Regents and the UT System executive offices. It works closely with and provides counsel to the 15 UT institution chief public affairs officers. The office also manages web and broadcast communications that build our brand and keep our constituents and communities informed, educated and engaged.

Example 2: News Center and list of Office of Public Affairs staff

THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS SYSTEM
Nine Universities. Six Health Institutions. Unlimited Possibilities.

Search the site

News Institutions Leadership Offices Students Giving

Home > News

News Center

Search News Search

News Archive
Media Resources
Economic Impact Sheets
Public Affairs Website

BY CATEGORY

- Education
- Board of Regents Actions
- Board of Regents Meetings
- Budget
- Chancellor
- General
- Institutions
- Health & Medical Education
- Presidents
- Research
- Tuition & Financial Aid
- UT System Administration

UT courses a hit on edX
Monday, April 1, 2013
Filed in: [Education](#), [UT Austin](#)

Just three days after posting new online courses on the groundbreaking platform of [edX](#), the University of Texas System reports nearly 15,000 students from around the world have enrolled in four UT courses, ranging in topics from Energy 101 to [The Impact of Drug Development](#).

[Read the full release](#)

Regents announce new investigation into funding for UT Law School
Wednesday, March 20, 2013
Filed in: [Board of Regents Actions](#), [UT Austin](#)

The University of Texas Board of Regents today authorized a thorough external investigation of the use and management of money provided for the support of the University of Texas at Austin Law School.

[Tweets by @utsystem](#)

Phone
(512) 499-4363

Fax
(512) 499-4358

Staff

[Jenny LaCoste-Caputo](#)
Executive Director of Public Affairs
(512) 499-4361

[Karen Adler](#)
Assistant Director of Public Affairs
(512) 499-4360

[Meagan Abendschein](#)
Assistant Director of Communications
(512) 499-4487



The University of Wisconsin System

Observations

The communications office page for the University of Wisconsin System appears to follow a format similar to that of the Texas A&M System, displaying the members of the System communications office as well as the appointed media contacts for each institution or agency. However, one of the greatest differences is that the UW System communications office is titled “Communications and External Relations” versus the A&M System’s focus on marketing. Furthermore, the focus on external relations is emphasized within the department’s description, stating the office is responsible for “working with the news media, elected officials and other key external audiences.

The UW System communications office is housed on the website within the “Office of the President” page, whereas the A&M System communications office is listed only under the “System Offices” tab. One of the most practical features of the UW System communications page is the description listed under each staff’s position, outlining his or her role within the communications structure.

| Communications Office Structure: University of Wisconsin System | |
|--|---|
| Department Name | Communications & external relations (CERT) |
| Number of Staff | 7 |
| Staff Titles and Roles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive director (David F. Giroux) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides overall team leadership ○ Advises the president and other UW System officials ○ Serves as UW System spokesman • Special assistant (Jessica Tormey) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislative liaison to the Wisconsin State Legislature ○ Legislative communications • Special assistant (Grant Huber) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Legislative liaison to the Wisconsin State Legislature ○ Legislative communications • Senior university relations specialist (Heather LaRoi) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ External communications ○ Media relations • Web writer/editor (Jennifer Moore) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Communications and web support ○ UWSA staff newsletter editor ○ Internal communications • Web developer (Linda Ruiz) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Website design and maintenance ○ Department web support and training ○ Technical assistance |



| Communications Office Structure: University of Wisconsin System | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Executive staff assistant<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Admin support for SVP and executive director○ Admin support for communications office○ Back-up support to office of the president |
| Listed Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for working with the news media, elected officials and other key external audiences• Working with colleagues at each UW institution• Responsible for maintaining open lines of communication with the executive and legislative branches of state government• Serves as a primary point of contact for news reporters seeking information about the UW System• Produces a variety of print and electronic publications, including this UW System web site, to serve both internal and external audiences. |
| Website Access | <p>From the UW System home page, the “Communications & External Relations” page is accessible through three ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Office of the President – listed in the left hand column• News – listed under Media Contacts• UW System Offices – listed on the left hand side along with the other System offices such as government relations, general counsel and finance<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Additionally, under “Contacts” on the CERT page, there are two separate links for the System and institutions:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Communications and External Relations Team▪ UW System Public Information Officers |
| News Center | <p>Press releases are listed clearly under the “News” tab from the home page, as well as on the CERT page. Releases are listed chronologically, along with separate pages for a news archive, reports and publications, media contacts and a news search.</p> <p>Topics included regents meetings, chancellor appointments, fiscal and budget matters, as well as system-wide initiatives.</p> |
| Communications Page Layout | <p>The CERT webpage lists its main responsibilities noted previously, as well as three main categories of information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government Relations Resources – Legislative blog, bill positions and status, legislative committees, etc.• Communications Resources – UW System news and events, news archive, style guidelines, web development and news links to major and regional outlets |



Communications Office Structure: University of Wisconsin System

- Contacts – System (CERT) team, System liaisons, System public information officers (contacts for each university or college) and UW System admin staff directory

Example 1: Communications and External Relations Page

The screenshot shows a web page for the University of Wisconsin System's Communications and External Relations Team. The page has a dark red header with the 'UW' logo and the text 'PRESIDENT'S OFFICE'. Below the header, there is a breadcrumb trail: 'UW System Home > Communications and External Relations Team'. The main content area is titled 'Communications and External Relations Team' and includes a paragraph describing the team's role. Below this, there are three sections: 'Government Relations Resources', 'Communications Resources', and 'Contacts', each with a list of links. At the bottom, there is a contact information block for David F. Giroux, Executive Director, including his address, email, and phone number.

UW System Home > Communications and External Relations Team

Communications and External Relations Team

The Communications and External Relations Team is responsible for working with the news media, elected officials and other key external audiences. Working with colleagues at each UW institution, team members are responsible for maintaining open lines of communication with the executive and legislative branches of state government. The team serves as a primary point of contact for news reporters seeking information about the UW System, and produces a variety of print and electronic publications, including this UW System web site, to serve both internal and external audiences.

Government Relations Resources

- > [Legislative Update - BLOG](#)
- > [Bill Positions and Status](#)
- > [Legislative Committees](#)
- > [Find your Wisconsin legislator by zip code/address](#)
- > [Guidance on Campaign Activities](#)
- > [Growth Agenda for Wisconsin](#)

Communications Resources

- > UW System [News and events](#)
- > [News archive](#)
- > [Publications and style guidelines](#)
- > [Web development](#)
- > [News links](#)
- > Public records requests: [List of legal records custodians](#) [PDF]

Contacts

- > [Communications and External Relations Team \(CERT\)](#)
- > [UW System Legislative Liaisons](#)
- > [UW System Public Information Officers](#)
- > [UW System Administration Staff Directory](#)

David F. Giroux
 Executive Director, Communications and External Relations
 Van Hise Hall
 1220 Linden Drive
 Madison, Wisconsin 53706
dgiroux@uwsa.edu
 office: (608) 262-4464
[Personal Bio](#)



Example 2: Communications and External Relations Team Members Page

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN SYSTEM
UW

PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

UW System Home > Communications and External Relations Team > Contact

Communications and External Relations Team

Contact

Mailing address:
1700 Van Hise Hall
1220 Linden Drive
Madison, WI 53706

Tel: 608-263-5512
Toll-free: 800-442-6461
Fax: 608-262-3985
Email: communications@uwsa.edu

Related

Office of the President
Government Relations

UW System Home
Policies & Procedures
UW System Offices

Search UW System

SEARCH

David F. Giroux
Executive Director
608-262-4464
1760 Van Hise Hall
dgiroux@uwsa.edu
[Personal Bio](#)

- > Provide overall team leadership
- > Advise the President and other UW System officials
- > Serve as a UW System spokesman

Jessica Tormey
Special Assistant
608-263-7962
1762 Van Hise Hall
jtormey@uwsa.edu

- > Legislative Liaison to the Wisconsin State Legislature
- > Legislative Communications

Grant Huber
Special Assistant
608-262-4463
1746 Van Hise Hall
ghuber@uwsa.edu

- > Legislative Liaison to the Wisconsin State Legislature
- > Legislative Communications



Changes in Communications Functions in a New Media Environment

REPORT OVERVIEW

In 2013, Hill+Knowlton Strategies (H+K) was commissioned by the Texas A&M University System (the System) to conduct a thorough assessment of the effectiveness of its communications function. As a follow-up to the initial report, the System asked H+K to prepare a summary report on **changes to university systems' communications functions in light of the new media environment**.

The research findings and resulting recommendations included in this report are based on **expert interviews, desktop research** and **input from H+K subject matter experts**. H+K conducted in-depth interviews (IDIs) with the communications managers listed below:

- **California State University System** – Mike Uhlenkamp, director of media relations and new media
- **University of California Berkeley** – Ram Kapoor, executive director of digital communications
- **University of California System** – Jason Simon, executive director of marketing communications
- **University of Wisconsin System** – David Giroux, executive director of communications and external relations

Desktop research focused on corporate best practices and related thought leadership. Additionally, H+K subject matter experts reviewed the research findings and recommendations, providing input that is reflected throughout this report.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

Below is a summary of the findings and best practices resulting from the benchmark analysis of the impact of the new media environment on university systems' communications functions. There were **five key findings**:

1. There has been a **paradigm shift in the communications environment**;
2. Traditional **organizational hierarchies are evolving** to become more social;
3. **Investments in technology and capabilities reflect the new reality**;
4. **Social media is an enabling tool** rather than an activity undertaken for its own sake; and
5. **Community creation represents an opportunity** for university systems.



1. Paradigm Shift In Communications Environment

Disintermediation and the Rise of Interactive Communications – The proliferation of social media has led to a disintermediation of traditional communications channels. Barriers that used to exist between messenger and audience and among audiences/individuals have been removed. An interactive and conversational communications model (“many-to-many”) has replaced the traditional models (“one-to-many” or “one-to-few”).

Rising Power of the Public – The relative power of the messenger and the audience has changed dramatically. Individuals and outside groups have a new ability to engage and shape outcomes. Successful organizations account for this new influence in their decision-making and communications processes. Many organizations are also using social channels to communicate directly with customers, respond to complaints and interact with partners.

- Recent history is littered with examples of organizations that failed to account for this paradigm shift and paid the price (e.g., the Mubarak regime during the Arab Spring).
- Conversely, there are multiple examples of organizations that have effectively harnessed social media and reaped the rewards (e.g., President Obama’s reelection campaign).

Transparency is the New Normal – There is a rising expectation, particularly among Millennials, that organizations embrace greater transparency. Individuals have a vast quantity of information available online. This, combined with social media and historically low levels of public trust in institutions, creates an environment where individuals and communities are willing, able and experienced in shining a light on inconsistencies or generating public pressure.

- For example, during the Gulf oil spill, BP found that it could not shut down the live feed of its underwater leak for fear of appearing to be “covering up” the damage.

Once Committed, Difficult to Disengage – Organizations are finding that once they engage on social platforms it is difficult to “put the toothpaste back in the tube.” Engaging in social media establishes an expectation that the organization is not only talking, but also listening. Companies find that shutting down unwanted conversations on their own or others’ social platforms can create significant public backlash.

New Seat at the Table During Decision-Making – Sophisticated corporations and university systems are better integrating communications into the decision-making and planning/execution on a range of initiatives. Just as a university system would never embark on a major partnership without consulting legal, financial and subject-matter experts, today’s decision-making on major initiatives should also factor in the impact on public perception and on key stakeholders. Factoring in public and stakeholder reaction as well as calibrating communications tactics accordingly can prevent inadvertently injecting confusion or inconsistent messages into the marketplace.

- “Six or seven years ago there was no social media. ... [It’s] now a part of every strategy that we put together. I now have somebody who is in charge of digital content. ... She’s not a web person; she’s a communications strategist.” – David Giroux, University of Wisconsin System

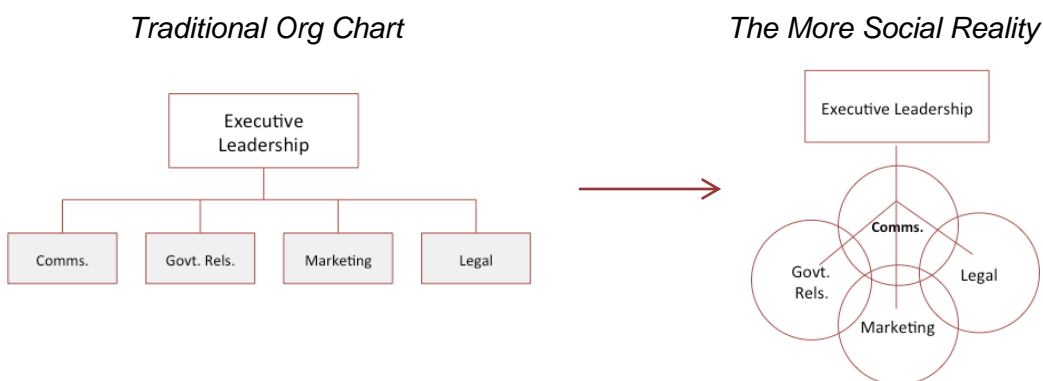
2. Traditional Organizational Hierarchies Are Evolving

Social Media is Only Part of the Story – The emerging communications environment is more social and the changes are not limited to the introduction of social media platforms. A social environment is one where people, organizations and institutions are expected to interact. Therefore, communications should not be viewed as a siloed function, but rather as an enabler for achieving a more social organization. A social organization has a competitive advantage when communicating, advancing an agenda and organizing its stakeholders to achieve its objectives.

- “We’re finally at the point where [social engagement] is no longer an ancillary part of what we do. It’s part of our structure and it’s part of our strategy.” – David Giroux, University of Wisconsin System

Enhanced Opportunities for University Systems – Today, most university systems are largely seen (by themselves and by their member institutions) as a separate entity, but we are beginning to see the top university systems recognize a potentially different role for the system. By establishing a more social organization at the system level, the system is better able to embrace and interact with its member institutions and individuals as participants in a larger community. This represents a potentially dramatic increase in the ability of the system to advance its interests.

Emergence of a More Social Organization – The utilization of traditional hierarchical organizational charts to describe functions and lines of responsibility has not changed. What has changed is the widespread recognition of the ability to utilize social media as a mechanism to blend the previously siloed functions to achieve objectives. Looking solely at an organizational chart on paper, one may note only small changes such as the addition of a digital leader. But this obscures the informal changes occurring below the surface where there is recognition of the enhanced need for regular communication/coordination among functional areas. For example:



Nimble and More Flexible Organizations – To get the most out of a social media strategy, organizations need to be structured in a way that allows them to react quickly and be able to spontaneously implement social media tactics as needed. Layers of bureaucracy and rigid approval processes can inhibit, and even paralyze, an effective social media strategy. Particularly in times of crisis, organizations must be able to communicate real time via social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.) in order to both inform and gather information from an actively engaged public.



Systems are Establishing Guardrails and Resisting Micromanaging – In social media, the most successful university systems appear to be those that are able to set parameters and guardrails, but then step back and empower actors throughout the system to communicate. However, this approach requires guidance and collaboration to ensure efforts are generally consistent with the desired strategy and priorities.

- “We’ve created guidelines to share with [communicators]. We don’t want to seem that this is how you have to do it, but these are just the best practices ideas.” – Mike Uhlenkamp, California State University System

Best Practices are Being Socialized to Encourage Consistent Guidelines – None of the university systems we spoke with have implemented rigid policies and procedures related to social media. Instead, these systems use best practices and general guidelines that continue to evolve with time, experience, technology and the media environment. Rigidity limits authenticity, and therefore inhibits success in a social environment.

- According to David Giroux at the University of Wisconsin System, “We’ve done a lot of sharing of best practices.” However, Giroux noted that this collaboration is mostly peer-to-peer rather than mandated from the top.
- “It’s not one framework that everyone has to work from, but we share best practices, and everybody has guidelines and policies around use and also around moderation.” – Jason Simon, University of California System

3. Investments In Technology And Capabilities Reflect New Priorities

Resource Constraints Force Prioritization – Most university systems we interviewed identified resources as a key constraint to optimal engagement with social platforms. This is a function of budget, staffing and expertise. As a result, university systems are prioritizing key areas for focused investment, while providing guidance and support in areas of lesser importance.

Content and Platforms Become More Social and Mobile Friendly – As users begin to access more content on social media platforms and mobile devices, maintaining social and mobile friendly platforms is critical to an organization’s ability to engage. Creating platforms and content that allows visitors to engage more easily on social media or mobile devices helps drive collaboration and participation among users. This also requires budget, so care should be given to prioritize and plan thoughtfully about where to invest.

Social Media Channels Should Reference Relevant Collateral – Consistently linking to relevant material on social media channels drives engagement among followers and recognition among stakeholders as a credible source. According to a 2013 Buddy Media study, tweets that contain links receive 86 percent higher retweet rates than tweets with no links or collateral.

- In 2012, the University of Wisconsin System initiated a social media campaign, Knowledge Powers Wisconsin, to highlight the role UW System institutions play in powering the state’s



economy. As part of the program, the system maintains an active Twitter feed that directs followers to UW System collateral such as the regularly updated microsite and the related YouTube channel with a selection of videos discussing UW's impact on economic growth.

Toolkit Defines Branding and Communications Guidelines and Recommendations – Toolkits that clearly communicate branding and communications guidelines can contribute to a more cohesive message for the System and its member institutions.

- For instance, UC Berkeley's communications and public affairs team developed a toolkit of resources for more than 200 campus communicators, which identifies the university's brand story and positioning as well as includes tactical guidelines and noteworthy examples of branded materials.

4. Social Communications Are A Means, Not An End

Social Media Facilitates Engagement – Social media is at its most effective when it is used as a means to engage with your audience. Launching accounts on social platforms is not an activity to be undertaken for its own sake. This is particularly true in an environment of constrained budgets and limited personnel.

- “We have the philosophy and believe heartily in social media, because one, it's a direct channel for us to reach constituents, as opposed to various other kinds of activity, whether it's advertising, which we invest in and do—or even PR.” – Jason Simon, University of California System
- “You need to make sure you are getting into [social media] for the right reasons; you are not just getting into it just to get into it.” – Mike Uhlenkamp, California State University System
- “We tell people that you might create a Facebook page or a Twitter feed, but the Internet is open 24 hours a day, and people are going to be responding, and hopefully they are engaging you. If they do, you need to be able to support a team to engage them back, because if they pose a question and there's no response for four or five days, then you are losing people.” – Mike Uhlenkamp, California State University System

Communications are a Source of Leverage – In a social environment, sophisticated organizations recognize that communications are a key source of leverage. Social communications engage key stakeholders and mobilize communities. But just as with leverage in the physical world, leverage in social communications can also be used to mobilize opposition. Failure to engage on social channels can create negative leverage in times of crisis or it can create positive leverage to help your organization achieve its objective(s).

- For example, Texas State Senator Wendy Davis's June 2013 filibuster of SB5, a controversial bill regulating abortion, achieved national prominence on the back of social media efforts by activists and supporters. Activists used social media to prepare in advance, activating a network of supporters to gather at the Capitol. Ultimately, this group of supporters was instrumental in disrupting a planned vote. And at one point nearly 200,000 individuals were watching the late-night Texas Tribune live stream of the filibuster, even as



traditional cable and network television ignored the event. To put this in context, this viewership would have beaten every other cable news channel's audience size during that time period with the exception of Fox News.

Increasing Collaboration Between Government Relations and Communications – In a social world, government relations is as much about managing public constituencies as it is about one-on-one communications with government officials. University systems' communications departments are increasingly partnering with government relations and corporate affairs to ensure that work is not duplicated, consistent messaging is used and the appropriate tactics are deployed to reach and mobilize supporters.

- The University of Wisconsin System has monthly meetings or video conferences with all of the system's public information officers and legislative liaisons in an effort to increase collaboration between communications and government relations professionals. As David Giroux noted, "Let's face it, these days as a public institution, a lot of the communications issues you are facing are governmental in nature."
- "We are intentionally aligned with all of our government relations activity, because we know that part of the long-term success of the system is going to be in building more broad-based awareness and support and having better relationships with key policymakers. We're really intentional in trying to create some of those channels and some of those opportunities." – Jason Simon, University of California System

Additional Uses of Social Media – Other areas where utilizing social media is particularly helpful include student engagement, alumni relations, donors/fundraising and athletics. Each system prioritizes these areas in a way that fits the unique needs of the individual moment and the organization.

- **Breadth of Use** – An April 2013 survey by Huron Consulting, "Best Practices in Social Media," reviewed universities' use of social media tools. The study found that universities report using social media for: Alumni Engagement (81 percent), Brand/Marketing (65 percent), Fundraising/Development (59 percent), Student Engagement (54 percent) and Admissions (41 percent). Fully 54 percent of respondents report that their greatest success in social media has come from "increasing engagement with our target audiences."
- **Student Engagement** – David Giroux at the University of Wisconsin System noted that students are one audience that has been a particular focus of social engagement efforts. However, they are also a natural source of growth because "very soon, the students are going to be our alums and they are going to take this affinity for social media with them and that's going to change [how we communicate with alumni]."
- **Crisis Communication** – Mike Uhlenkamp of the California State University System noted that during times of crisis the individual campuses use social media to engage and inform students. "The people at the universities were saying that the students aren't reading their emails, but they are following Twitter."

Collaboration and Cross-Pollination Enhance Capabilities – Every system we spoke to holds regular meetings (whether in-person or virtually), bringing together communications leaders from



across the system's member institutions. This provides opportunities for cross-pollination, collaboration, enhanced peer relationships and shared best practices. Because social media management is generally quite diffuse, ensuring all of your key communicators are in contact with one another can help avoid disruptive missteps.

- According to David Giroux at the University of Wisconsin System, peer-to-peer collaboration and information sharing dominates, with fairly limited “mandates” from the top.
- “We have set up different lists where [communicators] can engage with the other people working in that function to share best practices.” – Mike Uhlenkamp of the California State University System
- “We have recently instituted something where we have all of the social media coordinators from throughout the system on a regular call every month, and they share editorial calendars, budgets and all kinds of things.” – Jason Simon, University of California System

5. Creating Communities

Enhanced Ability to Create Sense of Community – Social media offers the opportunity to engage with member institutions and stakeholders on issues of shared relevance. This enhances the sense of belonging to (and if managed well — having a stake in) a university system, not just a single institution. In turn, this enhances the system's ability to articulate its value and highlight exciting developments. It also enhances the system's ability to interact and engage with stakeholders in creative ways.

- “The value that we're trying to articulate as a system is that we do have more in common than you might think. Together we are strengthening Wisconsin businesses. We're creating a stronger workforce. We're creating stronger responsive communities. The way we illustrate that is in the success stories that come out of UW-Stevens Point and the work they're doing with the paper industry to do this, this, this, and this. Or UW-La Crosse and the graduates they're producing in the health-related fields that will go on to take these jobs and those jobs. We try to aggregate those success stories in a way that people begin to see the value of the System as a whole. ... The experience you have at UW-Platteville may be a lot different than the experience you'd have at UW-Milwaukee. But they both mean an affordable access to a high-quality college degree that will prepare you for success in life. You'll be part of that stronger workforce that we're trying to create.” – David Giroux, University of Wisconsin System
- “I would like to get to a place where we're using [social media] for other, broader communications, specifically around people's interest areas ... and get them engaged in a certain issue or in a certain content element. We've got all these current students, and we want to get them to help answer other prospective students' questions. How are we using our digital channels to be able to do that? Or I want to be able to say there's this big new initiative that the system is doing around biotechnology. Let's slice out all the biotechnology people that we have in all these channels and make sure they know about it and are connecting together. Regardless of campus affiliation or anything else, I think that's the real goal for us, is to move away from talking about us and start going to what they want to talk



about and providing that information. We should be facilitating that.” – Jason Simon, University of California System

Member Institutions Demonstrate Systems’ Value – Because a system office is not only a bricks-and-mortar institution, its value proposition lies in the sum of its parts. In order to reflect this value, the leading university systems are learning to step back, do less talking about themselves and focus more on shining a spotlight on students, institutions, partners and outcomes. This engages individuals and allows the value to become self-evident. Ultimately, this is more authentic and sustainable.

- “I think that’s what the role of the University of California System is. We are essentially the research and new knowledge and new industry backbone of the state. That’s the space that we want to occupy, and to do it, we’ve got to stop talking about us.” – Jason Simon, University of California System
- “Nobody considers themselves an alum of the System. Nobody considers themselves a student of the System. Nobody gives money to the System. That affinity, we recognize, lies at the institutional level. ... We try and use our social media channels, our platforms, as a way to celebrate and echo what’s happening out there with everybody else. We go out and look for success stories from all the other UW institutions and we channel those through our platforms in a way that serves as a sounding board for all the good things they’re doing. In some small way it gives people an opportunity to learn about the part of the elephant that they can’t routinely touch.” – David Giroux, University of Wisconsin System

Leveling the Playing Field for Member Institutions – While the flagship school may, by default, generate the most media attention, it is important that the System be viewed as a neutral arbiter. This creates a sense of shared interests that will accrue to the System’s benefit in the long term.

- One example is that the University of Wisconsin System regularly uses its social media channels to promote smaller campuses’ athletic programs. For example, if a small school is making a run at the Division III Volleyball title, then the System can act as an amplifier for that news, alerting other System stakeholders to the news and generating a broader fan base of support. This in turn raises awareness of and a sense of belonging to a System as well as an individual institution.

Promoting Partnerships – Social channels can also be used to raise awareness of partnerships. For example, if a university has a research partnership with a company such as Google, the appropriate faculty or staff can actively talk on social channels about it. Also engaging directly with that partner when they have news to share – for example retweeting their news and congratulating them will incentivize your partners to do the same for you. This will grow your audience reach over time.

Encouraging Engagement – Don’t be afraid to tweet directly. Give students shout outs, or praise faculty and staff. Be informal, playful and nimble as well as focus on engaging where the activity being praised aligns with System’s core values (e.g., service or academic excellence).



