

Minutes of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee
University of Kentucky Board of Trustees
Tuesday, April 30, 2019

The Human Resources and University Relations Committee of the University of Kentucky Board of Trustees met on Tuesday, April 30, 2019 in the Bolivar Art Gallery in the School of Art and Visual Studies.

A. Meeting Opened

Cammie Grant, Chair of the Human Resources and University Relations Committee, called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

Chair Grant asked Viki Martorano, staff assistant for Human Resources, to call the roll.

B. Roll Call

The following members of the Board of Trustees answered the call of the roll: Cammie DeShields Grant, Lee X. Blonder, Angela L. Edwards, Robert Grossman, Michael Hamilton, David V. Hawpe, David Melanson, Sandra R. Shuffett, and Rachel Watts Webb.

Other Board Members present included: Jennifer Yue Barber, Claude A. Berry III, Edward Britt Brockman, Michael A. Christian, Kimberly McCann, Elizabeth McCoy, Derrick Ramsey, Robert D. Vance, and Barbara Young.

C. Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Trustee Melanson to approve the minutes from the February 22, 2019 Committee meeting. The motion was seconded by Trustee Hawpe. The motion carried and minutes were approved as written.

D. Brand Strategy Update

Chair Grant introduced Tom Harris, Vice President for University Relations, Julie Balog, Associate Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer, and Jay Blanton, Associate Vice President and Chief Communications Officer. Mr. Harris reviewed the history and development process of the proposed Brand Strategy and invited Julie Balog and Jay Blanton to present an update to the Committee.

Ms. Balog thanked the Committee for the opportunity to share an update on the Brand Strategy process and shared the higher purpose of this process (what is Rare, Relevant, and Real) for the University of Kentucky. Rare – what can few universities claim in this Brand Strategy space? Relevant – does the Brand Strategy matter to our key stakeholders and their influencers (perspective students, parents and high school counselors)? Real – the Brand Strategy must be authentic to the University of Kentucky to create consistency, verbally and physically.

Mr. Blanton asked the Committee to think about two additional aspects when seeing the Brand Strategy narrative and visuals.

1. Is the Brand Strategy authentic to what the University of Kentucky is?
2. Is the Brand Strategy aspirational and what the University of Kentucky wants to achieve?

Eighty students, 56 faculty and administrators, 104 prospective students and their parents, and 28 UK Alumni and Board of Trustees members were interviewed for this research. Ms. Balog reviewed the research results with the Committee.

1. Tale of Two Brands – high awareness and high affinity inside the state of Kentucky, but not outside the borders of Kentucky. This is an important consideration during out-of-state recruitment and achievement of enrollment goals.
2. The See Blue Campaign is not resonating outside of Kentucky.

Additionally, the Brand Strategy presentation deck was socialized to approximately 200 more stakeholders, which is more extensive than previous strategies such as the See Blue Campaign.

Ms. Balog reviewed the Brand Strategy Pillars that ladder up to the Brand Promise of “Achieve More Through Grace and Grit” with the Committee:

1. Quality Pillar that inspires the Path Forward.
2. Experience Pillar – with Grace and Grit.
3. Emotional – the Pride of Affiliation.

A communications map has been created and tested from the Brand Strategy promise that will be individualized to provide a roadmap for each individual college or unit at the University of Kentucky but also will ladder up to the bigger Brand Promise.

Ms. Balog shared the process and results of recent concept testing done over five narratives with 40 prospective students and 21 family members; chosen to mirror UK’s student body. One narrative, “Wildly Possible”, was more resonant with the test group than all the other narratives due to its balance between achievement and community. The key takeaway is that at UK, you can achieve your individual dreams while being part of a community that supports and challenges you. It is important for the University to lean in with achievement, but then wrap that achievement with support from the community.

Prior to sharing any narratives, baseline testing revealed that the 40 prospective students and their family members viewed UK as traditional, average, proud (related to UK Athletics), and welcoming. Post-narrative testing showed a perception change of UK to life changing, supportive, powerful, and proud.

Ms. Balog paused the presentation and opened the floor for questions or comments from the Committee.

Q. Trustee Shuffett asked why the survey was given to prospective students that mirrored the current student body instead of focusing on bringing in more diversity.

A. Ms. Balog shared that they did recruit for diversity, and they can review that feedback at a deeper level when needed. Ms. Balog also reiterated that regardless of diversity, the narrative being reviewed was the most resonating. Mr. Blanton shared that during on-campus socialization, most groups were intentionally very diverse or solely diverse.

Q. Trustee Grant asked if there were there any noteworthy similarities or differences between in-state and out-of-state focus group responses.

A. Ms. Balog stated that they discovered that Generation Z cared deeply about value and return on investment, and achievement; and the main difference between in-state and out-of-state, was the perception and lack of awareness about UK with out-of-state groups. Mr. Blanton responded that out-of-state students are often more concerned about security and safety, but mostly they care about outcomes and achievement.

Q. Trustee Hawpe stated that UK is the institution of choice in rural counties, and then asked what is being done to recruit Kentucky high school students in higher population counties whose higher education aspirations are focused outside the state of Kentucky.

A. Mr. Blanton responded that there is more commonality among their focus area because the target is high schoolers who are focused on higher education, regardless of the county in which they reside.

Trustee McCann shared that students from rural counties have changed over the last 20 years, and that UK is not necessarily the first choice anymore.

Q. Trustee Shuffett asked which states are being focused on for out-of-state recruitment.

A. Ms. Balog stated that the areas of Atlanta, Chicago, Indianapolis, and St. Louis are already big markets for UK and will be further emphasized.

Ms. Balog continued the Master Brand Creative Review presentation and reiterated the focus on achievement with community support from faculty who care for and mentor students. (The entire Master Brand Creative Review presentation is available on the Board of Trustees website, www.uky.edu/Trustees, under Human Resources and University Relations).

Trustee Blonder shared her concern that there is too much emphasis on the word “Wildly” in the