- “We have a UW Powers Me Twitter feed, which is by far the most fun Twitter feed we have, which is a curated account where we rotate the use of that on a weekly basis. One week, right now, it’s the provost from UW-La Crosse. Next week it will be a student from some other campus. The week after that it will be an alum. The week after that it will be another student. The week after that it will be another professor. All from different institutions, all from every place around the state, and occasionally around the world. We had a week where two UW-Milwaukee students were tweeting from their study abroad experience in Austria. We had an alum who was tweeting on a trade mission to China. Really, it’s not about the university but it’s about their own personal view on the university. It’s turned out to be a really nice organic way to talk about the institution.” – David Giroux, University of Wisconsin System



Appendix E

STRATEGIES FOR MOBILE ENGAGEMENT

Summary

As part of research to inform the broader communications assessment conducted by Hill+Knowlton

- As more people purchase smartphones and tablets, and use these devices to get news, universities have been pushed to think about mobile devices when developing solutions for all of their constituents. For this reason, it is important that all online content is mobile friendly.
- We evaluated the Texas A&M University System mobile presence for two components: for news and for current initiatives to drive awareness of the system.
- Recommendations for developing a more robust and usable mobile experience are included below.

Findings

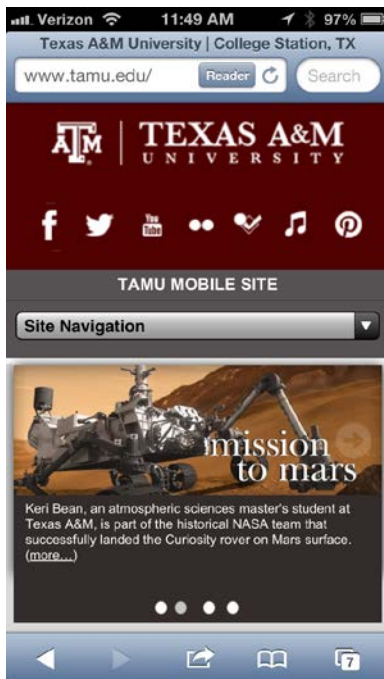
Dedicated apps

- At this time, The Texas A&M System does not have a dedicated app, and we have not identified any apps for large university systems.
- The university apps that we have found typically fall into two categories – recruitment and student experience. A&M has done a good job of promoting its mobile apps for the University.

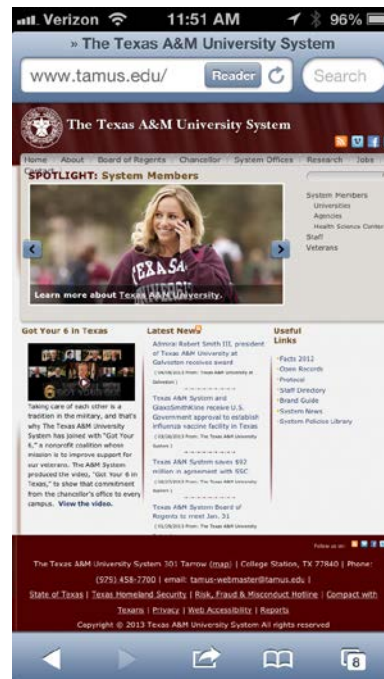


Mobile optimized sites

- Although the TAMU.EDU site is optimized for mobile, the TAMUS.EDU site is not



TAMU.EDU Site on an iPhone



TAMUS.EDU Site on an iPhone

- Some of the issues with the TAMUS.EDU site on mobile browsers (iPhone):
 - Current site is difficult to navigate on a mobile device
 - Some of the functionality does not work. For example, the RSS feed attempts to open as a podcast

Twitter

- We also feel the @tamusystem Twitter feed can be used more effectively for distributing news about the system, without concerns about the platform.
 - Twitter is the most practical way to distribute news across all platforms
 - The @tamusystem handle is not updated enough

Recommendations

We recommend a digital strategy for TAMUS that focuses on a mobile-first philosophy for both tablets and smartphones.

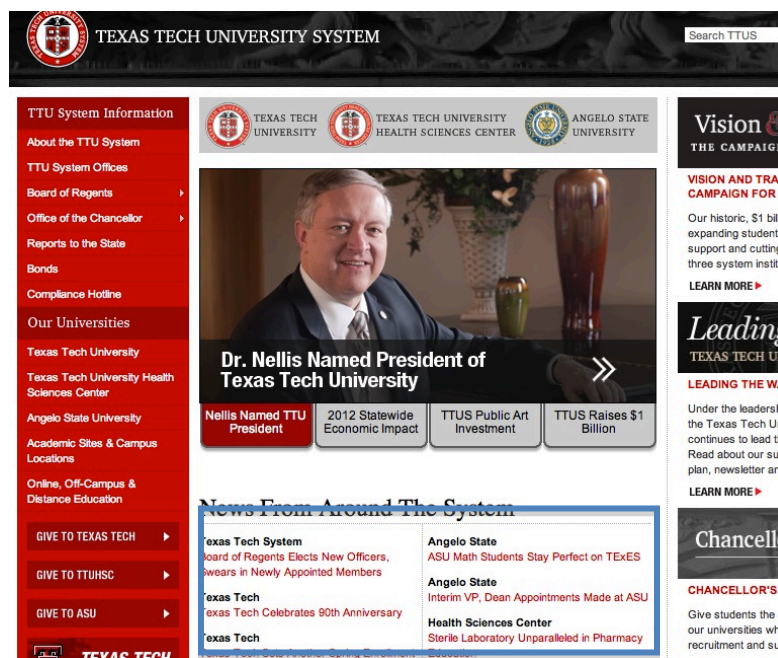
We put together the recommendations below based on a progressive level of complexity for each phase in order to provide a practical roadmap towards a more effective mobile strategy.

1) Make news more available, regardless of platform. Since Twitter is the most popular way for people to get their news on the go, we propose using Twitter more aggressively for pushing out system news.

- Consider creating a dedicated Twitter handle just for system news. For an example, see @UCNewsroom on Twitter.
- Re-tweet and promote more content from all of the universities in the system, while also encouraging other universities to re-tweet out The TAMUS content
- Create and promote Twitter Lists of all of the system university Twitter accounts to aggregate Twitter content

2) Integrate more with the existing Texas A&M app and place system news on the A&M homepage.

- The A&M site and app receive a significant amount of traffic and we recommend adding more news



Example of system content on the Texas Tech homepage

3). Optimize the current TAMUS site for mobile web browsing. Make additional content changes to highlight news content to make it easier to find.

4). Create a dedicated mobile app for Android and iOS for TAMUS, focused on system news.

Recommend content for the dedicated apps:

- System news and hot topics
- Tweets from the System and aggregated TAMUS Twitter Lists
- System news and archives
- Maps and campus information for all campuses
- Links to system sites, apps and social media channels for other universities in the system
- Images to reflect the diversity of the programs and universities within the system
- Directory for TAMUS contacts



- TAMUS events
- Bulletins and releases
- History and legacy
- Programs (system focus)
- At a glance - stats and info
- Video and multimedia content
- Tools for submitting new story ideas and content
- Social News - aggregated content using Twitter and Instagram #hashtags
- Social sharing tools

The Texas A&M University System

In-Depth Media Analysis



September 2013

prepared by
Hill+Knowlton Strategies



In-Depth Media Analysis Overview

Analysis of The Texas A&M University System's Media Coverage

Hill+Knowlton Strategies synthesizes multiple media channels and analytic tools to render a comprehensive view of the media and public opinion landscape. This analysis of The Texas A&M University System provides insights into that landscape for the institution today, including comparisons to The University of Texas System to provide context, and offers suggestions on how to apply the findings to the A&M System's benefit.

The findings of this analysis should be integrated with the recommendations set forth in the broader Communications Assessment and are designed to assist with increasing the impact of the A&M System's media outreach efforts. Through this exercise, we hope to help you achieve the outcomes that you are looking for: the best and brightest students, experienced and effective administrators, increased legislative support and grant funding from government and foundation sources, and attracting top tier graduate researchers and prestigious faculty.

We compare traditional and social media coverage of the A&M System to examine:

- Comparative trends in volume
- Leading topics
- Leading sources of conversation on a local, regional and national level
- Relative sentiment of the conversation
- Types of media that drive the conversation

Analysis of Media Influencers

We also identify and analyze media influencers who help shape the substantive conversation about an organization and its peers. The insights gained from influencer monitoring and outreach can be leveraged to measure the impact of media coverage, events or outreach efforts.

Analysis of A&M System-Generated Social Media + Web Content

We apply industry-leading Web analytics to compare and contrast the A&M System's Web presence with other university peers. We analyze the A&M's System's social media presence based on four basic criteria: design, content, organization and navigation.

In addition, it is essential that the A&M System stays current and participates in online conversations. By analyzing the "chatter" involving the A&M System across social media platforms, we will determine how and when the A&M System needs to participate in that conversation.



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Executive Summary





Executive Summary

1. The A&M System is well-positioned to capitalize on event-driven coverage.

During 2012, total volume of coverage received by the A&M System was comparable to that of the UT System. It is important to note that there was a significant spike in coverage of Texas A&M University during November and December of 2012, due to commentary on the football season and the Heisman race. The media focus on Texas A&M, due to its move to the SEC and the success of its football program, provides the A&M System with the platform upon which to drive more coverage of its excellent academic and research programs and initiatives.

2. The A&M System has the opportunity to leverage the positive work of its state agencies to expand media impact.

In aggregate, mentions of the Texas A&M state agencies totaled 9,797, or less than 1 percent of coverage for the A&M System overall. Coverage for the state agencies was driven by initiatives, studies and events in which the respective agencies participated. These agencies provide valuable services to the state of Texas and contribute to positive coverage and awareness of the A&M System. The work of these agencies can be leveraged to expand the reach of A&M's media profile to broader audiences.

3. The A&M System would benefit from a disciplined and sustained focus on generating coverage for academics and research.

The A&M System received 84 percent less coverage related to research than the UT System, and received 49 percent less coverage related to academics. While the athletics coverage is an effective doorway through which to draw the attention of a wider audience, the A&M System should provide people with additional substantive stories to raise the profile of the university's core culture and generate discussion regarding its core academic and research excellence. The A&M System has an opportunity to use the platform afforded the institution by Texas A&M's standout football team to promote the system's world-class research and academic programs.

4. The A&M System can capitalize on engagement with the A&M-focused communities already interacting in social media.

The majority of media activity for the A&M System took place on social channels, with Twitter and Facebook activity comprising a combined 90 percent of coverage for the organization overall. This dynamic reflects the way that students and sports fans, as a core constituency demographic, use media to talk about their interests.

It is important for the A&M System to join in social media conversations already underway. Social media often acts as an amplifier of media content and can serve to increase reach and awareness of news items in public consciousness. The student body, alumni and sports fans represent significant stakeholder groups that are already highly engaged and will be key to mobilize online.

5. Defining strategic media targets will help the A&M System to create efficiencies and increase impact of outreach efforts.

Coverage of the A&M System was concentrated in local or regional publications tied to cities or regions in which members of the A&M System have a strong presence. In addition, the UT System receives more coverage in the larger Texas media markets and all of the national media publications surveyed.

The A&M System would benefit from a disciplined and dedicated messaging and outreach campaign to raise its profile. Defining desired outcomes will help to appropriately focus resources and priorities. Tracking of coverage in designated media targets over time will enable the A&M System to identify opportunities to increase its efforts, as well as recognize sustained successes over time.



Executive Summary – Continued

6. Academic coverage represents a significant opportunity for the A&M System to increase substantive coverage.

During the past year, the UT System received three times more coverage in the academic journals surveyed than the A&M System. While media coverage in academic press may not have the same reach as more mainstream publications, many of the more substantive stories are derived from academic coverage. Academic coverage demonstrates the great work to which the system contributes and that is at the core of the institution's mission. Furthermore, academic press helps validate to mainstream media the legitimacy and regard for research conducted by the professors.

7. The A&M System has successfully developed an initial profile in social media channels and should build upon these efforts.

The A&M System has built a comprehensive social media program and has an active presence across all major and upcoming social channels, except the photo-sharing platform Instagram. The A&M System should ensure that the commitment to social media outreach is sustained in order to be successful in the new media environment.

Engagement via university-owned social media channels is inexpensive and is often the best means for the organization to reach its core stakeholder groups and represent itself to the general public. Social media channels often represent the first interactions people have with the A&M brand; a strong social media program is essential for the A&M System to raise its profile in public awareness.

8. Search activity indicates that the A&M System should increase its profile-building efforts.

In 2012, the average search volume in the U.S. about the A&M System was lower than searches related to the UT System. The vast majority of searches took place locally in Texas, with searches coming from College Station and Austin for the A&M System and UT System, respectively.

The most prominent news story for the the A&M System appearing in search's in 2012 was the June 2012 announcement that the system was awarded a contract for developing one of the three U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing. This is a positive indicator, demonstrating that substantive news stories generate interest in the A&M System and motivate people to look for additional information. The A&M System should take advantage of this dynamic and provide content to the audiences that are seeking it.

9. Partnering with media influencers represents an opportunity to increase the reach and profile of the A&M System's stories.

Media influencers related to the A&M System include athletes, political figures, researchers, law enforcement personnel, astronomers and respected thought leaders. These media influencers have a prominent presence in media channels and are associated with the A&M System. The A&M System has the opportunity to partner with these individuals to reach their existing networks through collaborating on stories and content creation, engaging with their extended networks and working with them to promote the A&M System's activities and initiatives.

A developed influencer outreach and coordination program could help boost the visibility of the A&M System with new audiences and high-profile, influential observers.

Media Activity Analysis





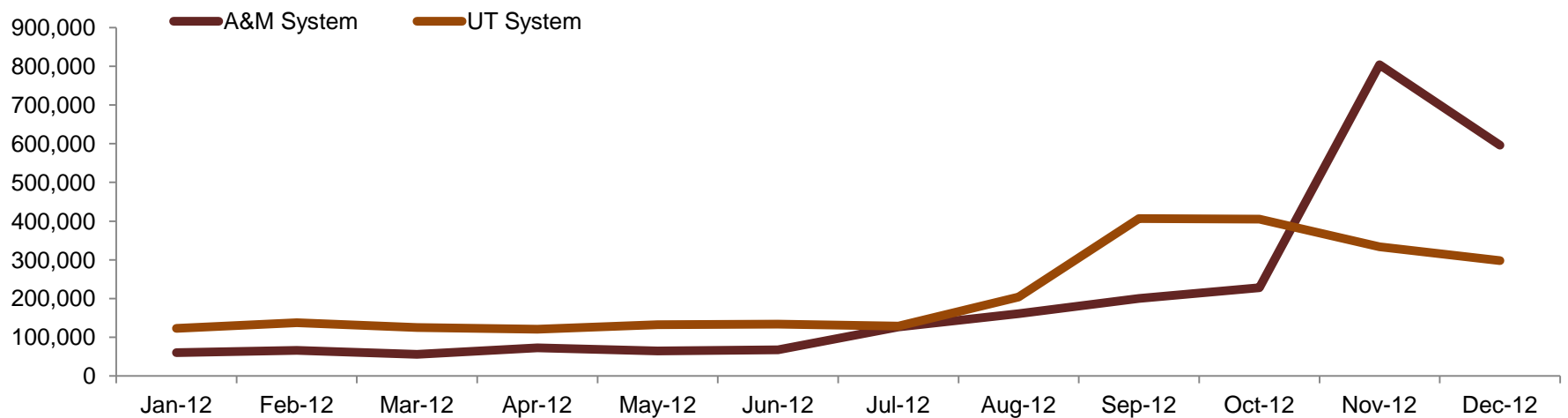
Media Volume: Overall

In 2012, total volume of coverage received by the A&M System was comparable to that of the UT System. Each system garnered approximately 2.5 million mentions across media channels.

It is important to note that there was a significant spike in coverage of Texas A&M during November and December of 2012, due to commentary about the football season and the Heisman race. During the period of January through October 2012, the UT System received 42 percent more activity than the A&M System.

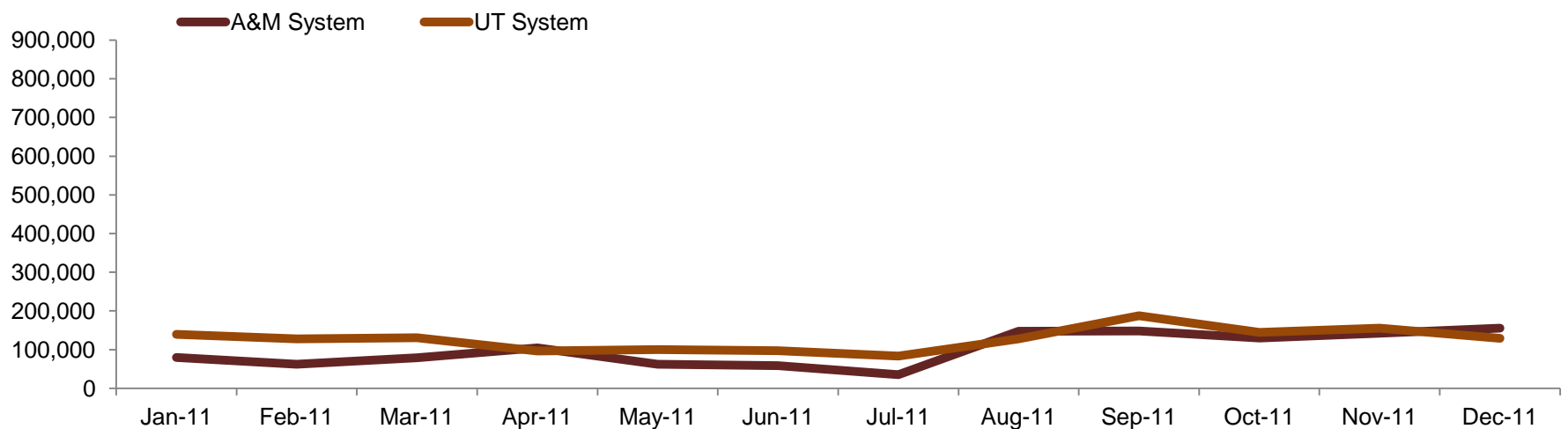
Peak volume occurred in November 2012 with 803,900 mentions for the month, largely related to football and Heisman coverage. Media activity during November 2012 made up 32 percent of total volume for the year.

Volume of Media Coverage 2012



Media mentions of the A&M System doubled from 2011 to 2012, primarily due to media and public excitement over the school's move to the SEC, the success of the Texas A&M's football team and its star player, Johnny Manziel. The average monthly volume for 2011 was 100,367, less than half the average monthly volume for 2012, which was 208,819. During 2011, the A&M System received 21 percent fewer mentions than the UT System.

Volume of Media Coverage 2011





Media Volume: Comparative

For the first half of 2012, a period in which there was less media activity related to football, the UT System received 50 percent more media volume than the A&M System. During this period, the A&M System received an average of 64,815 media mentions per month, compared to an average of 352,825 during the second half of the year.

Peak volume occurred in November 2012 with 803,900 mentions for the month, largely related to Texas A&M's football and Heisman coverage. Media activity during November 2012 made up 32 percent of total volume for the year.

Specific topics that generated a dramatic spike in media activity for the A&M System during November and December 2012 included:

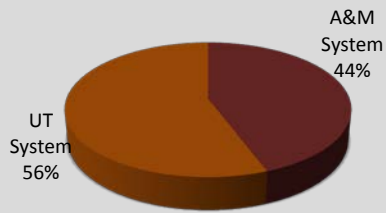
- Texas A&M's football team defeats the previously undefeated University of Alabama
- Texas A&M quarterback Johnny Manziel wins the 2012 Heisman trophy, becoming the youngest recipient of the award
- A shooting incident near Texas A&M's campus in College Station that resulted in three fatalities
- A bomb threat at the Texas A&M College Station campus

2011

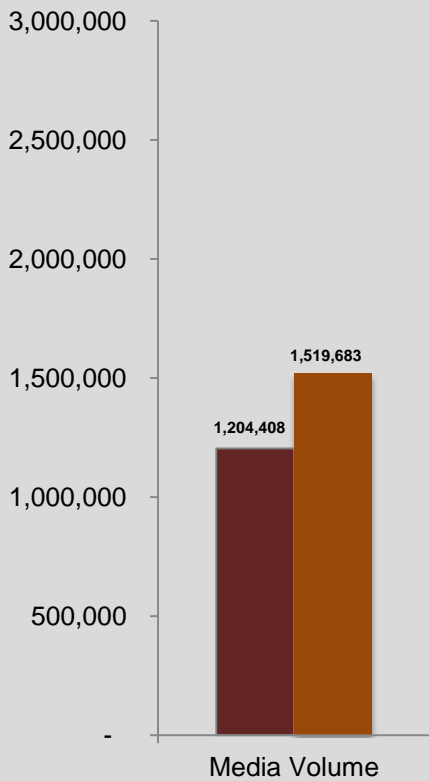
-21%

vs. UT System

2011 – Share of Media Volume



2011 – Volume of Media Coverage

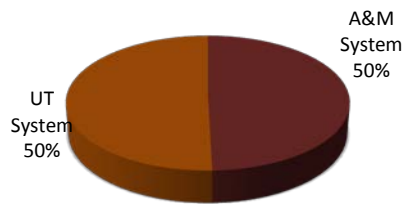


2012

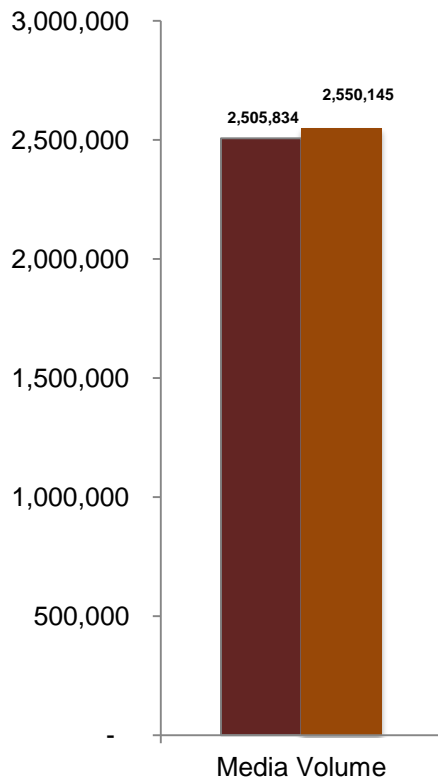
-2%

vs. UT System

2012 – Share of Media Volume



2012 – Volume of Media Coverage

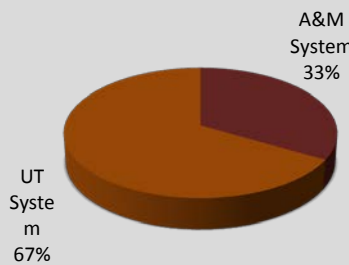


1st Half 2012

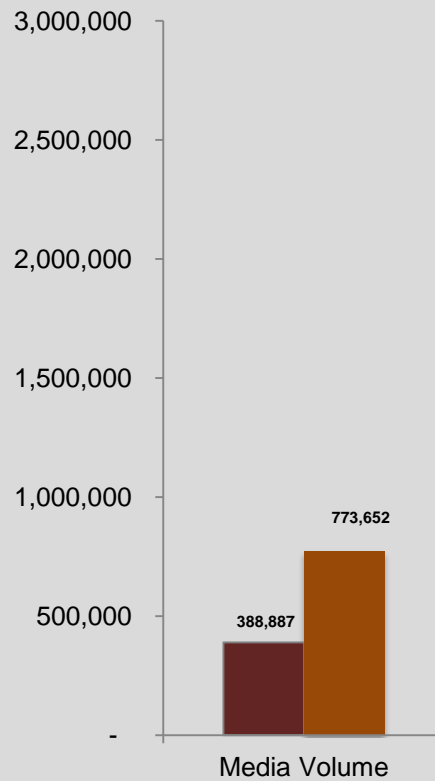
-50%

vs. UT System

1st Half 2012 – Share of Media Volume



1st Half 2012 – Volume of Media Coverage

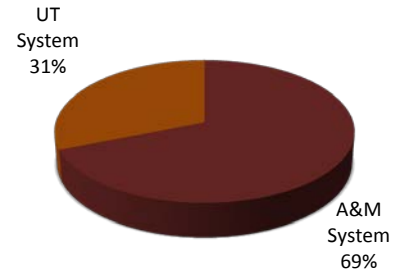


Nov-Dec 2012

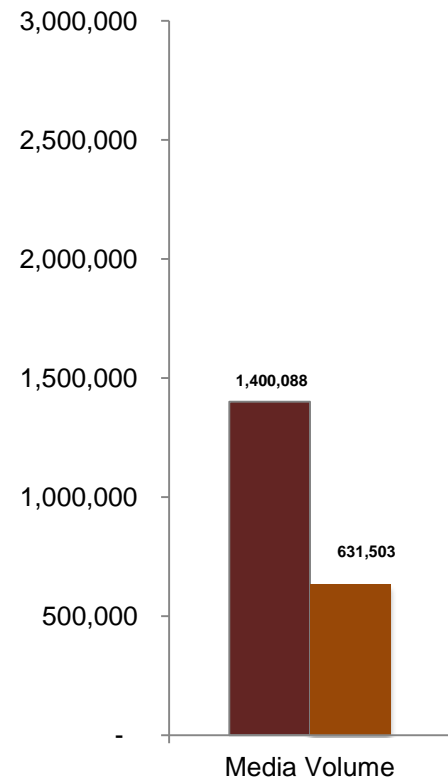
+122%

vs. UT System

Nov-Dec 2012 – Share of Media Volume



Nov-Dec 2012 – Volume of Media Coverage





Media Volume: Texas A&M System State Agencies – Aggregate

Of note for the purposes of this analysis, Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research) and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) are grouped as one entity, as are Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) and Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). These grouped agencies are often discussed in the same articles related to similar themes.

In aggregate, mentions of the Texas A&M state agencies totaled 9,797, or less than 1 percent of coverage for the A&M System overall. This indicates that the state agencies do not have a high profile in media coverage and that there is a significant opportunity to leverage the important services and research that these institutions provide.

AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension are the most frequently mentioned state agencies, making up over half of the overall state agency conversation. The AgriLife agencies received two times the volume of the next highest Texas A&M state agency, the Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS).

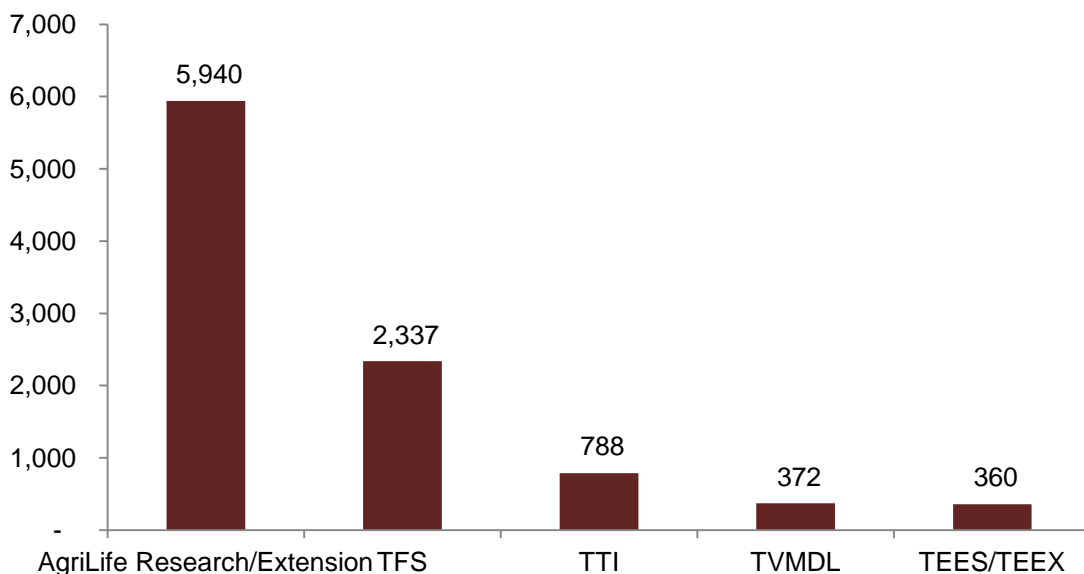
Conversation about AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension is almost entirely focused on the research that is produced by the agency. Other coverage of AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension includes the announcement of grants and new projects that the agencies are pursuing.

TFS made up 24 percent of the overall coverage of the Texas A&M state agencies. The story that generated the highest volume for TFS in 2012 was the agency’s September report finding that the 2011 drought in Texas killed over 300 million trees. The agency also frequently releases warnings and cautionary information related to drought conditions and burn bans. These types of announcements were concentrated during holiday weekends and also generated coverage.

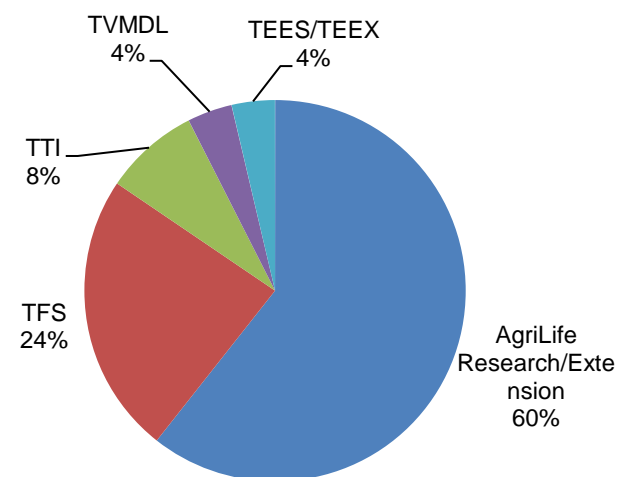
The Texas A&M Transportation Institute’s (TTI) coverage is primarily driven by reports on its research findings and touting of various studies that TTI conducts. The announcement of TTI’s partnerships with the University of Florida to create a life-saving device – a barrier for highways – was the leading story for the agency. TTI made up 8 percent of the total of Texas A&M state agency coverage.

TEES, TEEX and the Texas A&M Veterinary Diagnostics Lab (TVMDL) had the lowest volume, making up 4 percent, respectively, of the agencies conversation. Mentions of TEES and TEEX primarily consisted of various reports published by the agencies. Conversation about TVMDL centered on reports on various studies and findings from the agency.

Volume of Agency Coverage



Share of Agency Coverage





Media Volume: Texas A&M System State Agencies – Trended

Of note, for the purposes of this analysis, AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension are grouped as one entity, as are TEES and TEEEX. These grouped agencies are often discussed in the same articles related to similar themes.

In mid-2012, the state agencies were rebranded with the Texas A&M name. In the second half of the year, the total media mentions of the agencies rose 10 percent. It's not clear whether the rebranding was the cause of, or contributed to, the 10 percent increase. At the very least, the rebranding was well-timed, for it ensured that the A&M brand received more exposure, helping to educate the public on the fact that the valuable public services provided by the agencies were done so under the ultimate supervision of the A&M System.

Overall, coverage for the state agencies was driven by initiatives, studies and events in which the respective agencies participated. These agencies provide valuable services to the state of Texas and contribute to positive coverage and awareness of the A&M System. The work of these agencies can be leveraged to expand the reach of A&M's media profile.

AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension received a steady volume of coverage throughout 2012. They received their highest volume of coverage in August 2012 as the result of signing an agreement with BP's biofuels division to advance biofuel feedstock development.

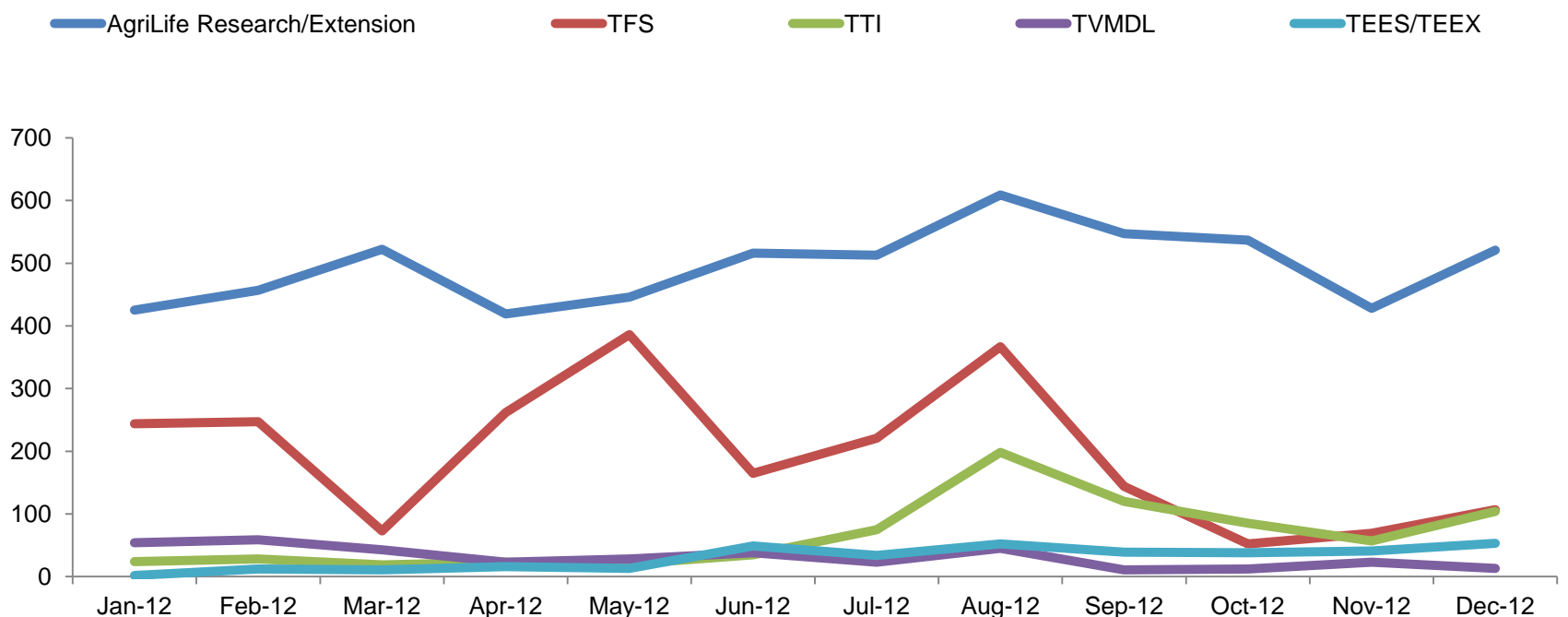
TFS received a prominent uptick in coverage during May 2012, with 17 percent of its coverage occurring during this month. Media activity centered on the launch of its wildfire application for smart phones, the release of its drought assessment, and the high number of wildfires that were occurring throughout the state.

TTI received an increase in coverage as a study published by the agency was mentioned in an AP article that was reprinted in other publications across the U.S.

TEES and TEEEX received coverage related to the safe return of one of its task forces following service with FEMA during Hurricane Isaac.

Media volume for TVMDL was steady throughout the year with upticks due to the publication of various reports and study findings.

Trended Volume of Agency Media Coverage





Media Volume: Texas A&M System Universities

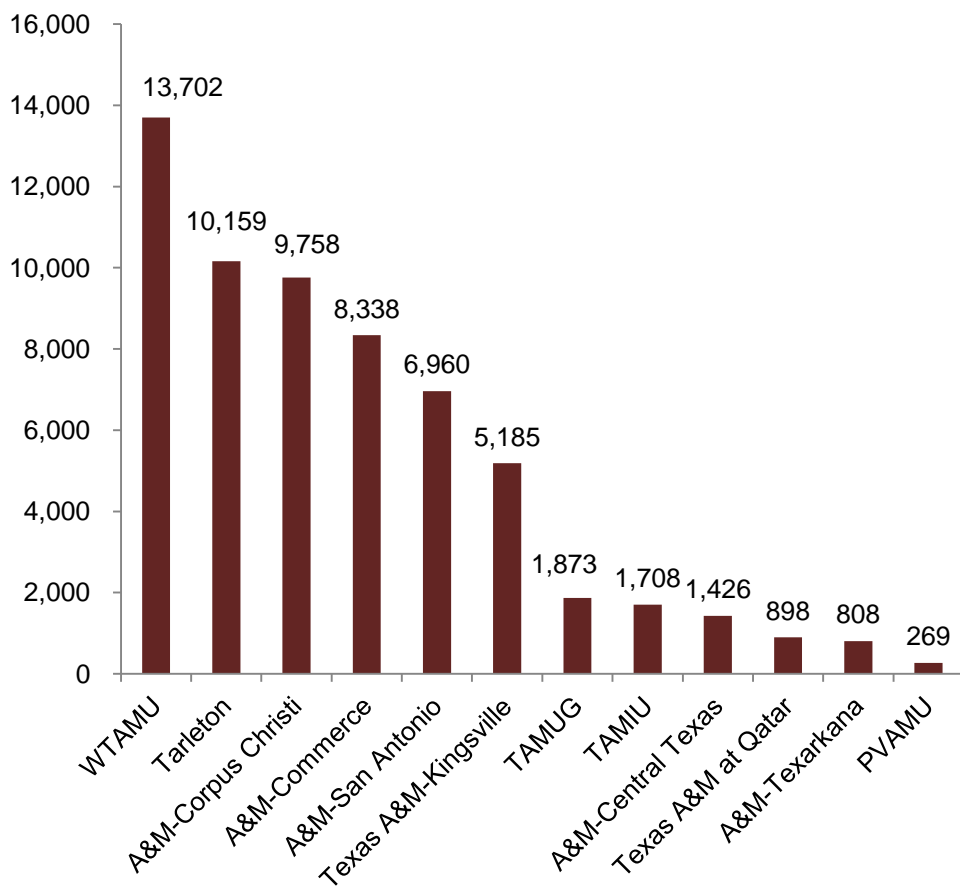
Texas A&M's flagship campus in College Station is often referred to as "A&M," and so is not included in this analysis of media coverage related to the other universities in the A&M System. Of the 2.5 million mentions of the A&M System during 2012, just under 3 percent specifically referenced one of the universities in the A&M System. This indicates that universities in the A&M System do not have a high profile in media coverage and that virtually all media coverage focuses on the College Station campus, or names the universities generically as "A&M."

Of the 10 other universities in the A&M System plus the Galveston and Qatar campuses, West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) received the highest volume of coverage during 2012, while Prairie View A&M University (PVAMU) received the lowest volume. Coverage was relatively evenly dispersed, with no institution garnering more than 25 percent of the total volume. Virtually all of the mainstream news coverage on these schools occurred in local media sources, though there was some social media activity, which can broaden the reach of media mentions.

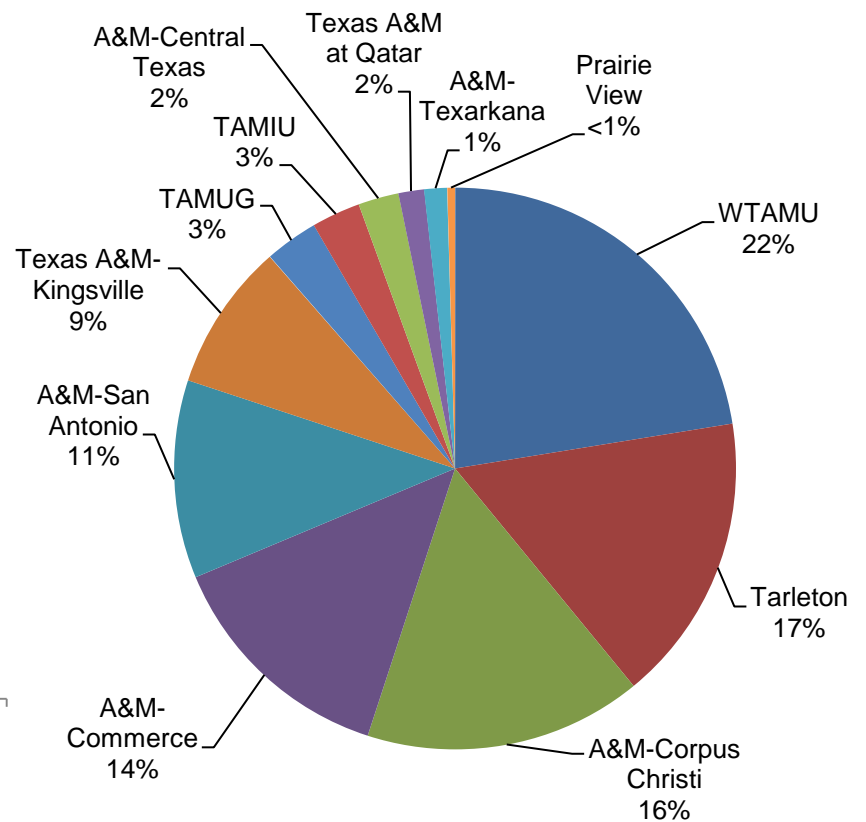
Generally, conversations focused on these members of the A&M System were related to sports teams, degree programs and research findings. Tarleton State University (Tarleton), like the College Station campus, experienced a bomb threat during mid-December 2012 which generated coverage.

Several of the A&M System members received their highest volume of coverage during the fourth quarter of 2012 due to media focus on the schools' respective football seasons, as well as the early part of the basketball season. WTAMU drew significantly higher coverage during the fourth quarter of 2012 due to the football team's participation in the NCAA Division II playoffs.

Volume of Peer Coverage



Share of Coverage



Media Topics Analysis





Comparative Topic Analysis

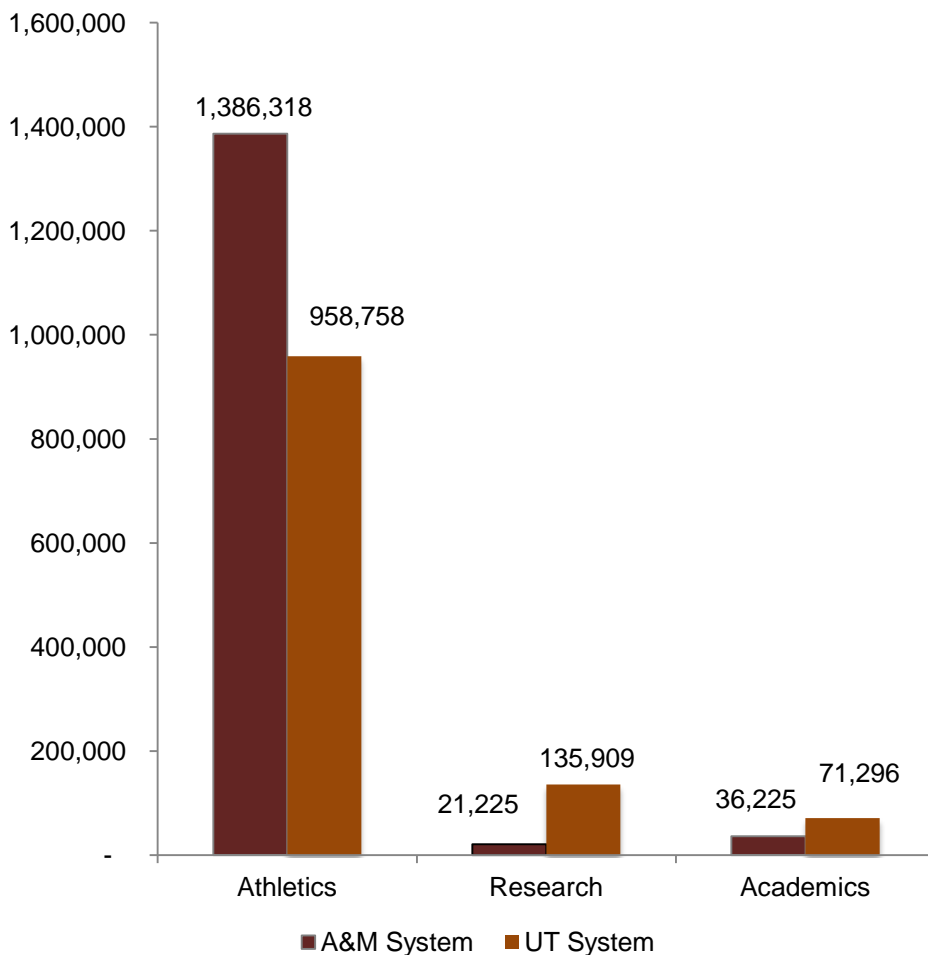
Due to the intense focus on Texas A&M during the Heisman race and football season, the A&M System received more athletics-related coverage than the UT System in 2012. This demonstrates the role that athletics – and Texas A&M’s football program specifically – can play in raising the institution’s profile in media coverage. At the same time, the UT System outpaced the A&M System in media coverage of academics and research.

For the purposes of this media review, “academics” was defined as any mention of university-related programs, colleges, academic rankings, coursework or general discussion regarding degrees, majors, college courses or areas of study at the universities. “Research” was defined as any mention of university-affiliated studies, funding, awarded grants or scientific/investigative work, and mention of any university-affiliated research institutes.

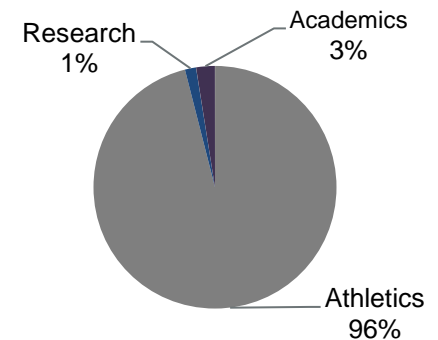
Athletics dominated media activity for the A&M System, with this category making up 96 percent of coverage. Share of topical coverage related to athletics was 14 percentage points lower for the UT System than for the A&M System, indicating that the UT System received media coverage on a broader spectrum of topics.

The A&M System received 84 percent less coverage related to research than the UT System, and received 49 percent less coverage related to academics. While the athletics coverage is an effective way to draw the attention of a wider audience, the A&M System should provide the public with additional substantive stories to raise the profile of the institution’s core culture and initiatives that it is focusing on.

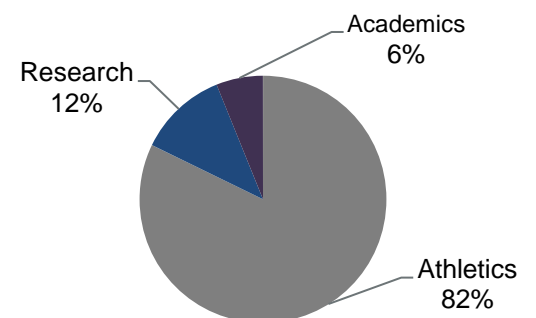
Volume of Institution Coverage by Topic



A&M System: Share of Coverage by Topic



UT System: Share of Coverage by Topic





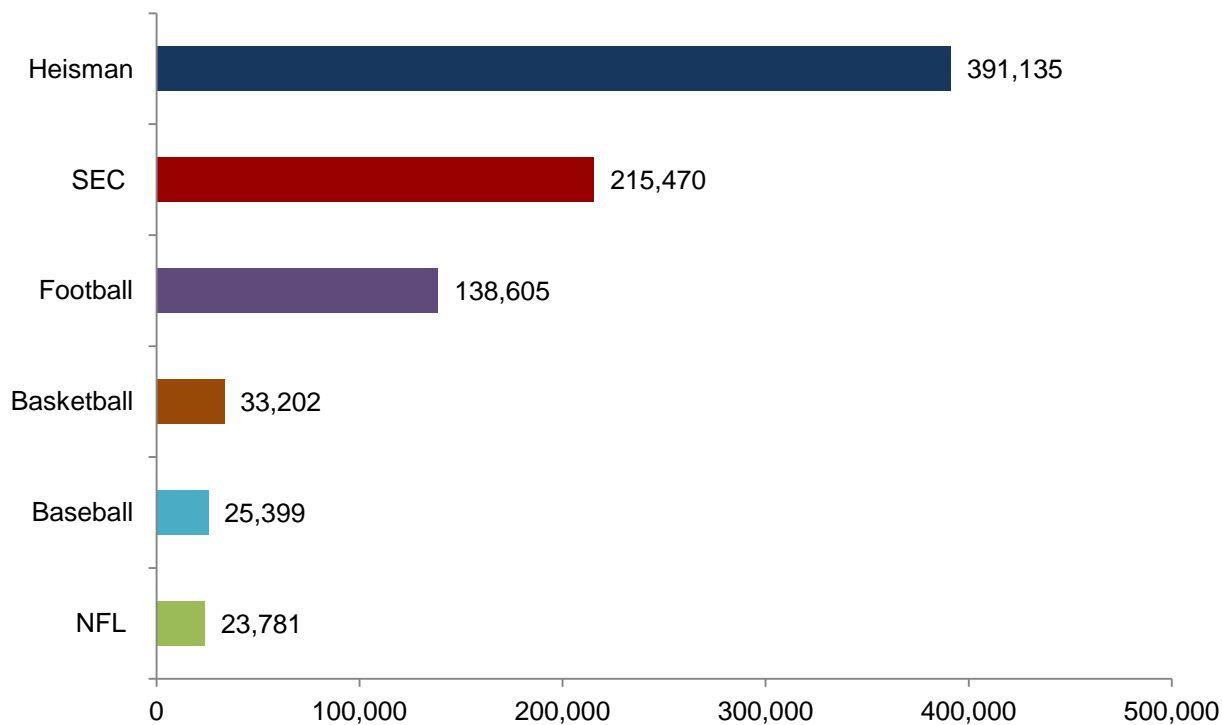
Texas A&M Topic Analysis: Athletics

Media coverage of Texas A&M's athletic programs was dominated by commentary on the Heisman race, culminating in Johnny Manziel being named as the 2012 Heisman Trophy winner. Volume of coverage mentioning the Heisman was 45 percent higher than the next largest topic, Texas A&M joining the Southeastern Conference (SEC). The conversation about the Heisman trophy was high profile in both sports news and general news outlets. Interest in the story was heightened by the fact that Manziel was the youngest Heisman Trophy winner in history, as well as discussion of the Texas A&M football team's success in the SEC this season.

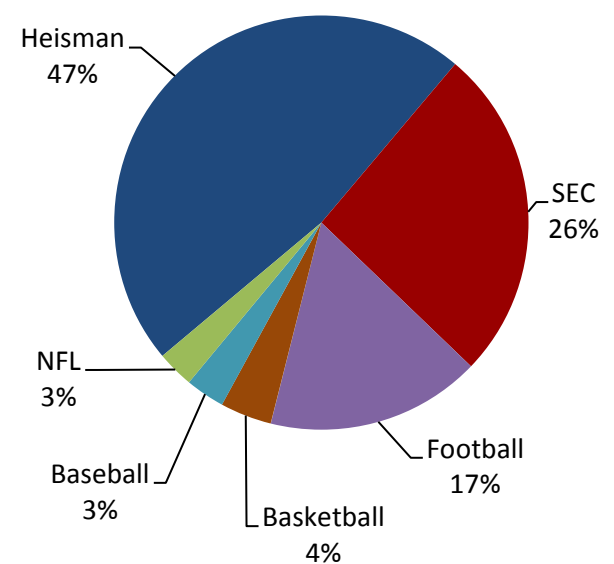
Texas A&M's transition into the SEC was the second leading driver of athletics-related conversation during 2012. Prior to the official announcement, coverage was generated by rumors that Texas A&M was one of the schools being considered to join the SEC. Following the announcement, there was media commentary about how the new additions, including Texas A&M, would fare in the highly competitive football conference. As the football season got underway, Texas A&M proved itself as a contender in the SEC.

Discussion of Texas A&M's move to the SEC was not limited to the football conversation, however, the leading theme in discussion of the move was the school's football program. At the outset, media speculated on how Texas A&M would fare in the SEC, and how the school's departure from the Big 12 would affect that conference. Commentary progressed to focus on how well Texas A&M's football program performed against SEC schools during its first year in the conference, and centered on Texas A&M's win over the University of Alabama.

Topic Mentions: Athletics



Share of Coverage: Athletics





Texas A&M System Topic Analysis: Academics

Graduation is a leading topic for A&M System academics, making up 70 percent of the overall academic conversation. The topic includes conversation about graduation day, from the convocation to graduates expressing excitement for the upcoming completion of their degrees. The speaker for the Commencement Convocation for Spring 2012 graduates was Chancellor John Sharp, and there was significant chatter about the the speech.

A leading storyline for the year in terms of academics, was the A&M System Board of Regents' approval of the purchase of the Wesleyan Law School, giving Texas A&M its first law school. The announcement of the transaction garnered significant coverage, as observers reported on the facts and expressed excitement about the development and its potential impact on the academic landscape in Texas.

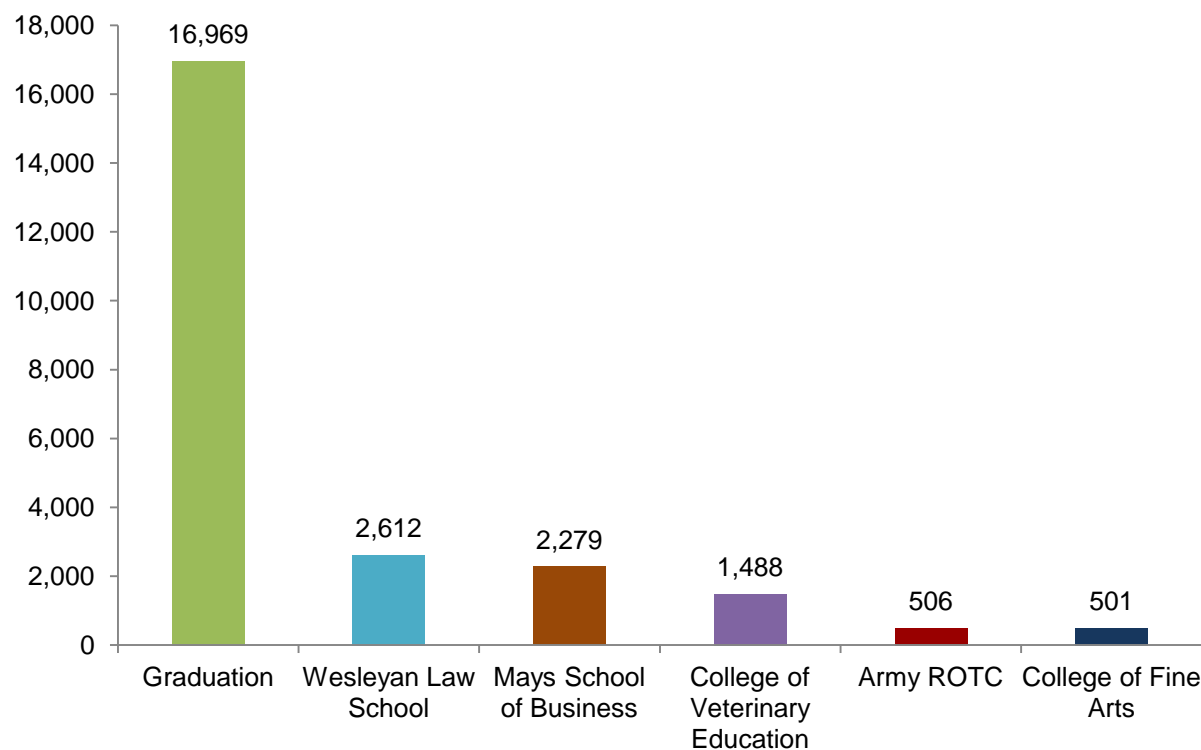
The Mays School of Business and the College of Veterinary Education each received significant media coverage, relative to Texas A&M's other programs. Conversation about Mays Business School was generated, in part, by students expressing excitement about their acceptance into the program or graduation from the program. The College of Veterinary Education received coverage around its releases on pet warnings (such as pets having heat exhaustion), and touting that it is the largest vet school in the country.

The Army ROTC, with its heritage and significance to the school, was one of the leading topics. The ROTC generated 2 percent of the topical coverage. Conversation about the Corps of Cadets was driven by people expressing their pride in being a part of the ROTC program.

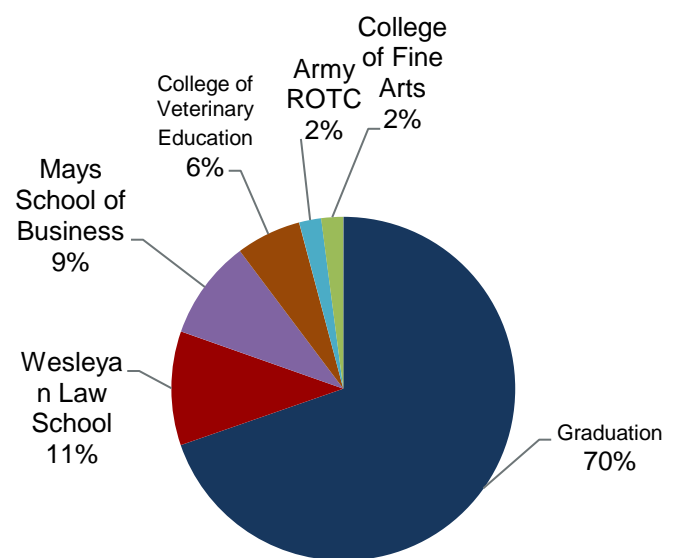
Finally, the new College of Fine Arts received mentions throughout the year as the program's first set of students began graduating.

This indicates that there is an opportunity for the A&M System to further distinguish its academic programs, and raise the profile of the system's academic achievements.

Topic Mentions: Academics



Share of Coverage: Academics





Texas A&M System Topic Analysis: Research

Grants were the most frequently discussed topic related to research, with just more than 8,000 total mentions. Volume of media coverage on research grant announcements was 77 percent higher than the next highest volume topic, which was research awards.

Grant announcements made up 61 percent of the research topics. This topic was followed by research awards (14 percent), AgriLife Research (10 percent), Biosecurity Research Center (8 percent) and Land, Sea and Space Grants (7 percent).

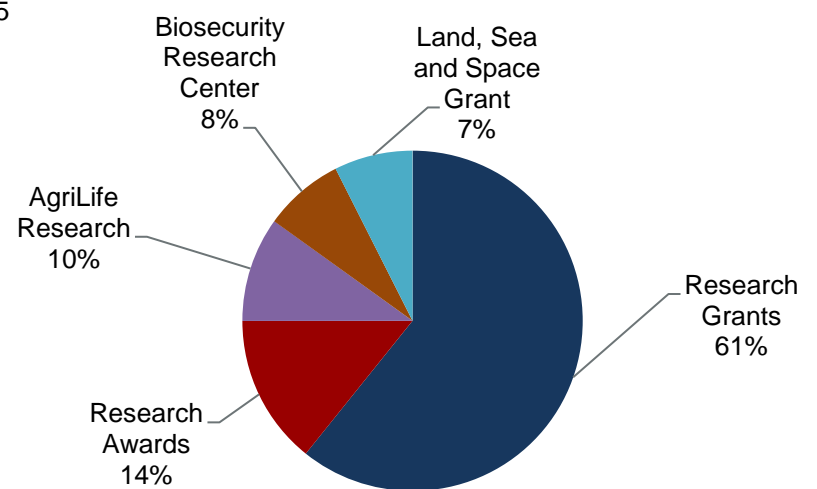
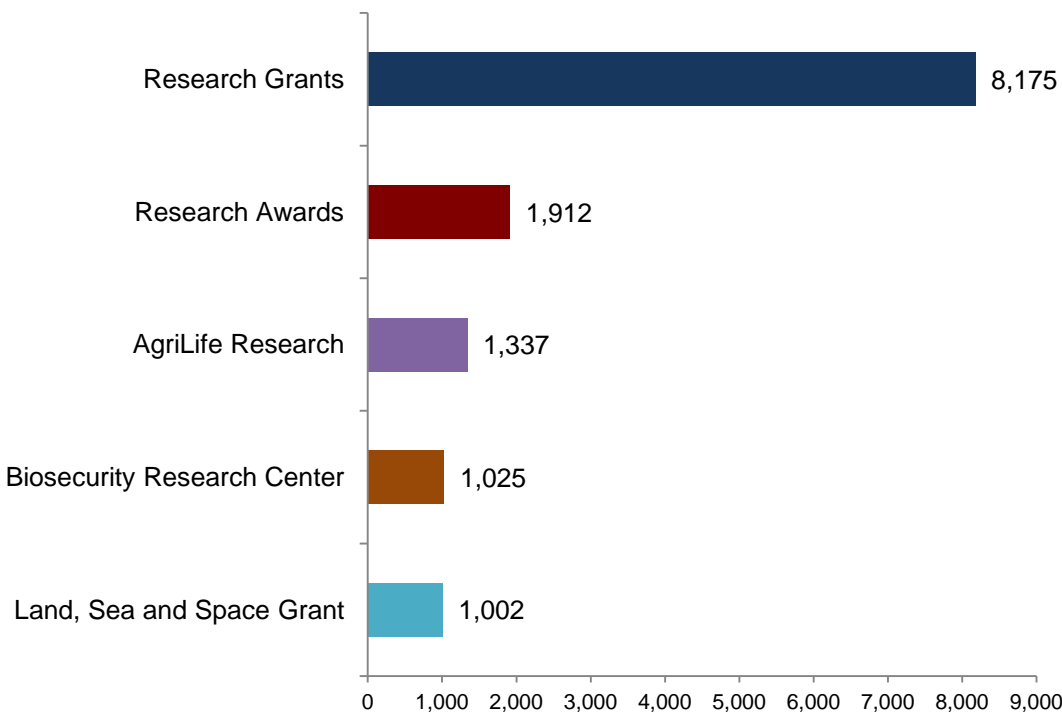
The research awards category includes any awards that researchers receive and/or research professors who receive awards for excellence in their fields. AgriLife research was, by far, the most discussed research program.

In mid-July, Texas A&M was awarded a biodefense contract to create a center for developing vaccines to protect against pandemics and threats of bioterrorism from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The announcement garnered more than 1,000 mentions since July 2012, or 8 percent of total research-related discussion.

The final topic was mentions of Texas A&M being a Land, Sea and Space Grant school. The majority of the conversation about this topic consists of touting that A&M is one of the few universities of this type that exists in the South. Other schools that were included in the conversation were Auburn University and the University of Florida.

Topic Mentions: Research

Share of Coverage: Research



Media Channels Analysis





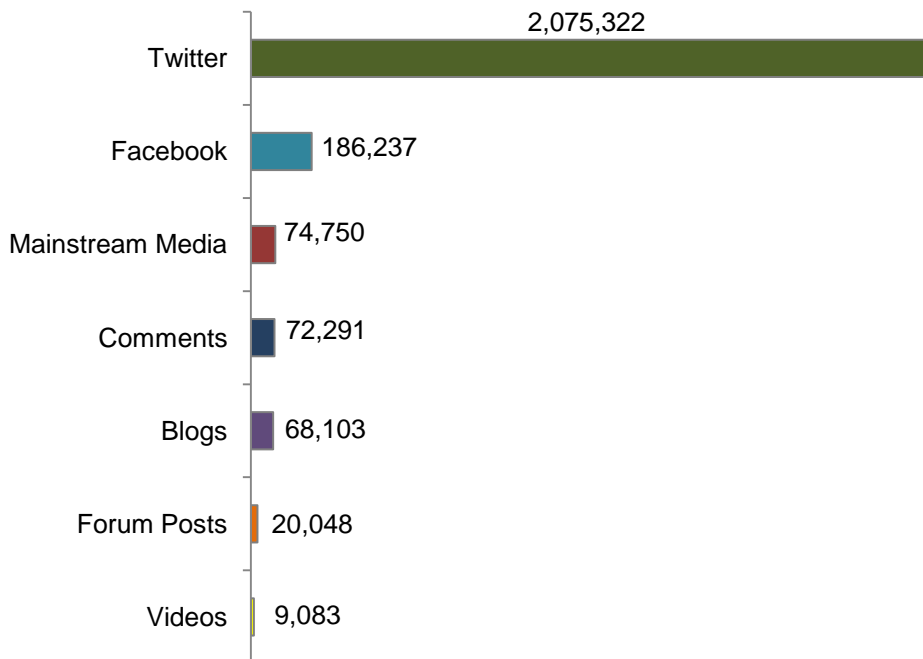
Media Channels: Texas A&M System

The majority of media activity for the Texas A&M System took place on Twitter, with Twitter activity comprising 83 percent of coverage for the organization overall. Facebook also made up a significant share of coverage, with 7 percent of total activity. This dynamic reflects the way that students, as a core constituency demographic, use media to talk about the university, and related academic and extracurricular activities.

We see here that it is important to be a part of the conversations on social media that people are already engaging in. Social media often acts as an amplifier of mainstream or blog media content and can serve to increase reach and awareness of news items in public consciousness. The student body represents a significant constituency that is already highly engaged and will be key to mobilize as advocates online.

At the same time, mainstream media and blog content, as well as increasing use of online video, often provide the more substantive editorial content that generates additional conversation. The A&M System has a significant opportunity to implement a strategic approach to its content creation functions, in concert with a broader media engagement plan.

Volume of Coverage by Media Channel: A&M System



A&M System Topics by Media Channel

While the August 13 shooting, football and athletics were the major drivers of activity in each channel, several other topics drove conversation. Below are conversation drivers and important topics by type of media channel.

Twitter:

- Texas A&M announcements
- Links to articles regarding research projects undertaken by Texas A&M
- Links to articles citing Texas A&M personnel as experts in their fields

Facebook:

- Graduation
- Texas A&M students preventing the Westboro Baptist Church from protesting a soldier's funeral near campus
- Mitt Romney's presidential campaign published a post that went viral with the names of 673 economists who endorsed him for president; a Texas A&M professor was among those mentioned in the post

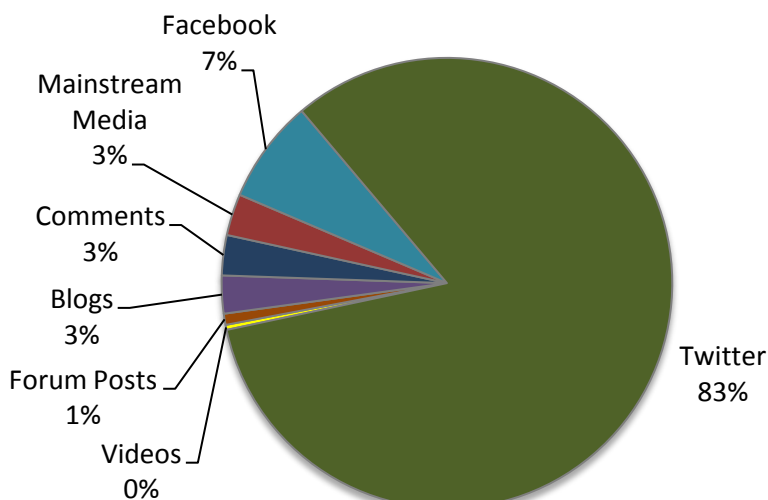
Mainstream News:

- The New York Times published an article on Chancellor John Sharp that was republished by several outlets
- Articles regarding research projects undertaken or supported by Texas A&M
- Articles citing Texas A&M personnel as experts in their field

Blogs:

- Posts related to Texas A&M's Engineering Department
- Blog posts citing studies and research performed at Texas A&M, specifically in chemistry and life sciences

Share by Media Channel: A&M System



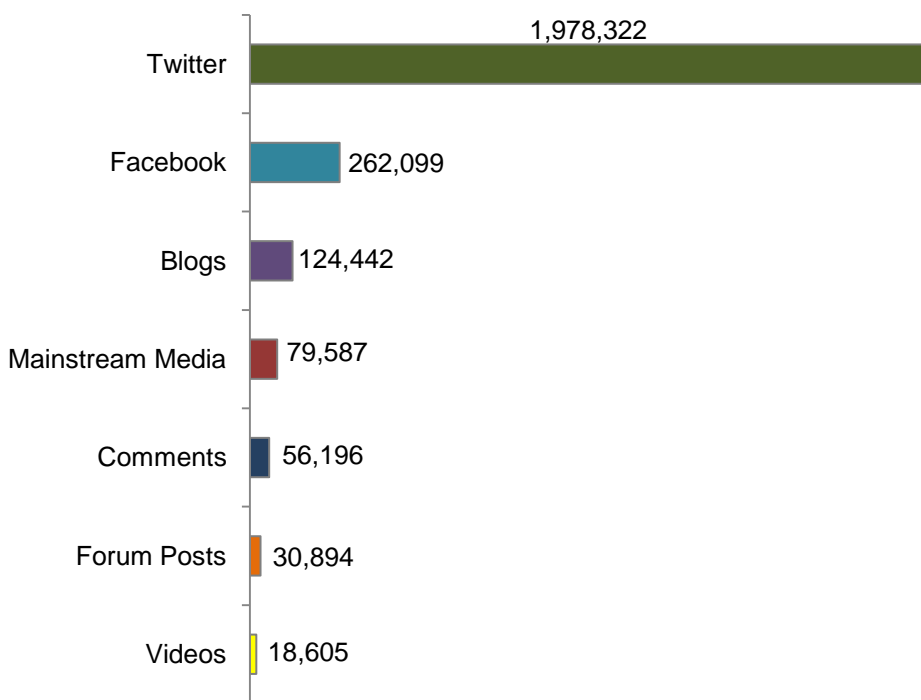


Media Channels: UT System

Coverage of the UT System was also heavily concentrated in social media channels, with a combined 88 percent of activity occurring on Twitter and Facebook. Many of the audiences and dynamics of media interactions for the A&M System and the UT System are similar, as the institutions share many of the same factors such as academic audiences and contributors, regional media environment and political landscape.

However, the UT System receives a higher percentage of its coverage in blogs and mainstream media sources than does the A&M System, which has the potential to contribute more substantive content to discussions of the organization. In addition, greater utilization of these media sources gives the UT System more opportunities to tell its own story and introduce its own narratives into media commentary.

Volume of Coverage by Media Channel: UT System



UT System Topics by Media Channel

While the September 14 bomb threat, football and athletics were the major drivers of activity in each channel, several other topics drove conversation. Below are conversation drivers and important topics by type of media channel.

Twitter:

- UT-San Antonio's move to Conference USA
- Retweets of famous alumni
- Darrell K. Royal's passing
- School news and announcements

Facebook:

- Graduation
- Mitt Romney's presidential campaign published a post that went viral with the names of 673 economists who endorsed him for president; Several professors from the UT System were mentioned
- Darrell K. Royal's passing

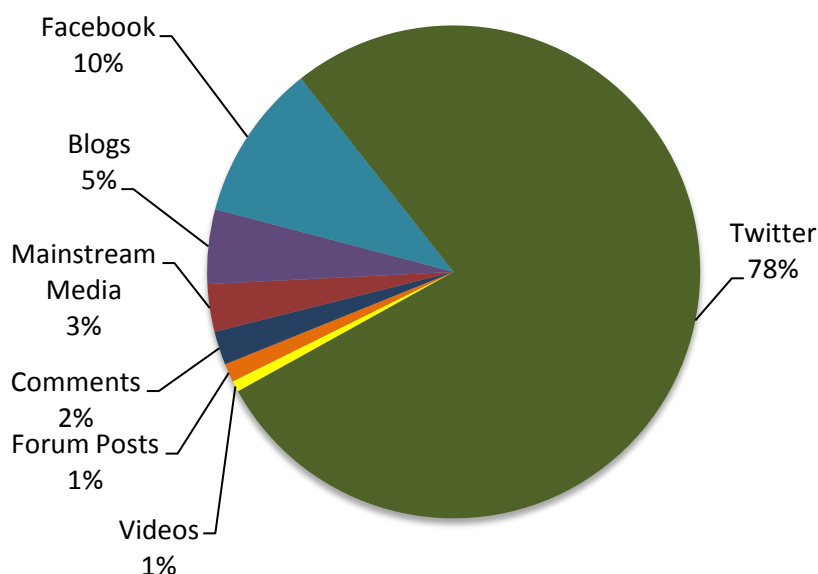
Blogs:

- Posts related to discoveries and work taking place at the McDonald Observatory
- Posts related to studies and research performed by UT System institutions, most notably UT-Southwestern and the UT Health Science Center in Houston

Mainstream News:

- The U.S. Supreme Court heard and ruled on a case related to how race is used by the admissions department at the University of Texas
- Articles citing studies performed by members of the UT System, specifically those released by the MD Anderson Cancer Center
- Articles referencing tuition rates, and potential tuition rate freezes

Share by Media Channel: UT System



Media Outlets Analysis



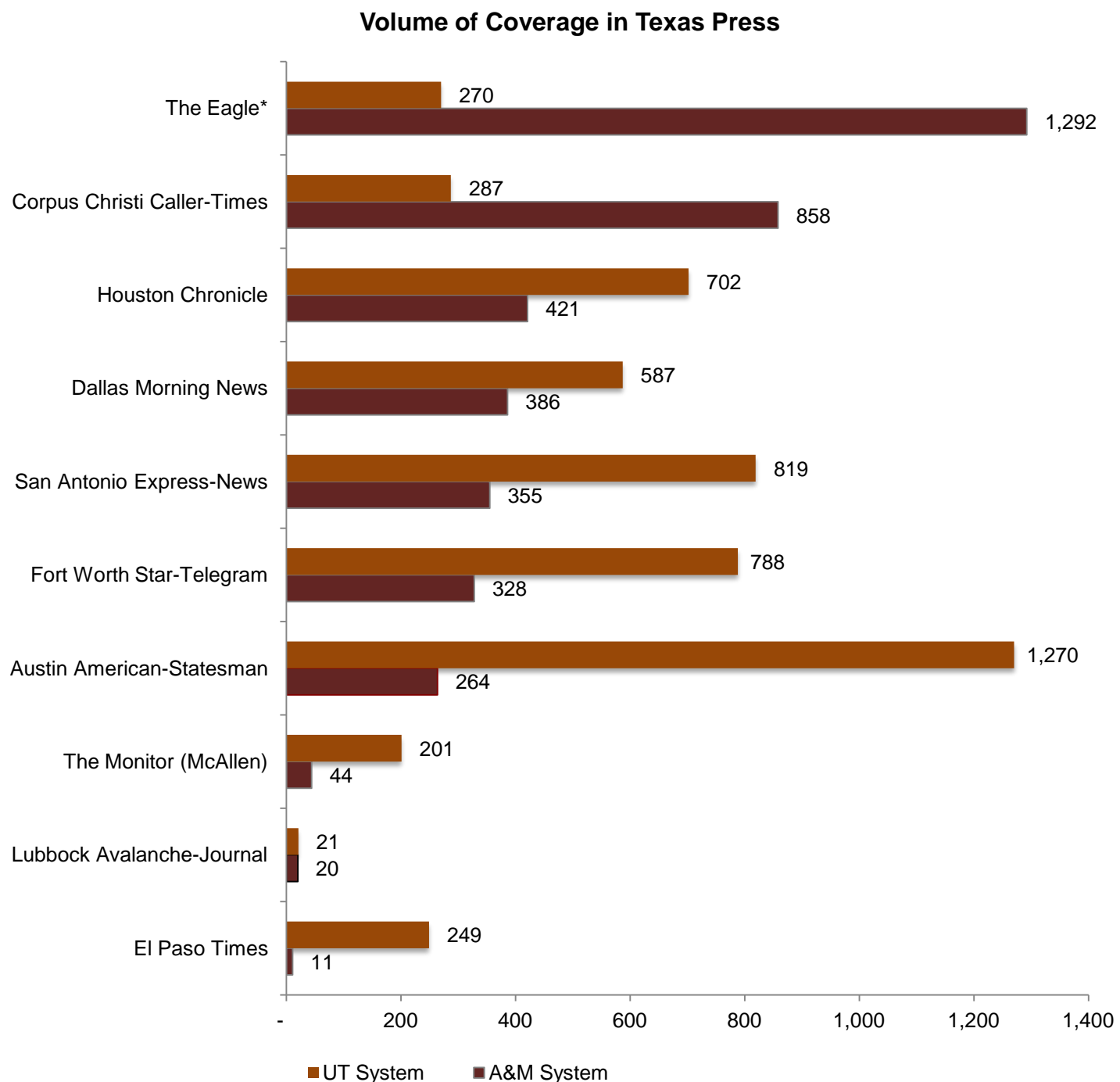


Media Outlets: Texas Press

The chart below features the articles mentioning A&M and UT published by leading Texas newspapers. The chart is organized by descending order of A&M System volume.

Coverage of A&M System members was concentrated in local or regional publications for cities or regions in which A&M has a strong presence. Of note, there are only two publications that carry a higher volume of coverage on the A&M System than the UT System. In addition, the UT System receives more coverage in the larger Texas media markets.

Notably, the Houston Chronicle published 67 percent more volume on the UT System than the A&M System, though A&M's flagship university in College Station is closer geographically to Houston than is UT's flagship in Austin.

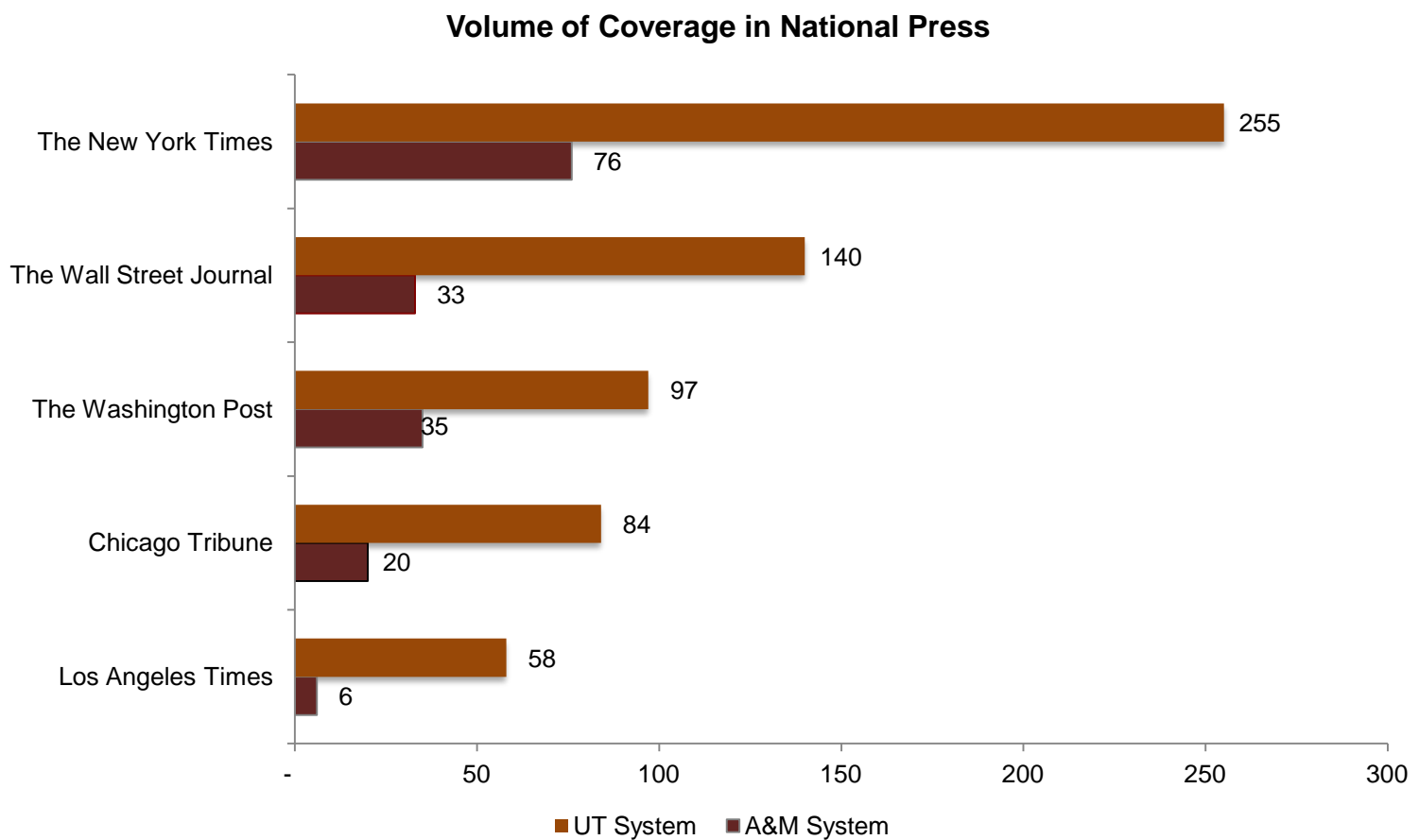


*Data generated by Radian 6 and TheEagle.com



Media Outlets: National Press

The UT System received a higher volume of coverage in all of the national outlets surveyed. This indicates that the UT System has a higher profile in national perception and that the organization may have stronger relationships with these publications.





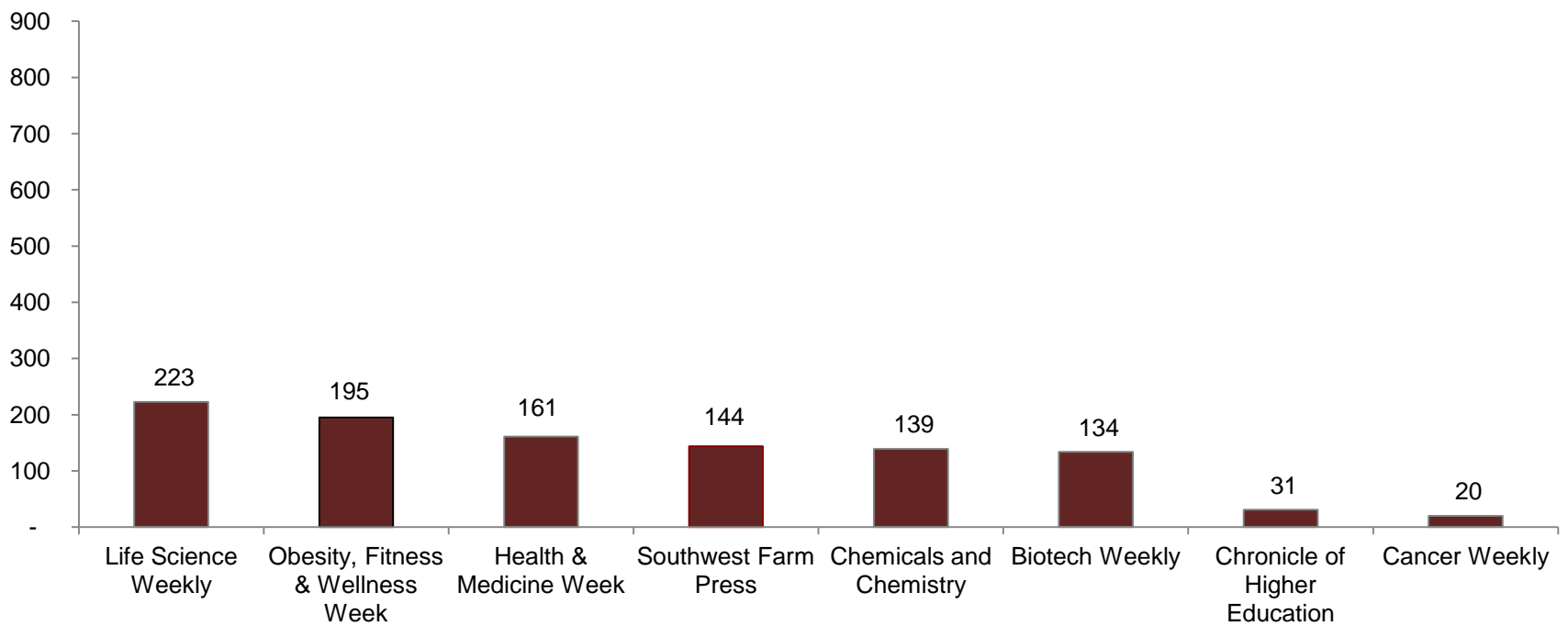
Media Outlets: Academic Press

For the purposes of this analysis, academic press is defined as publications that are centered on research in a given field, publish academic papers or are focused on higher education and academics. A sample of academic press outlets were included in order to provide a snapshot of coverage in a variety of publications with different audiences. During the past year, the UT System received three times more coverage in the academic journals surveyed than the A&M System.

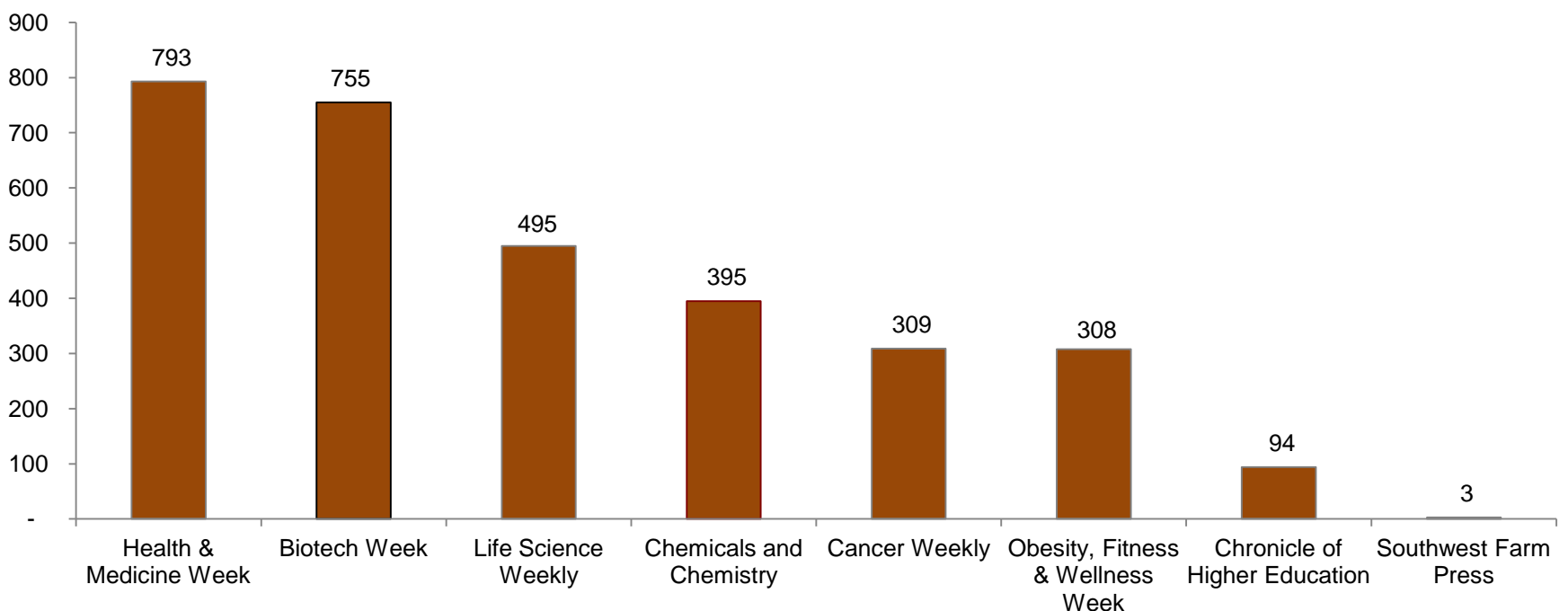
While media coverage in academic press may not have the same reach as more mainstream publications, many of the more substantive stories come out of academic coverage. Academic coverage demonstrates the great work that universities contribute to and that is at the core of the system's mission. In addition, it is an indicator of the perceived credibility of the schools.

Academic press should be a focus of the A&M System's media outreach efforts, as the coverage is always positive, serves to heighten the institution's credibility and standing, and is core to the organization's mission.

Volume of A&M System Coverage in Academic Press



Volume of UT System Coverage in Academic Press



Media Case Studies





Texas A&M University and University of Texas: Case Studies

Overview

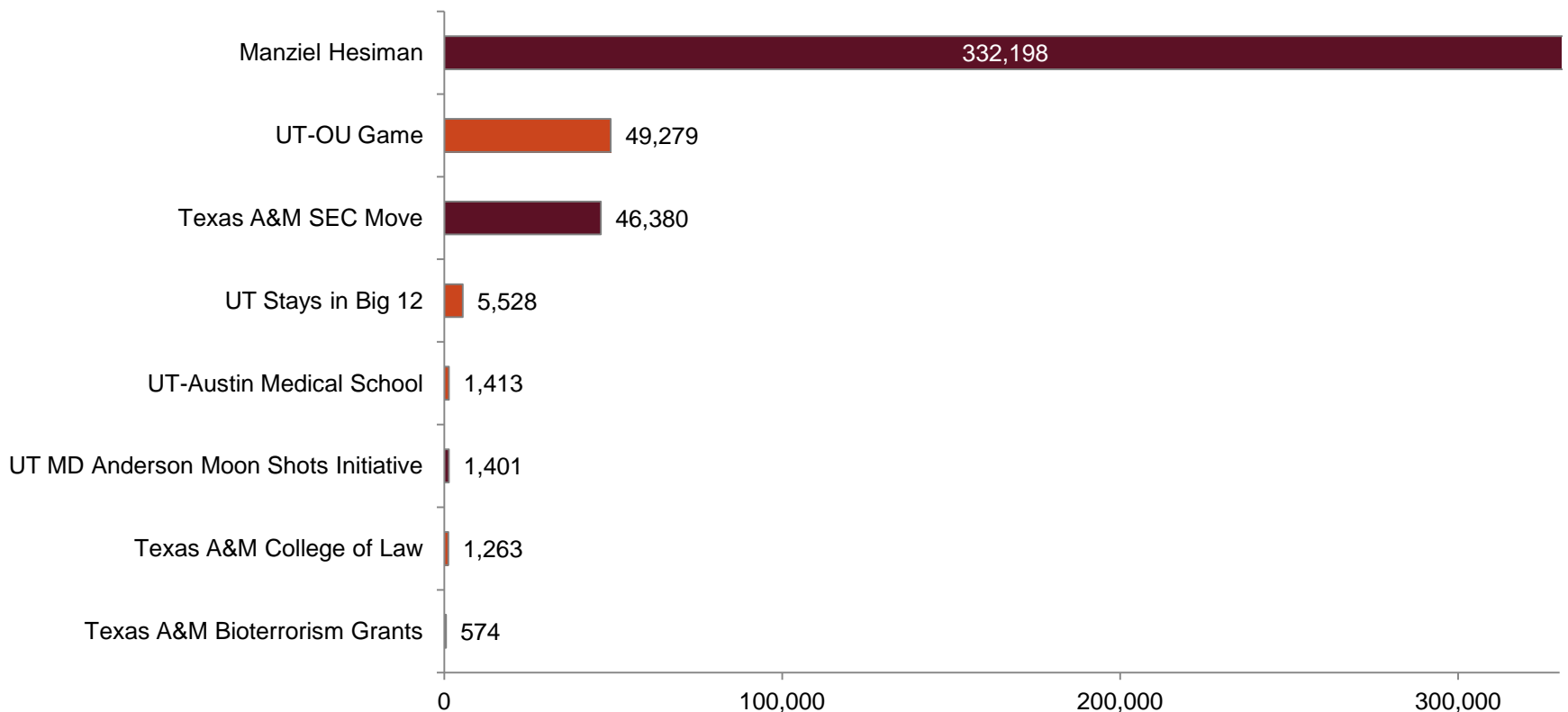
Notable stories from each of the three key coverage areas of athletics, academics and research have brought Texas A&M national media attention and generated significant public response. By comparing Texas A&M's national coverage around these notable events to national media coverage of similar events occurring in the UT System, several trends can be identified that illuminate how each scenario played out in the media environment, and the ways in which the A&M System can engage with media outlets to raise its profile in coverage.

For this analysis, several categories of media response were identified:

- Digital media activity is defined as the total number of mentions of the story in online blog, Twitter or news outlets.
- Mainstream media placements are defined as total mentions of the story across six high-profile national media outlets: The Associate Press, The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, USA Today and the Chicago Tribune.
- Top tier media placements are defined by Factiva based on readership, circulation and influence.

Each set of case studies is compared on similar time frames, with data from Radian6 and Factiva searches.

Case Studies: Social Media Activity Overview





Athletics Case Study: Texas A&M SEC Move vs. UT Big 12 Influence

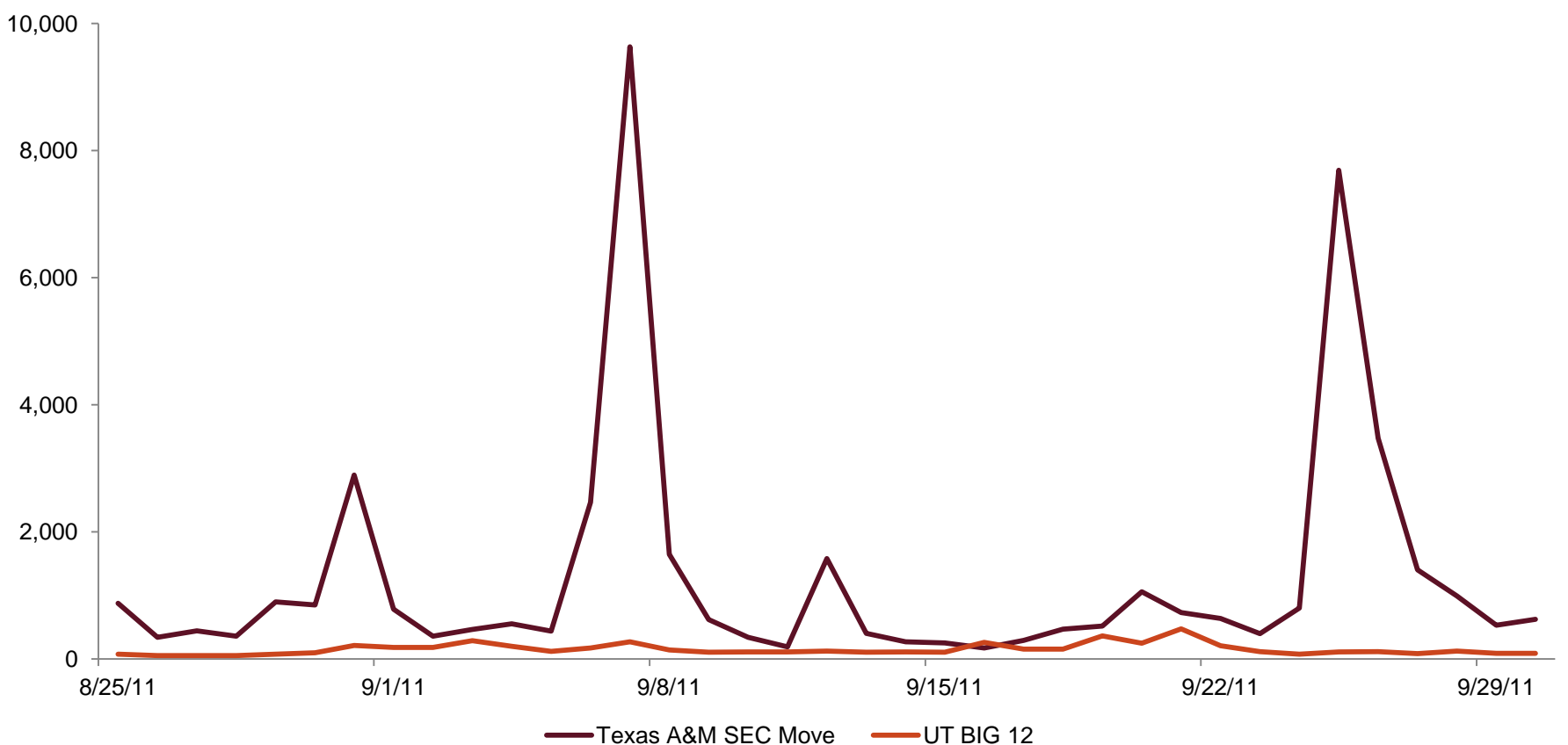
Overview

In August 2011, speculation heightened that Texas A&M would leave the Big 12 and join the SEC. Simultaneously, coverage focused on the future of the Big 12, often centering on the UT's role in keeping the Big 12 intact.

| Incident | Digital Media Activity | Mainstream Media Placements | Top Tier Media Placements |
|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Texas A&M SEC Move | 46,380 | 170 | 694 |
| UT Influence on Big 12 | 5,528 | 31 | 113 |

- Volume Indicators:** From Aug. 25 to Sept. 29, 2011, The Texas A&M SEC move received an average of 1,288 daily mentions, while UT's influence on the Big 12's future received an average of 154 daily mentions.
 - The Texas A&M SEC move also generated 694 top tier and 170 mainstream media placements, while UT's Big 12 influence generated 113 top tier and 31 mainstream media placements.
 - Texas A&M's SEC move and UT's influence on the Big 12 received 77 percent and 44 percent of coverage on Twitter, respectively.
- Topics of Conversation:** Topics focused on Texas A&M's expected performance in the SEC, Big 12 schools' attempts to block the Texas A&M move, the possibility of Big 12 schools moving to the Pac-12 and how the Longhorn Network and broader revenue sharing factored into Texas A&M's decision to leave.
- Sentiment:** Tone of coverage varied toward these stories. Supporters of Texas A&M widely endorsed the move to the SEC, while those aligning with other Big 12 schools were more negative toward the decision. Much of the commentary was critical and focused on the expectation that Texas A&M would perform poorly in the SEC. Those covering the story generally agreed that UT, along with OU, would play an integral role in keeping the Big 12 together.
- Takeaways:** While both schools received coverage on this story, Texas A&M was clearly the focus. The high profile nature of Texas A&M's decision only added to scrutiny of the school's performance in the conference, which paid dividends as the Aggies embarked on a highly successful football season.

Texas A&M SEC Move vs. UT Influence on Big 12: Overall Volume Trends





Athletics Case Study: Manziel Heisman vs. UT-OU Football Game

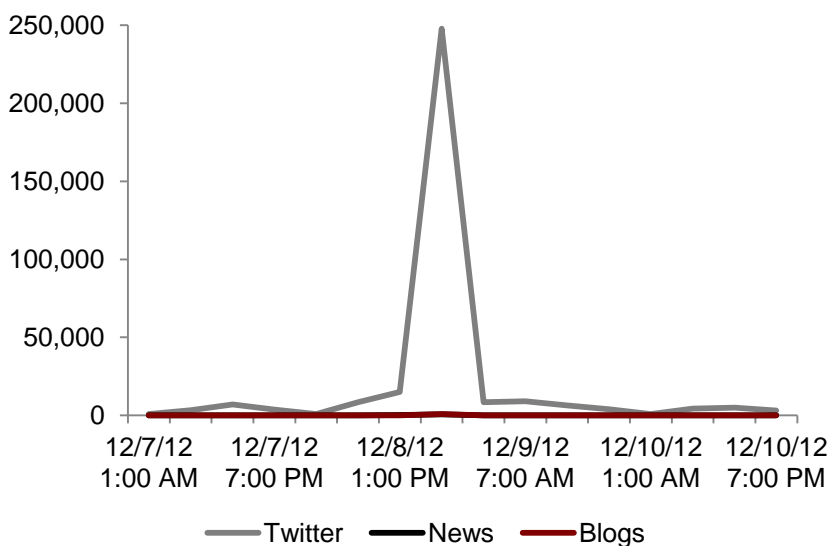
Overview

Johnny Manziel's Heisman Trophy victory and the UT-OU football game represented the highest volume sports-related events for Texas A&M and UT, respectively. While the events were each widely discussed in digital media, several factors distinguished the Heisman victory as a more lasting and positive story.

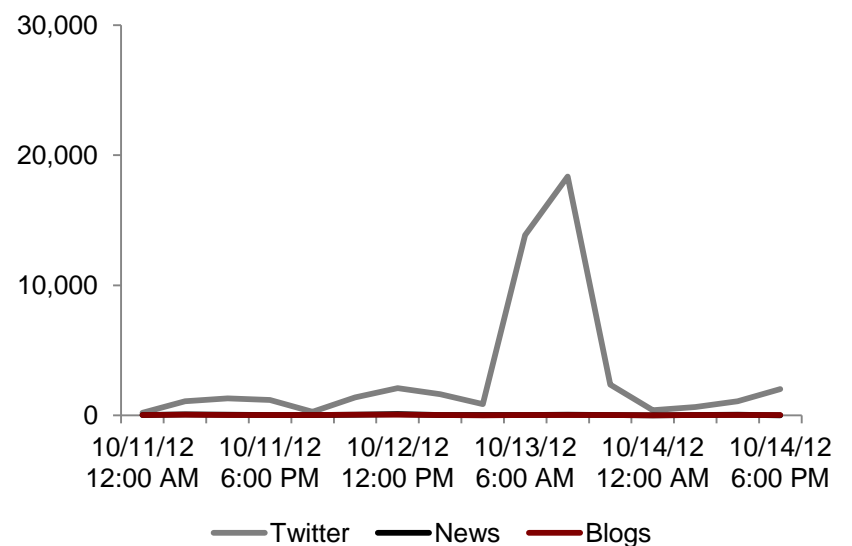
- Volume Indicators:** The weekend of the ceremony, Manziel's Heisman trophy award averaged 83,050 daily mentions. Comparably, the UT-OU game received 12,320 daily mentions the weekend of the game.
 - The Manziel Heisman story also generated more than double the amount of mainstream media placements and nearly four times the amount of top tier media placements as the UT-OU Game.
 - Manziel's Heisman victory and the UT-OU game received 99 percent and 98 percent of coverage on Twitter, respectively.
- Sentiment:** Manziel's Heisman trophy victory, the first by a Texas A&M player since John David Crow in 1957, generated an overwhelmingly positive digital media response. Discussion of UT football after the UT-OU game was largely negative in tone due to the lopsided final score of the game.
- Momentum:** Discussion of Manziel's Heisman victory came after several weeks of build up, which began after Texas A&M's victory over the University of Alabama. In addition, the Heisman Trophy presentation traditionally receives significant media attention in the week leading up to the award, which drove media attention to address Texas A&M and Manziel. The result of this build-up was a high volume, primarily positive mainstream and social media response to Manziel's award.
- Takeaways:** Manziel's Heisman Trophy victory represents one of the highest profile accolades attainable for an NCAA athletic program. The success of Texas A&M's football program has led to heightened attention on the sports program and will likely create increased opportunities for media attention in coming years.

| Incident | Digital Media Activity | Mainstream Media Placements | Top Tier Media Placements |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Manziel Heisman (Dec. 7-10) | 332,198 | 78 | 279 |
| UT-OU Game (Oct. 11-14) | 49,279 | 31 | 72 |

Manziel Heisman



UT-OU Game





Academics Case Study: Texas A&M Acquisition of Wesleyan Law School vs. UT-Austin Medical School

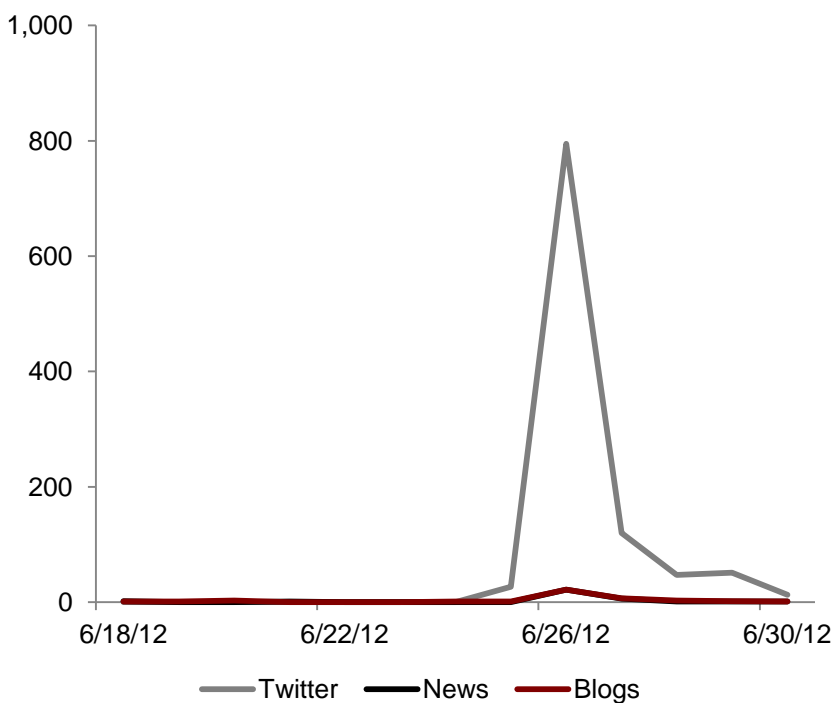
Overview

On June 26, 2012, Texas A&M announced that it would acquire the Texas Wesleyan Law School to create the Texas A&M School of Law. In early November, media coverage built around the approval of a proposed UT medical school in Austin. The addition of graduate-level colleges by each university system presents a unique opportunity for comparison of media coverage.

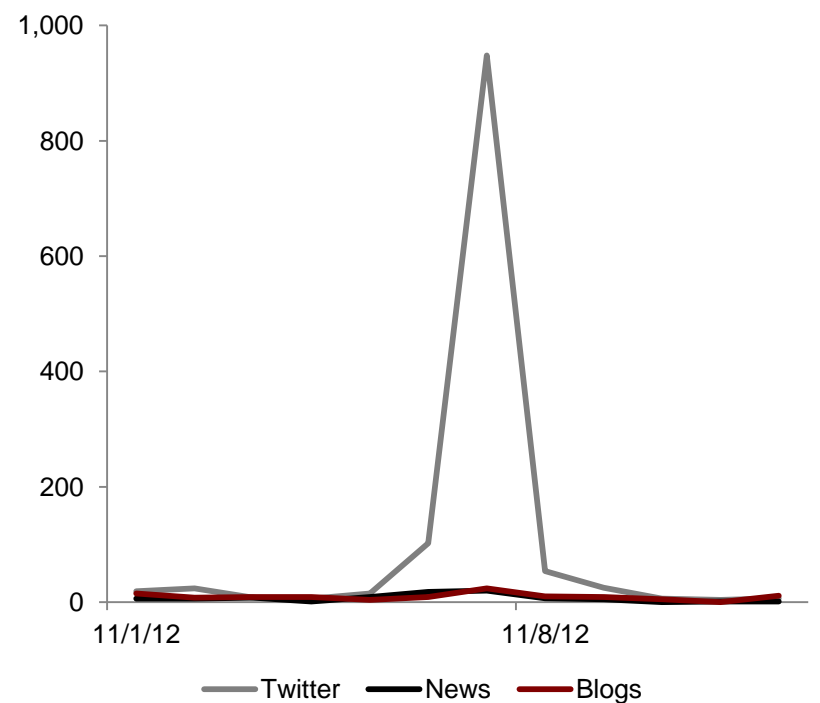
| Incident | Digital Media Activity | Mainstream Media Placements | Top Tier Media Placements |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Wesleyan Law School | 1,263 | 2 | 23 |
| UT Austin Med School | 1,413 | 2 | 34 |

- Volume Indicators:** Over comparable 12-day periods, Texas A&M's acquisition of Wesleyan Law School and the passing of UT-Austin's Medical School received an average of 105 and 118 daily mentions, respectively.
 - The stories generated similar amounts of mainstream media placements, while the UT Austin Medical school received slightly higher volume of top tier media placements overall.
 - The Texas A&M School of Law and the UT Austin Medical School received 93 percent and 86 percent of coverage on Twitter, respectively.
- Sentiment:** Coverage of these issues followed slightly different tracks. Coverage of the Wesleyan Law School acquisition, which spiked abruptly with the announcement of the acquisition, was largely neutral in tone and focused on details of the decision. Positive coverage noted Texas A&M's strong desire to have a law school. The UT Austin Medical School proposal was included on the November election ballot, allowing for more polarizing conversation around the merits of approving such a school. Coverage of the UT Austin Medical School was neutral to positive overall.
- Takeaways:** These stories were each primarily regionally focused; however, the nature of the campaign for an Austin-based medical school led to slightly higher overall coverage.

Texas A&M School of Law



UT Austin Medical School





Research Case Study: Texas A&M Bioterrorism Grant vs. UT MD Anderson Moon Shots Initiative

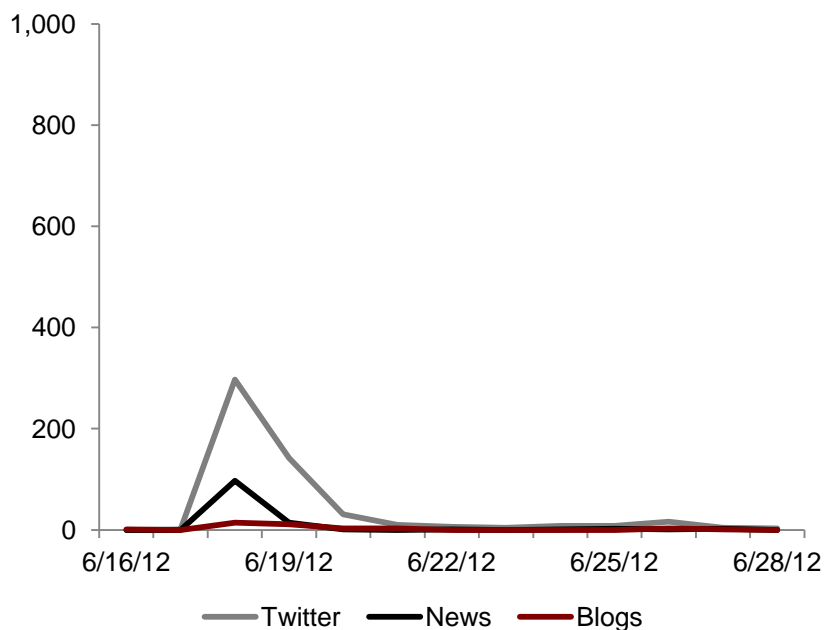
Overview

On June 18, 2012, it was announced that Texas A&M had won a contract with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to fund a national bioterrorism research center. In September 2012, UT MD Anderson announced a \$3 billion “Moon Shots” initiative aimed at significantly reducing cancer deaths in eight different types of cancers.

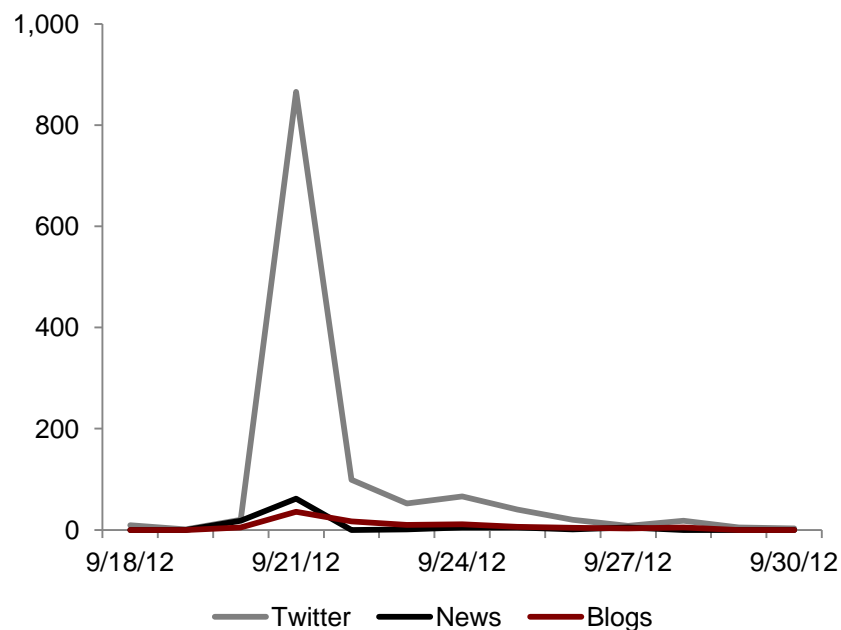
| Incident | Digital Media Activity | Mainstream Media Placements | Top Tier Media Placements |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Texas A&M Bioterrorism Grant | 685 | 3 | 9 |
| UT MDA Moon Shots Initiative | 1,401 | 5 | 11 |

- Volume Indicators:** Over comparable time frames, the Texas A&M bioterrorism grant announcement and the MD Anderson Moon Shots initiative generated an average of 57 and 117 daily mentions, respectively.
 - The stories received comparable mainstream media and top tier media placements, although the MD Anderson Moon Shots initiative received slightly more traction in widely circulated publications.
 - The Texas A&M bioterrorism grant and the MD Anderson Moon Shots initiative received 77 percent and 93 percent of coverage on Twitter, respectively.
- Sentiment:** Each of these stories received primarily positive coverage. The bioterrorism grant was covered positively for its exclusivity, as top tier outlets noted that Texas A&M received one of only three grants awarded to build a National Center for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing, as well as its positive economic impact on the region. The Moon Shots initiative was characterized as “bold,” with media coverage praising the ambition of attempting to find outright cures within a decade for eight different forms of cancer.
- Takeaways:** MD Anderson’s profile as a national leader in cancer research, coupled with a marketing campaign centered on the anniversary of John F. Kennedy’s commitment to reach the moon, and a launch featuring a widely covered press release, led to higher media coverage overall for UT.

Texas A&M Bioterrorism Grant



UT MDA Moon Shots Initiative



Owned Channels Analysis





Comparison of Flagship and Peer Universities' Social Media Channels

All flagship and peer universities compared have substantial networks on social media channels, but Texas A&M has the most comprehensive social media program. Texas A&M has an active presence across all major and upcoming social channels, except the photo-sharing platform Instagram (it seems the university will launch this channel soon, since the account is reserved and populated, but not yet active). In terms of reach, Texas A&M leads on platforms Twitter and Pinterest and has the second-largest presence on Facebook, Flickr, LinkedIn, and Google+.

| Social Network Reach | Texas A&M | UT Austin | Texas Tech | Auburn |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Facebook
Likes | 385,501 | 426,443 | 157,906 | 268,382 |
| Twitter
Followers | 63,625 | 43,332 | 32,713 | 32,644 |
| YouTube
Total Views | 931,331 | 1,038,730 | 1,557,294 | 1,432,480 |
| Flickr
Photos | 999 | -- | 594 | 2,047 |
| LinkedIn
Page Followers | 17,140 | 20,033 | 7,044 | 6,439 |
| Pinterest
Followers | 4,842 | -- | -- | 855 |
| Google+
Followers | 2,566 | 3,155 | 620 | 2,106 |
| Foursquare
Check-ins | 6,725 | 14,747 | 18,304 | 3,929 |
| Instagram
Followers | 0 | -- | 5,563 | -- |



Outbound Social Media Analysis

Social media assets were evaluated for the A&M System and the UT System for effectiveness and overall use of the medium to reach and engage appropriate audiences. Visual appeal, outbound communications, and responsiveness were taken into consideration in evaluating the value of assets to each organization. In addition, this section includes quantitative data as indicators of the strength of activity and engagement on each channel.

Texas A&M University System Social Media

Facebook | 463 Page Likes

The A&M System Facebook page design is appropriate, but demonstrates little creativity and is not dynamic. While the images used (photos of the A&M System seal and building) demonstrate personalization, the photos are not visually coordinated. The space for the profile picture and cover photos is prime real estate and should be used to capture visitors' attention, especially for first-time visitors to the page. As visitors scroll through the timeline, most updates consist of text, links, and only occasionally contain photos. To enhance visual appeal, photos should be used as often as possible in updates.

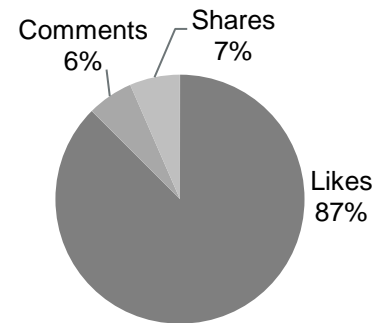
The A&M System uses its Facebook page to communicate with audiences about the latest achievements from across the system. In general, the page is updated regularly, averaging 2.6 posts per week in 2012. Updates share links to articles about programs, grants, and research at institutions system wide, as well as other news that comes from or affects the system. The page makes good use of engagement functionality on Facebook, tagging and sharing updates from other pages as appropriate, and expanding major news stories on the page. Some updates could be improved by providing context and an introduction to shared news, rather than simply sharing links.

Updates on the page do not often generate a generous amount of feedback. Most updates result in a few likes and very rarely comments or shares; likes constitute 87 percent of engagement on content. On average, content from the page garnered only 1.75 stories (or interactions in the form of likes, comments, and shares) per post in 2012. This limits the need for reciprocation on engagement by the A&M System page. Only eight times during the reporting period did audience members tag the A&M System page or initiate contact by writing on the page's wall; the page administrator did not respond in any of those instances.

Overall, the A&M System is using Facebook as a broadcasting medium, rather than as a platform to engage with audiences. The latter is crucial to gaining visibility among relevant audiences and collecting valuable feedback from constituents. While the A&M System's Facebook page is currently a one-way dialogue, updates are frequent and relevant to the existing audience.

| | |
|------------------|------|
| Page Likes | 463 |
| Total Posts | 96 |
| Avg Posts / Week | 2.6 |
| Stories / Post | 1.75 |
| Total Likes | 147 |
| Total Comments | 10 |
| Total Shares | 11 |

Share of Engagement



Missed opportunities | Above, chance to incorporate A&M System messaging about higher education. Left, no context provided.

Good use of engagement tools | Above, A&M System page shares a post. Right, A&M System tags Texas A&M in a post.



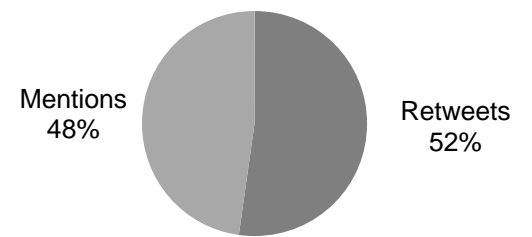
Twitter (A&M System) | 2,165 Followers

On Twitter, the A&M System contains all necessary creative assets, but could make better use of the space to strengthen creative appeal and branding. While the profile avatar and the background image are appropriate and intact, the account is missing a header image. In addition, the thumbnail gallery of recently tweeted images is only partially filled with photos. As a whole, all static imagery used for branding should be highly edited and aesthetically coordinated, while imagery that changes, such as the thumbnail gallery, should be regularly refreshed through tweets.

| | |
|---------------------------|-------|
| Followers | 2,165 |
| Total Posts | 203 |
| Avg Posts / Week | 4.5 |
| Engagements / Post | 1.3 |
| Total Retweets | 141 |
| Total Mentions | 129 |

The A&M System uses Twitter to broadcast its own information and amplify important announcements from others that pertain to the system. Information includes links to noteworthy news, articles, quotes and blogs from around the organization, and also included some live updates from SXSW. While there were a few inconsistencies in frequency of updates throughout 2012, the account averaged 4.5 tweets per week. Engagement on this account was moderate, increasing significantly for popular news. On average, for every tweet the account published, 1.3 engagements (retweets or mentions) were returned. While the Texas A&M System Twitter account used Twitter jargon appropriately, and the audience was responsive, an increase in the volume and frequency of outbound communications could strengthen the community (and its willingness to amplify A&M System messages) on this platform.

Share of Engagement



Twitter (Texas A&M) | 64,091 Followers

Texas A&M's presence on Twitter is well-branded, employing all available visual customization options. Tweets from the account share links to current events featured in the TAMUtimes, university blogs, important announcements and official university communications, and other events occurring across the university. The Twitter account is highly visible, using hash tags for exposure among relevant conversations, and retweeting audience members whose tweets demonstrate Aggie culture. This type of interaction with followers sets the tone and personality for the account, which fosters school spirit and increases engagement and influence. To date, the account has over 64,000 followers and is featured on over 800 Twitter Lists.



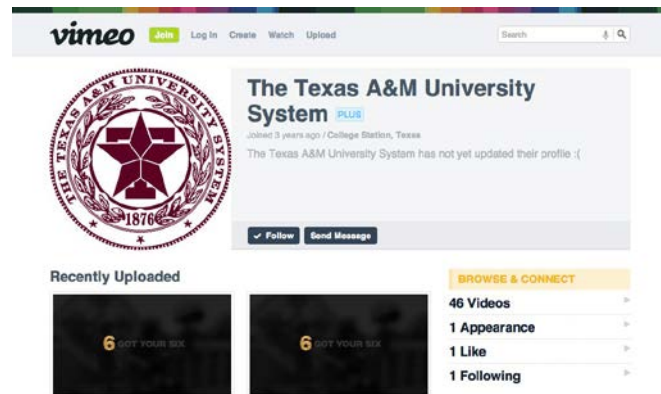
Below, missing thumbnail gallery photos from the A&M System feed. Above, 5 retweets received for news about record-breaking FFA Invitational at Tarleton State.





Vimeo

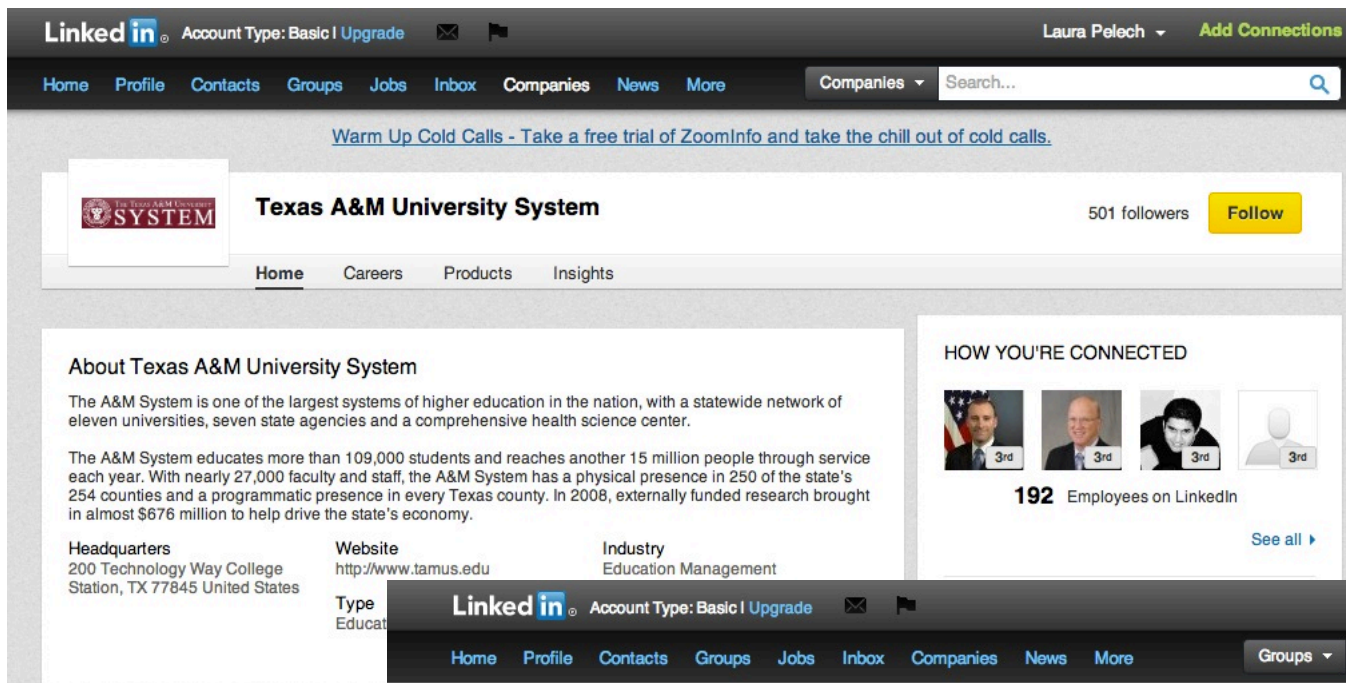
The A&M System presence on Vimeo is sizable, containing 46 video uploads with over 12,000 views total. While not many interactions in the form of likes and comments occur on this account, it still has 14 followers and most videos have at least several hundred views. To improve its visibility on the platform, the A&M System should add a description to the account profile, ensure all videos are populated with individual descriptions, and follow more users on the network.



LinkedIn

The A&M System has a LinkedIn page with 501 followers, as well as a LinkedIn Group with nearly 3,000 members. The page is accessible to every user on LinkedIn, while the group is private. This indicates that the group may be used as an internal networking tool. The public-facing page is not updated and is not populated with all creative assets available to company pages on LinkedIn.

| | |
|-------------|--------|
| Videos | 46 |
| Views | 12,020 |
| Subscribers | 14 |
| Likes | 9 |
| Comments | 0 |



Texas A&M University System

The Texas A&M University System is a major contributor to the education of Texas students. More than 21 percent of all students in Texas public universities are enrolled in one of the System's nine universities. Current students or alumni of The Texas A&M University System come join us.

[Join Group](#) [Share group](#) [Report as...](#)

Group Members in Your Network

- Walt Smith**
Government Relations and Association Executive
[2nd](#)
- Carlota Plantier Santos**
BA, MBA, Research Specialist at Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
[2nd](#)
- Brenda Parnell**
Public Relations/Campaign events, Governmental expertise/EWTG Member
[2nd](#)
- Cheryl Cain**
Executive Director, Marketing and Communications at Texas A&M University-Kingsville
[2nd](#)

About this Group

Created: July 28, 2009
Type: Networking Group
Members: 2,814

Owner: Justin Fletcher

Website: <http://tamus.edu/>

Group Statistics

CHECK OUT INSIGHTFUL STATISTICS ON THIS GROUP

MEMBERS: **3,759**

[View Group Statistics](#)



The University of Texas System Social Media

Facebook | 467 Page Likes

The UT System Facebook page design employs available visual elements, but lacks energy. The profile and cover images are appropriate to the organization, and the cover image even signals first-time visitors to search for or expect specific updates from the page. However, the images are not visually coordinated and are below standard web quality. In addition, the page rarely uses photos to populate the timeline and add visual appeal.

Updates to the UT System page inform audiences about the latest developments, and important news and announcements around the system. While the Facebook page averaged 3.6 posts per week for 2012, updates were sporadic and often coincided with updates to a different social network, Twitter. Updating two platforms at once in this manner is generally not considered best practice. Engagement from the UT System page is virtually non-existent, as it rarely tags other users, shares content from others, or engages back with its own fan base.

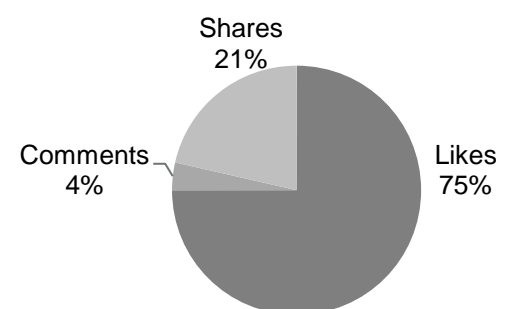
In the same way that updates were sporadic, feedback was clustered only around more prominent news, resulting in only 0.81 stories (or interactions in the form of likes, comments, and shares) per post. However, the engagement mix worked in favor of the UT System Facebook page, generating more shares and visibility.

As a whole, the UT System is primitive in its Facebook communications. Recent updates to the page indicate a slow evolution towards best practices, but in general, the medium is being used as a one-way broadcast tool.



| | |
|------------------|------|
| Page Likes | 467 |
| Total Posts | 138 |
| Avg Posts / Week | 3.6 |
| Stories / Post | 0.81 |
| Total Likes | 84 |
| Total Comments | 4 |
| Total Shares | 24 |

Share of Engagement



Left, updates to Twitter automatically populate the Facebook page, which has different character requirements and uses different jargon.



Twitter | 852 Followers

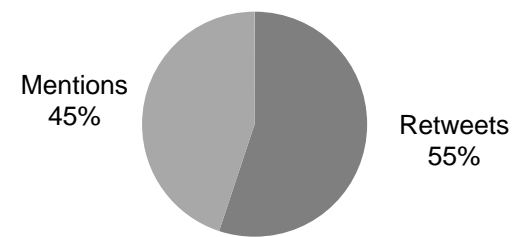
The UT System Twitter account is populated with most creative assets, missing only a header image photo. However, the creative content should be coordinated to better represent the brand image. Content published on the UT System Twitter account is focused on news and announcements from across the system and also features live updates at events. Throughout 2012, the account picked up momentum, increasing frequency during the last quarter for a total of 5.9 posts per week.

Engagement from the public with this account is high and consistent, averaging 2.5 interactions (retweets or mentions) for every published tweet. However, the total number of followers of the UT System Twitter account is not reflective of the high engagement rate, indicating the system's failure to capitalize on chatter across the platform.



| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| Followers | 852 |
| Total Posts | 295 |
| Avg Posts / Week | 5.9 |
| Engagements / Post | 2.5 |
| Total Retweets | 399 |
| Total Mentions | 325 |

Share of Engagement

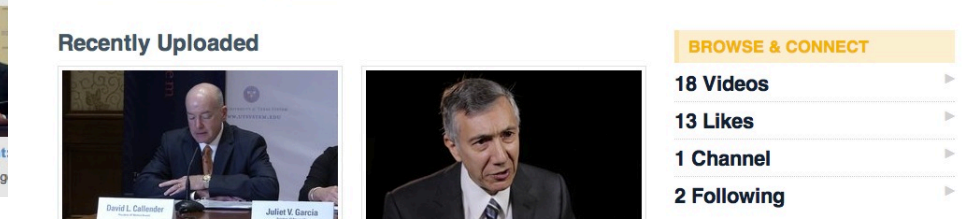
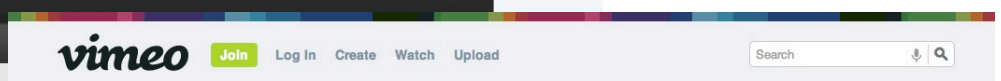
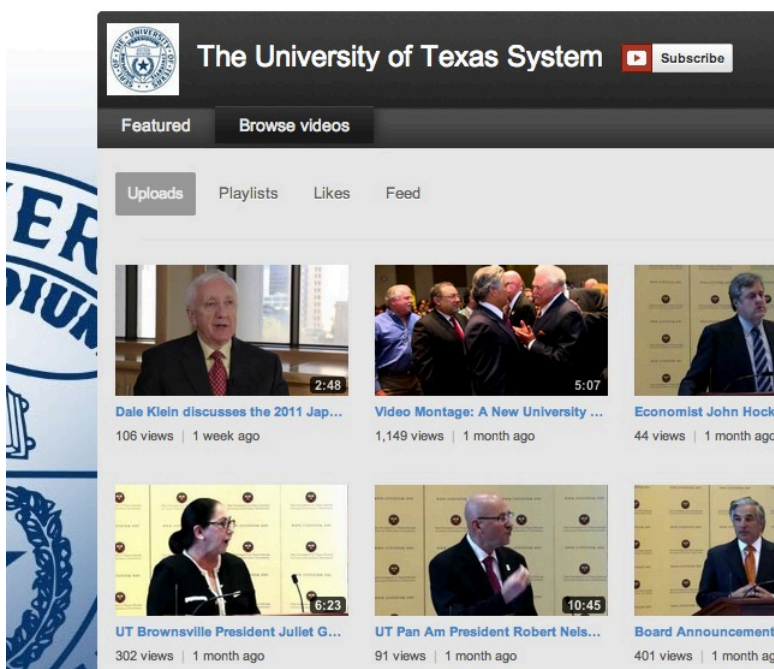
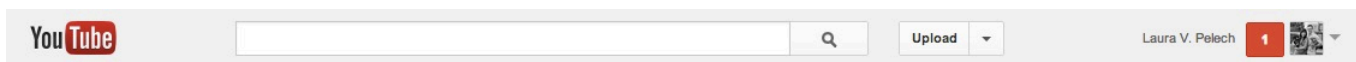


YouTube & Vimeo

Vimeo is a video-sharing website where users can upload, share, and interact with (view, comment, "like") videos. Vimeo is a community known for higher quality and more creative videos than YouTube.

The UT System has a presence on both YouTube and Vimeo. On YouTube, the UT System has acquired more than 60 followers and accumulated more than 28,000 views on 45 videos. Eight users have subscribed to the UT System on Vimeo, which is populated with 18 videos that have 1,277 total views. Engagement apart from views is limited on both channels. The UT System retains an advantage by having accounts on two video platforms. YouTube is one of the most popular web destinations in the U.S., its user base treating the website like a search engine. As a result, the UT System may be better exposed through YouTube than Vimeo.

| | YouTube | Vimeo |
|--------------------|---------|-------|
| Videos | 45 | 18 |
| Views | 28,068 | 1,277 |
| Subscribers | 64 | 8 |
| Likes | -- | 1 |
| Comments | -- | 0 |



Search Activity Analysis





Web Search Interest Analysis

Web search interest, or search demand, shows how often a particular search term is entered into the search engine Google relative to total search volume across various parameters such as region, language and time. Because the given volume is relative, we can gain meaningful insights by comparing the performance of search terms against one another, not by evaluating demand for individual terms.

A web search interest analysis provides insight about the overall demand for information; where searches are taking place; related terms people searched for; and related terms people searched for that are trending in popularity.

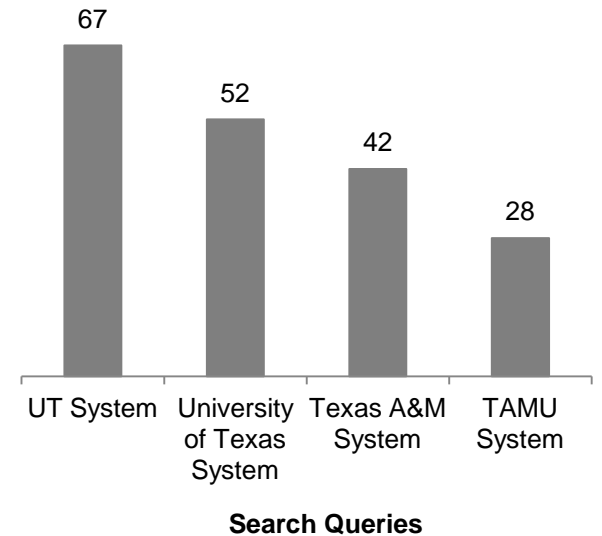
Data for web search interest is not given in aggregate volume. Instead, volume is provided on an index of 0 to 100, where the number 100 represents peak search interest, relative to the search queries being analyzed.

University Systems Search Demand

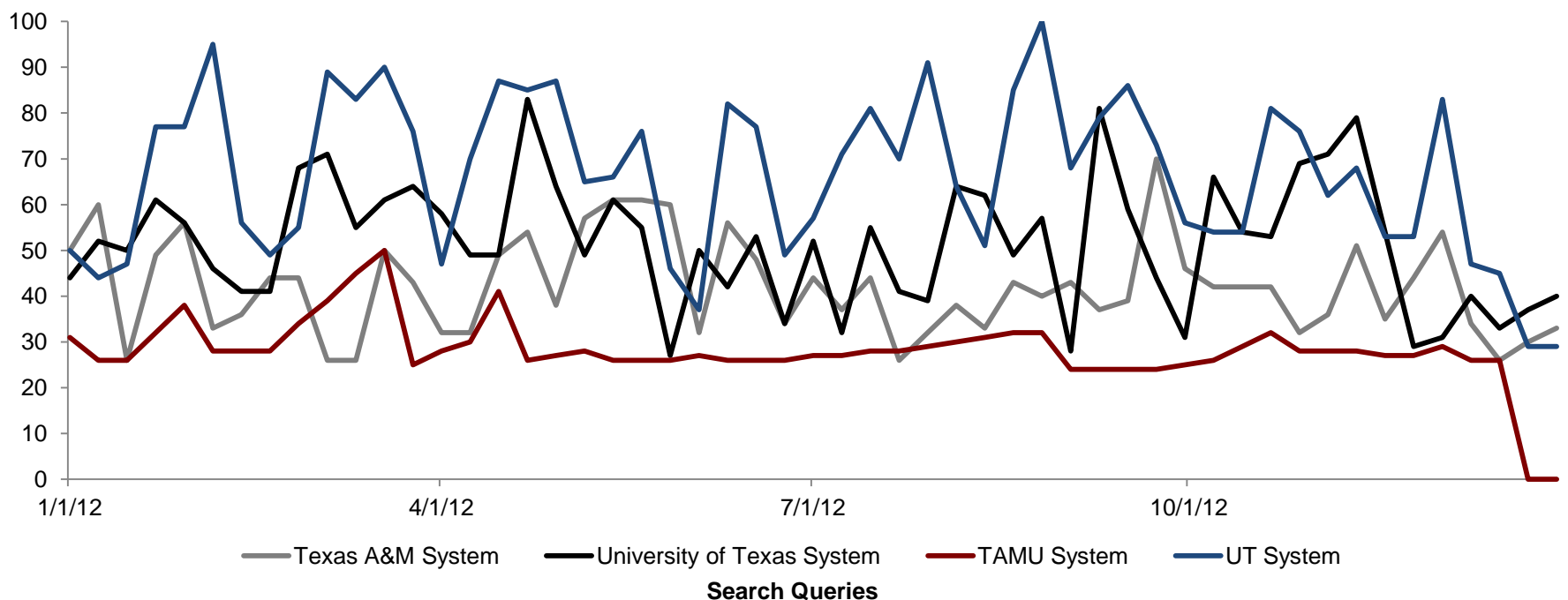
In 2012, the average search volume in the U.S. about the A&M System was lower than searches for the UT System. The vast majority of searches took place locally in Texas, with searches coming from College Station and Austin for the A&M System and UT System, respectively.

The most prominent news story for the A&M System appearing in search in 2012 was the June 2012 announcement that the system was awarded a contract for developing one of the three U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Innovation in Advanced Development and Manufacturing. For the UT System, top search stories in 2012 included the results of a report on safety monitors at UT Southwestern Medical Center; MD Anderson's clearance after an investigation by the UT System of wrongdoing in connection with a \$20 million grant; the high-profile approval of an incentive pay plan by UT System regents; and the reconsideration of a new headquarters for the UT System.

Average Indexed Search Volume for UT and A&M Systems in 2012



Indexed Search Volume for UT and A&M Systems in 2012





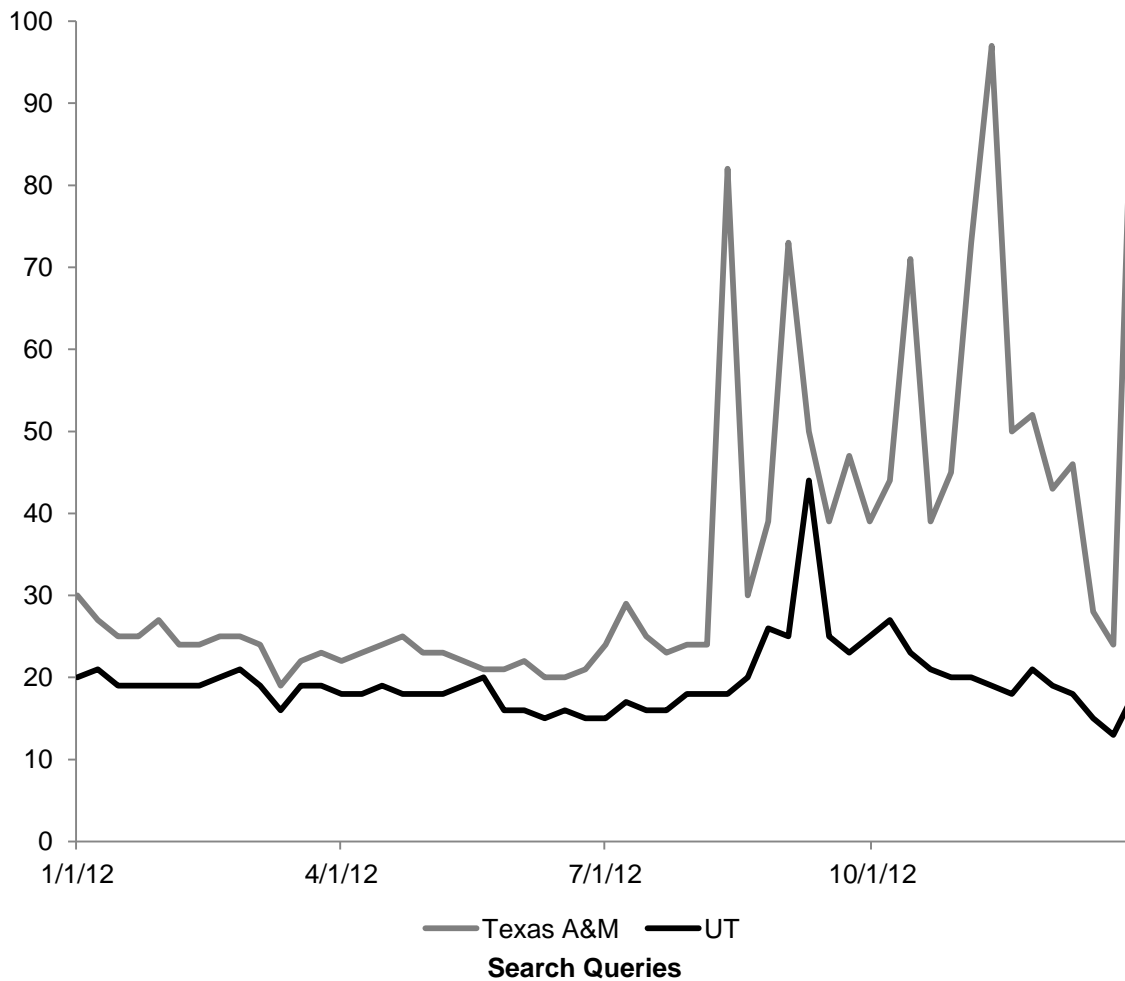
Flagship & Peer Universities Search Demand

Flagship Universities

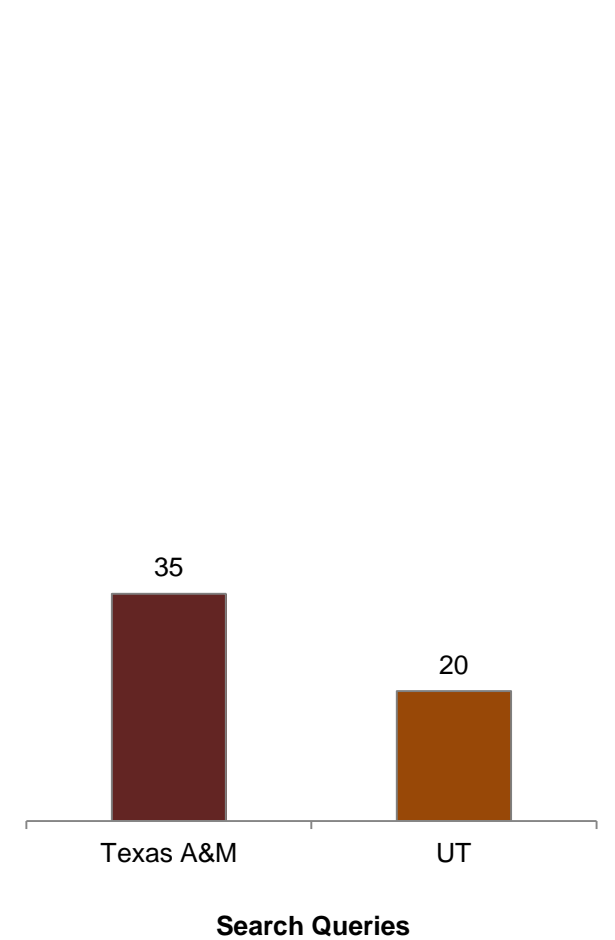
Search demand in 2012 was higher for Texas A&M than UT, both in terms of total volume and over time. While web search interest for both universities increased in the latter part of the year, search interest for Texas A&M spiked dramatically into 2013. Most searches for both universities took place within the state of Texas, although the Shreveport, La., metro area generated the ninth most search volume for Texas A&M.

Top related search terms for Texas A&M were connected to the football team, while top related searches for UT spanned searches for UT football and other universities in the state, including Texas A&M. In line with the related keyword pattern for Texas A&M, the searches that trended in popularity along with Texas A&M were associated with Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel, Texas A&M uniforms and recruiting, as well as the football program at the University of Alabama. Trending keywords in relation to UT were connected to the Supreme Court affirmative action case, Fisher v. University of Texas.

Indexed Search Volume for Flagship Universities in 2012



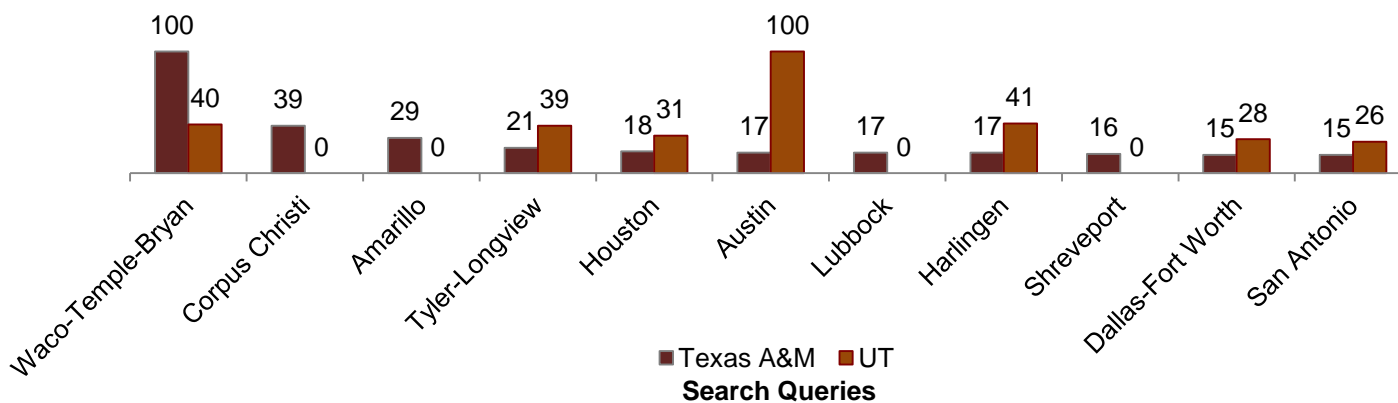
Average Indexed Search Volume in 2012





Stories that made top news headlines in 2012 search for Texas A&M were related mostly to athletics, including a story about the close basketball game between Texas A&M and 6th-ranked Baylor in February. Three stories related to Texas A&M's success in football became top headlines later in the year: Texas A&M defeating top-ranked University of Alabama near the end of the college football season, Johnny Manziel's Heisman Trophy win, and the Cotton Bowl win over the University of Oklahoma. However, the story that generated the most search activity was the deadly shooting near Texas A&M in August 2012. Similarly, top stories for UT centered on a crisis situation and athletics. In September, a bomb threat scare captured search volume related to UT, and the passing of ex-UT football coach Darrell K. Royal was a top search story in November.

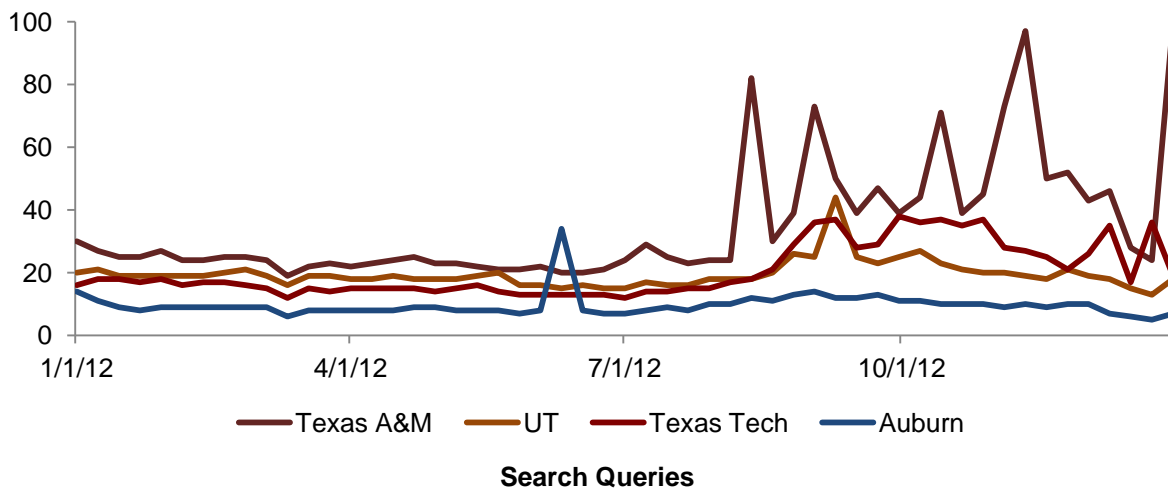
Average Indexed Search Volume by A&M System's Top 10 Metro Areas in 2012



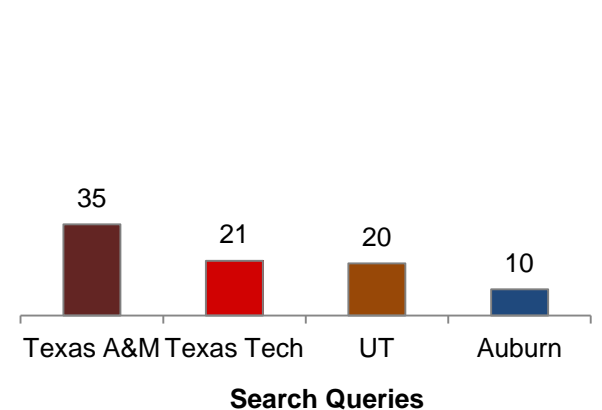
Peer Universities

Among peer universities, Texas A&M emerged a leader in search demand in 2012, over Texas Tech University, UT and Auburn University. Related searches in 2012 for both Texas Tech and Auburn were linked with each university's football program. No major stories for Texas Tech trended in search during 2012 in comparison to its peers, while Auburn experienced higher search volume because of major controversies, like the deadly shooting near the university, as well as ongoing legal proceedings in the Auburn tree poisoning incident by a University of Alabama fan.

Indexed Search Volume for Peer Universities in 2012



Average Indexed Search Volume in 2012

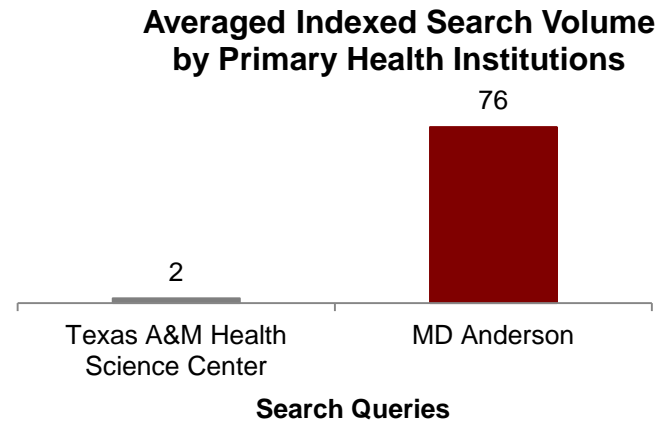
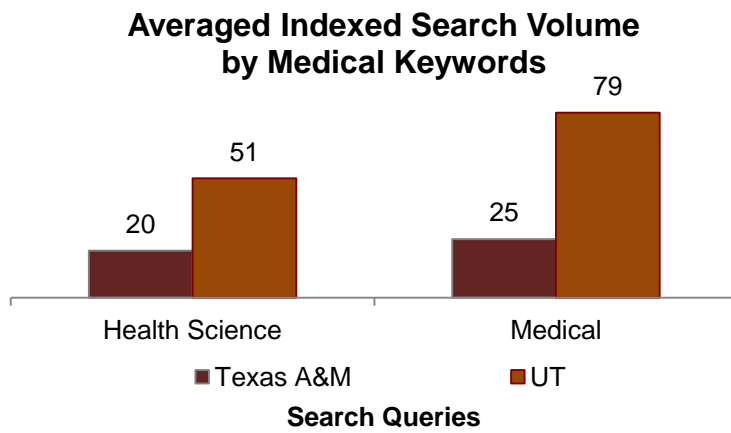




Search Demand Across Topics

Primary Health Institutions

Web search interest for Texas A&M as it relates to the keywords, health science and medical were evenly matched, though the same topics for UT generated much higher search volume in 2012. Similarly, the UT System's foremost health institution, MD Anderson, yielded higher search volume than Texas A&M's Health Science Center. Searches for Texas A&M as it relates to health keywords took place within Texas. On the other hand, the same searches for UT came from a broader network in the U.S., including California, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Illinois, New York, Georgia and Florida.

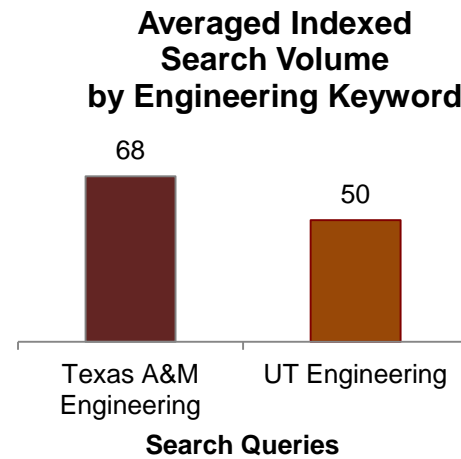
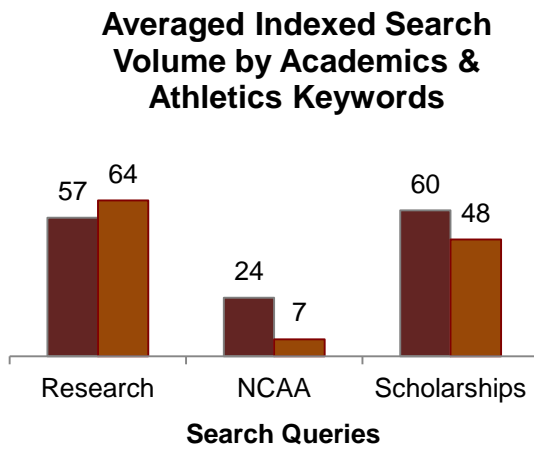


Academics and Athletics

The search demand in connection with research was higher for UT in 2012, though not by much. For the keywords "NCAA" and "scholarship," Texas A&M generated more interest. Searches about Texas A&M and NCAA largely took place in Texas, but also trended in California. Popular searches in relation to Texas A&M and NCAA included baseball, football and basketball. Users who searched for Texas A&M scholarships also researched other scholarships within the state.

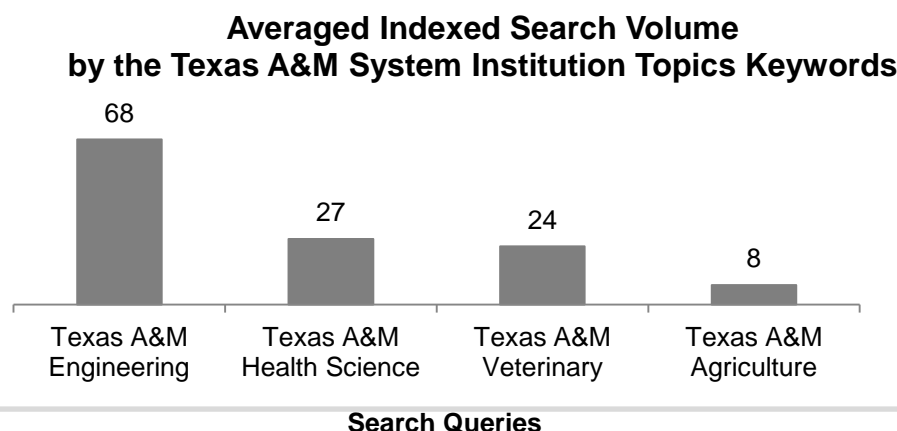
Engineering

While Texas A&M also surpassed UT in search volume for engineering, a popular keyword searched by both audiences was "petroleum engineering." Search demand for both universities as it relates to engineering also went beyond the state; a good portion of web search interest came from California.



A&M System Institutions

In comparing search demand across the A&M System institution specialties, engineering continued to be the most popular term, followed by health science, veterinary and agriculture. The majority of web interest in these topics came from Texas.



Influencer Profiles





Influencer Overview

Texas A&M University Influencers

The following section is a review of profiles on individuals who have a prominent presence online and are associated with Texas A&M. These people are associated with the A&M System through athletics, academics, research or administration. In this case, influence is defined as having an active presence in online media, with significant reach and impact. Some A&M System officials, such as John Sharp, may be influential because of a high-profile position and may be frequently quoted in coverage; however, this section is intended to capture people who maintain an active and influential presence in media through content creation and interaction with social media communities.

The A&M System has the opportunity to partner with these influencers, through collaborating on content or engaging on their media channels, to help boost the visibility of the A&M System among extended networks.



Johnny Manziel
Quarterback,
Texas A&M University Football
Twitter: @jmanziel2 | 286,069 Followers, on
538 Twitter Lists, 2,666 Tweets



Jeff Savell
Professor, Meat Science,
Texas A&M University
Twitter: @jsavell | 331 Followers, 130 Tweets
Blog: <http://jeffsavell.com/>
Blog: <http://meat.tamu.edu/>



Kevin Sumlin
Head Football Coach,
Texas A&M University
Twitter: @CoachSumlin | 29,572 Followers,
on 427 Twitter Lists, 1,394 Tweets



Mike Shaub
Clinical Professor, Department of Accounting,
Texas A&M University
Twitter: @mikeshaub | 151 Followers, on 2
Twitter Lists, 610 Tweets
Blog: <http://maysblogs.tamu.edu/ethics/>



Mike Fossum
NASA Astronaut,
Retired U.S. Air Force Colonel
Twitter: @astro_aggie | 22,508 Followers, on
816 Twitter Lists, 683 Tweets



Shane Hinckley
Assistant Vice President Business Development,
Texas A&M University; Director Collegiate
Licensing Texas A&M System
Twitter: @Shane_Hinckley | 617 followers, on 14
Twitter Lists, 829 tweets



Jason Cook
Vice President, Marketing and
Communications, Texas A&M University
Twitter: @jason_cook | 5,572 Followers, on
115 Twitter Lists, 651 Tweets



Joe Feagin
Sociology Professor, Texas A&M University;
Racism Researcher; Author
Twitter: @JoeFeagin | 1,033 Followers, on 86
Twitter Lists, 814 Tweets



Cullen Grissom
Law Enforcement Training Director,
Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service
Twitter: @TEEXcoptrainer | 837 Followers,
on 23 Twitter Lists, 1,939 Tweets



Debbie Field
Associate Vice President, Marketing and
Communications, Texas A&M University Health
Science Center
Twitter: @debafield | 414 Followers, on 15
Twitter Lists, 598 Tweets



Professor Astronomy (alias)
Assistant Professor,
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Twitter: @professor_astro | 3,183 Followers,
on 229 Twitter Lists, 1,429 Tweets



Nicholas Suntzeff
Vice President, AAS; Mitchell Professor Physics
& Astronomy, Texas A&M; Humanitarian Affairs
Officer, Office of Human Rights, U.S. Department
of State
Twitter: @nsuntzeff | 154 Followers, on 229
Twitter Lists, 85 Tweets



Blair Fannin
Agriculture Media Relations, Texas A&M AgriLife
Research/AgriLife Extension Service
Twitter: @cowhand | 325 Followers, on 16
Twitter Lists, 352 Tweets



Influencer Overview

Texas A&M University Influencers

The following section is a review of profiles on individuals who have a prominent presence online and are associated with Texas A&M. The individuals serve as examples of how a developed influencer outreach and coordination program could help boost the visibility of the A&M System among extended networks.



Johnny Manziel

Indicators of Influence

Quarterback, Texas A&M University Football

Twitter: @jmanziel2 | 286,069 Followers, on 538 Twitter Lists, 2,666 Tweets

Biography

Johnny Manziel is the football quarterback for Texas A&M University. He was nationally recruited out of high school and went on to have a record-setting redshirt freshman season during Texas A&M's first year in the SEC, which earned him a Heisman Trophy – a first for a freshman.

Relevance

Manziel has a large following on Twitter because of his recognition in the national sports arena. His Twitter account, while public, is personal, and he uses it primarily as a chatting and self-expression medium. Other tweets cover the Texas A&M football team, and news within the SEC athletic conference.

Sample Posts

1. December 12 (tweet): Have faith in Coach Sumlin...It's got us this far, why stop now? #gigem
2. October 7 (tweet): Good luck to the @AggieSoccer girls today in another big SEC game! #BTHOfloida @Annie_Kunz @AllieBailey_1 @kelleymonogue
3. September 22 (tweet): 86,000 strong tonight was really impressive Aggieland! Love this school and can't wait to BTHOArkansas next week! #goge

In The Media

1. December 27, Huffington Post: Mike Trout, RG3, Gabby Douglas, Johnny Manziel Among Breakout Stars Of 2012
 - Of course, perhaps no quarterback burst on to the scene in 2012 quite like redshirt Texas A&M freshman Johnny "Football" Manziel. The Kerrville, Texas native put up incredible numbers – not just for a freshman – accounting for 24 touchdowns through the air and 19 on the ground.
2. November 24, The New York Times: Texas A&M starts Johnny Manziel Heisman Trophy campaign
 - ... Johnny Manziel, the redshirt freshman quarterback for No. 9 Texas A&M and the Heisman Trophy front-runner heading into Saturday's game against Missouri, a sudden star both in his father's mischievous image and labeled with the all-American nickname Johnny Football. But because he is a Manziel, it takes friends, coaches and family to keep young Johnny on the straight and narrow.
3. November 16, AggieSports.com: Texas A&M starts Johnny Manziel Heisman Trophy campaign
 - Texas A&M had been relatively quiet about pushing freshman quarterback Johnny Manziel for the Heisman Trophy. But, no more...The university launched the official campaign this morning at johnnyfootball.aggieathletics.com.



Kevin Sumlin

Indicators of Influence

Head Football Coach, Texas A&M University

Twitter: @CoachSumlin | 29,572 Followers, on 427 Twitter Lists, 1,394 Tweets

Biography

Kevin Sumlin is the head football coach at Texas A&M and a two-time national coach of the year finalist. He came to Texas A&M after a successful coaching job at the University of Houston, where he led the team to a school-record 12 victories and the program's highest finish in the Bowl Championship Series standings in 2011. In 2012, Sumlin took Texas A&M, in their first year in the SEC, to an 11-2 record, including victories over then No. 1 Alabama in Tuscaloosa, and No. 11 Oklahoma in the AT&T Cotton Bowl.

Relevance

Sumlin's spotlight as the head coach of a top college football team earns him a significant following on Twitter. Tweets published from his account are mostly related to Texas A&M athletics, but Sumlin also uses the account to announce media appearances and converse with other prominent influencers in the college athletics world.

Sample Posts

1. November 15 (tweet): Thank you Pat "@YahooForde: Thanks to @CoachSumlin for his appearance on Wetzel To Forde. Great insight into the culture change at A&M."
2. September 11 (tweet): Radio this morning on @YSR 1560 with @johngranato and @seancablinaisan; <http://www.yahoosportsradio1560.com/audio/kevin-sum...>
3. July 9 (tweet): New Conference. New Look: Here's part of the new @AggieFootball TECHFIT uniform from @adidasUS Coming 7.12.12 #12thMan <http://ow.ly/i/KWYX>

In The Media

1. December 28, Dallas Morning News: Texas A&M's Kevin Sumlin added as a guest analyst for ESPN's BCS National Championship coverage
 - Sumlin has made countless media appearances before the season going on TV, radio shows and doing interviews anywhere and everywhere he could. With the Aggies success on the field, Sumlin's continued exposure can only help the program.
2. April 5, CBSSports.com: Pace of practice 'crazy' fast under Sumlin
 - Senior WR Uzoma Nwachukwu said the pace of practice under new coach Kevin Sumlin is a "shock" to the players, but they're quickly adjusting...



Mike Fossum

Indicators of Influence

NASA Astronaut, Retired U.S. Air Force Colonel

Twitter: @astro_aggie | 22,508 Followers, on 816 Twitter Lists, 683 Tweets

Biography

Mike Fossum is an American astronaut. He flew into space on board the NASA Space Shuttle missions STS-121 and STS-124 and served as a mission specialist of Expedition 28 and commander of Expedition 29 aboard the International Space Station. A native Texan, he received a bachelor of science degree in mechanical engineering from Texas A&M University.

Relevance

Fossum tweets about life as a NASA astronaut, chronicling daily activities, news, and answering questions from his follower base. He participates and is featured in various YouTube videos, so his recognition on social media is widespread among a very large specialty community. Fossum also regularly tweets in support of Texas A&M athletics.

Sample Posts

1. December 8 (tweet): Whoop!!!! Congratulations to Johnny Football!!! #gigem #tamu
2. August 9 (tweet): We had a VIP visitor in Mission Control today! Happy 68th birthday @SmokeyBear !!
<http://twitpic.com/ahdj6z>
3. May 29 (tweet): 6 months after landing, it's time to measure my bone density again. This is pQCT device.
<http://twitpic.com/9qne3n>

In The Media

1. September 5, TAMUtimes: Aggies At NASA: Having Fun And Great Careers At Warp Speed
 - No doubt the most famous Aggie in space is Mike Fossum, a 1980 mechanical engineering graduate. His most recent trip to space was last year as a member of the International Space Station in which he stayed in space for about six months while serving as commander of Expedition 29.
2. August 9, youtube.com/ReelNASA: Space Campers Speak With Astronaut Mike Fossum
 - From NASA's International Space Station Mission Control Center, NASA astronaut Mike Fossum participates in a Digital Learning Network (DLN) event with students at a space camp at the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex (Camp KSC) in Florida.



Potential Partner Influencers

The following collection of profiles consists of individuals who are associated with Texas A&M or the A&M System and actively pursue online communications. These individuals could be considered potential partners in an influencer program.



Jason Cook

Indicators of Influence

Vice President, Marketing and Communications, Texas A&M University
Twitter: @jason_cook | 5,572 Followers, on 115 Twitter Lists, 651 Tweets

Biography

Jason Cook serves as vice president of marketing and communications for Texas A&M University as well as chief communications officer for the A&M System. In this dual role, Cook directs institutional branding and marketing, licensing, media relations, internal communications and external affairs while leading Texas A&M's division of marketing and communications and the A&M System's Office of Communications.

Relevance

Cook actively tweets about Texas A&M athletics, occasionally broadening his scope to promote other news from around the university.

Sample Posts

1. November 29 (tweet): Props to longtime Texas A&M SID Alan Cannon for filling up the #JohnnyFootball media schedule this week. <http://bit.ly/SxfsPH> #12thMan
2. August 27 (tweet): Try Academy. In stock at campus B&N, too MT @vaaggie86: Hey @jason_cook I still cannot find that new aggie Jersey with sec patch.
3. April 13 (tweet): Great vid, powerful msg MT @TAMU Farmers Fight, a student-led movement, promotes modern agriculture at Texas A&M. <http://ow.ly/agGG3> #tamu

In The Media

1. February 19, Tuscaloosa News: Aggies hope SEC move translates to more success on national stage
 - “Our intent with the ‘It’s Time’ campaign is to illustrate that Texas A&M has arrived on the national stage,” explained Jason Cook, vice president of marketing and communications for the university, “not only in the top athletic league in the country, but also as one of the nation’s top universities.”
2. November 14, The New York Times: Texas A&M Hushes the Heisman Hype Over Manziel
 - “There’s a tremendous appetite among this fan base to see billboards and blimps,” said Jason Cook, Texas A&M’s vice president of marketing and communications. “But if you watch ESPN, if you look at Twitter, if you read what the media is writing about, the buzz is already there.”



Cullen Grissom

Indicators of Influence

Law Enforcement Training Director at Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service

Twitter: @TEEXcoptrainer | 837 Followers, on 23 Twitter Lists, 1,939 Tweets

Biography

Cullen Grissom is the law enforcement training director at Texas A&M's Engineering Extension Service (TEEX). He has worked at TEEX since 2004. The Law Enforcement Training program is in its 70th year of existence and incorporates the latest technology and instructional technique for training law enforcement professionals. The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education (TCLEOSE) licenses it as a training academy. Prior to his work at TEEX, Grissom worked at the Wharton Police Department in Wharton, Texas.

Relevance

Grissom frequently tweets about the different offerings of the TEEX program. However, he occasionally will tweet or retweet about other topics related to the Texas A&M campus.

Sample Posts

1. October 22 (tweet): TEEX launches new online version of its Basic Criminal Investigation course funded by @texasgov here's the link <http://bit.ly/UrWi1b>
2. September 18 (tweet): Mays College at TAMU rises 12 places in U.S. News undergraduate rankings - #whoop
3. August 6 (tweet): VIDEO: TEEX 's @LeeSanto1 demonstrates drawing from concealment in our #firearm #safety series: <http://bit.ly/fire22conceal> #policetraining



Professor Astronomy (alias)

Indicators of Influence

Assistant professor at Texas A&M University-Commerce

Twitter: @professor_astro | 3,183 Followers, on 229 Twitter Lists, 1,429 Tweets

Biography

This unnamed assistant professor at A&M-Commerce has been blogging under the alias “professor astronomy” since 2004. In 2010, the blog OnlineUniversities.com named @professor_astro one of the 50 fascinating professors who tweet. He was one of six science and math professors to be chosen.

Relevance

Professor Astronomy has over 3,000 active followers on Twitter and is on 229 lists. This is high for an expert in this particular field. He is also an active Tweeter and blogger.

Sample Posts

1. September 24 (tweet): We're moving up! Texas A&M-Commerce is joining SARA, a consortium operating two 1-meter telescopes <http://www.saraobservatory.org/>
2. July 17 (tweet): Students in charge and telescope working. I'm leaving before anything else breaks.
3. June 5 (tweet): The #VenusTransit through a telescope and clouds. At Texas A&M univ - Commerce Observatory pic.twitter.com/3suY7DrK



Nicholas Suntzeff

Indicators of Influence

Vice President, AAS; Mitchell Professor Physics & Astronomy, Texas A&M; Humanitarian Affairs Officer, Office of Human Rights, U.S. Department of State

Twitter: @nsuntzeff | 154 Followers, on 229 Twitter Lists, 85 Tweets

Biography

Dr. Nicholas Suntzeff is an observational cosmologist and is currently the Mitchell/Heep/Munnerlyn Chair of Observational Astronomy at Texas A&M. He is also the director of the astronomy program at Texas A&M. In 2011, Suntzeff, with fellow scientist Brian Schmidt, was awarded the Nobel Prize in physics for the founding of the High-z Supernova Search Team. In 2010, he was elected vice president of the American Astronomical Society. He has been awarded a 2010 Jefferson Senior Science Fellowship of the National Academy of Sciences to work at the U.S. Department of State, where he is a humanitarian affairs officer in the Bureau of Human Rights of the Office of International Organization Affairs.

Relevance

Dr. Suntzeff's extensive resume makes him more than qualified to be an expert in the field of astronomy. He is widely respected in the astronomy community.

Sample Posts

1. January 8 (tweet): I am VP of the AAS. If you want to talk to me about science, dark energy, the State Dept (where I worked), or the AAS politics, tweet me!

In The Media

1. December 21, The Eagle: Locals unfazed by doomsday talk
 - "Texas A&M University astronomer and cosmologist Nicholas Suntzeff said that there are a wide range of factual misconceptions that led to the belief that the ancient Mezo-American culture predicted the world was to end today."
2. November 14, The Eagle: Our Neighbors: Texas A&M astronomy program
 - "The director of the Texas A&M astronomy program and Nobel prize winner Nicholas B. Suntzeff has been recognized for his career achievements in the ongoing "12 Impacts for 2012" series by the university."



Jeff Savell

Indicators of Influence

Professor, Meat Science, Texas A&M University

Twitter: @jsavell | 331 Followers, 130 Tweets

Blog: <http://jeffsavell.com/>

Blog: <http://meat.tamu.edu/>

Biography

Jeff Savell is professor and leader of the meat science section in the Department of Animal Science, and holds the E. M. “Manny” Rosenthal Chair in Animal Science. He also holds appointments on the Faculty of Food Science and Technology and the Graduate Faculty of Nutrition. He received his bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate in animal science from Texas A&M University.

Relevance

Savell tweets occasionally about food preparation and the science behind it. His blog is used almost exclusively for personal use. He posts to Texas A&M Meat Science’s site on scientific explanations and studies related to meat.

Sample Posts

1. November 29 (tweet): @BBQsnob Yes, they have water in them. Just not as much as muscle. Average moisture content of lean is 70%, fat is about 22% water.
2. August 27 (tweet): Try Academy. In stock at campus B&N, too MT @vaaggie86: Hey @jason_cook I still cannot find that new aggie Jersey with sec patch.
3. May 11 (blog): “One of the frequent questions we have received from consumers over the years is this one: “Why is my package of ground beef brown in the middle?” We have had this question and answer on the Meat Science web page for years and have received many notes from retailers who have thanked us for providing this response to a question they have received many times from skeptical consumers.”

In The Media

1. April 18, The Battalion: Faculty say ‘pink slime’ beef scare unfounded
 - “Jeff Savell, professor and leader of the meat science section in the department of animal science, said all beef has some type of intervention applied to reduce the pathogens. ‘This process is approved by the USDA and the compound ammonium hydroxide is approved by the FDA as well as the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, so these are standard approved food substances or things that are applied to all kinds of foods,’ Savell said.”



Mike Shaub

Indicators of Influence

Clinical Professor, Department of Accounting, Texas A&M University
Twitter: @mikeshaub | 151 Followers, on 2 Twitter Lists, 610 Tweets
Blog: <http://maysblogs.tamu.edu/ethics/>

Biography

Dr. Michael K. Shaub joined the faculty of Texas A&M University's Mays Business School in 2006 from St. Mary's University, where he was Emil C. E. Jurica Professor of Accounting. Prior to St. Mary's, he was a faculty member at the University of North Alabama, where he was honored as an Eminent Scholar in Accounting. He has spent the past twenty years researching accounting ethics issues, especially in large accounting firms. His current focus is on trust, suspicion and professional skepticism in auditor-client relationships, incentives motivating young accounting professionals, and auditors' judgments about the materiality of adjustments. Dr. Shaub was recently chosen to receive the Texas Society of CPAs' Outstanding Accounting Educator Award for 2008.

Relevance

Shaub blogs for Texas A&M's Mays School of Business site, particularly on business ethics. He tweets on a wide range of topics, from sports to finance.

Sample Posts

1. December 21 (tweet): @michaeldoan @retheauditors 23 1/2 years teaching it. Confident my money is safe. One student got excited for an adverse control opinion!
2. December 6 (tweet): Really happy for @JManziel2 and Luke Joeckel tonight--well deserved. But Nate Boyer is a Longhorn who deserves our respect. @KatieShaub
3. April 30 (blog): "As I begin the final week of Accounting Ethics, I am overwhelmed by the ground we have covered and the issues we have encountered over the past five weeks... We have heard first-hand accounts of events at Adelphia and Enron, and we have been face-to-face for a conversation with an insider trader waiting to be sentenced."



Shane Hinckley

Indicators of Influence

Assistant Vice President Business Development at Texas A&M University; Director Collegiate Licensing Texas A&M System

Twitter: @Shane_Hinckley | 617 followers, on 14 Twitter Lists, 829 tweets

Biography

Shane Hinckley is the assistant vice president of business development at Texas A&M University. As assistant vice president of business development, Hinckley is responsible for the supervision of new and existing business opportunities with the university. Such oversight includes the on-campus bookstore as well as other business and marketing opportunities. Hinckley also directs the Texas A&M licensing program in its entirety. This program administers the use of the university's name, marks and still and moving images with internal and external partners. Shane currently serves as an officer on the board of directors for the International Collegiate Licensing Association (ICLA).

Relevance

Hinckley regularly tweets about Texas A&M sports, as well as promotional information regarding television appearances, and new consumer goods with Texas A&M trademarks.

Sample Posts

1. December 21 (tweet): Absolutely love what Zephyr is doing right now “@zephyrhats: First look for 2013: The Scoundrel snapback. <http://fb.me/204jOBnsJ>”
2. December 20 (tweet): @EASPORTS Cotton Bowl simulation. Who will win? #12thMan #tamu <http://youtu.be/hY2DbAI2HJY>
3. December 8 (tweet): Nice read by @dennisdoddcbs on #JohnnyFootball. @jason_cook shares his insider perspective. #tamu #12thMan <http://www.cbssports.com/collegefootball/...>



Joe Feagin

Indicators of Influence

Sociology Professor, Texas A&M University; Racism researcher; Author
Twitter: @JoeFeagin | 1,033 Followers, on 86 Twitter Lists, 814 Tweets

Biography

Dr. Joe Feagin serves as the Ella C. McFadden Professor of Liberal Arts at Texas A&M University teaching courses in sociology about racism and gender relations. Dr. Feagin is an acclaimed sociologist and social theorist who has conducted extensive research on racial and gender issues. His books have won numerous national and professional awards. Dr. Feagin also runs Racism Review, a website intended to provide a reliable and credible source of information for journalists, students and the public who are seeking solid evidence-based research and analysis of race, racism, ethnicity and immigration issues.

Relevance

Dr. Feagin actively tweets articles and his opinions about racial and gender issues typically pertaining to current events in America.

Sample Posts

1. January 29 (tweet): Did a post on Hull House death after 122 years, once major center for social justice (supported by Du Bois) goo.gl/SOE1I
2. August 15 (tweet): @feministing It was sad but was not at TAMU, but blocks away. White gun nut being evicted for not paying his rent, shot cop with papers.
3. September 19 (tweet): My new soc. piece on TheSocietyPages on 2012 election, Obama, and systemic racism issues tinyurl.com/9daz937

In The Media

1. July 19, Greensboro News and Record: The dark side of free speech
 - “Joe Feagin, a sociology professor at Texas A&M University and co-author of the book "Black in Blue: Black Police in White Departments" said the culture in many police departments can foster such a state of affairs. Because officers face daily threats, he said, they place a premium on sticking together. ‘That often means that when one officer is accused of something, the others tend to back him up,’ he said. ‘A black officer, when he’s dealing with a difficult situation and raises issues of discrimination, the other white officers are slow to back him up.’”
2. November 13, Salon: Dear angry white conservatives: Chill out
 - “Even in this economic environment, white people have at least 22 times the wealth of Blacks and Latinos (this gap doubled during the recession). In addition, white women in their peak earning years are worth an average of 40 thousand dollars. By comparison, Black women and Latinas have a net wealth of about 5 dollars. As sociologist Joe Feagin documents, of the 400 richest Americans according to Forbes magazine, 86 percent of them are white men.”



Debbie Field

Indicators of Influence

Associate Vice President, Marketing and Communications, Texas A&M University Health Science Center
Twitter: @debafield | 414 Followers, on 15 Twitter Lists, 598 Tweets

Biography

Debbie Field serves as the associate vice president for marketing and communications at Texas A&M University Health Science Center. She directs their marketing and communications team in the implementation of comprehensive, strategic communications initiatives aimed at positioning the university as a leader in healthcare higher education, research and service.

Relevance

Field occasionally tweets about health care issues and the Texas A&M University Health Science Center.

Sample Posts

1. February 29 (tweet): HHSC testifying on Medicaid Reform Waiver that 2.3 million will still be uninsured in TX even after Affordable Care Act implemented. #txlege
2. May 21 (tweet): From @statesman: 'A&M medical school keeps eye on UT plan' bit.ly/KrSeFS #TAMHSC #tamhsc_com #TAMHSC_CON #tamhsc_cop
3. June 18 (tweet): RT @quorumreport: statesman reports texas a&m lands national biosecurity center: One of only three in the nation, the \$285... bit.ly/NGZinP txlege



Blair Fannin

Indicators of Influence

Agriculture Media Relations, Texas A&M AgriLife Research/AgriLife Extension Service
Twitter: @cowhand | 325 Followers, on 16 Twitter Lists, 352 Tweets

Biography

Blair Fannin serves as the media relations specialist with Texas A&M AgriLife Communications for both Texas AgriLife Research and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. He provides media support for various departments and programs, including agricultural economics, animal science, the Office of the State Chemist and bioenergy research.

Relevance

Fannin regularly tweets about agricultural research, Texas A&M AgriLife and Texas A&M athletics.

Sample Posts

1. November 29 (tweet): Props to longtime Texas A&M SID Alan Cannon for filling up the #JohnnyFootball media schedule this week. <http://bit.ly/SxfsPH> #12thMan
2. September 13 (tweet): AgriLife Extension expert insight on replacement heifers, cattle for Texas producers looking to restock herds. bit.ly/UP7Oky #beef
3. July 23 (tweet): Tx A&M Animal Science head serving as president of new national assoc., advocates for animal science research funding. bit.ly/NNaw8y

In The Media

1. March 22, USA Today: Drought cost Texas nearly \$8 billion in agriculture losses
 - “The Texas AgriLife Extension Service now estimates crop and livestock losses at \$7.62 billion for 2011. The extension service's preliminary estimate of \$5.2 billion in August already topped the previous record of \$4.1 billion in 2006. Extension service spokesman Blair Fannin gave the Associated Press the data on losses Wednesday before it was publicly released.”

Methodology





Methodology

We used media analysis tools to create and analyze comprehensive data sets of traditional and social media coverage regarding the Texas A&M University System from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2012. Analysis of data related to the University of Texas System is also included to provide points of comparison.

Keyword-based search strings were used to define data sets for each respective category of analysis. These keyword groups include relevant organization names and individual names to ensure comprehensive data capture, and also utilize search phrases in order to ensure that the results are accurate to the search subjects.

Media Channels

We analyzed data from the following media channels:

- Mainstream news
- Blogs
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Forums
- Comments

Analysis Streams

This report presents findings in the following categories:

- Volume of coverage
 - Texas A&M System overall, UT System overall
 - Texas A&M System state agencies
 - Texas A&M System universities
- Topical coverage
- Media channels
- Regional and national media outlets
- Case studies
- Owned media channels
- Influencer activity

Monitoring Tools

We used the following tools to conduct our audit of traditional and social media coverage:

- Factiva
- Google Trends
- Radian6

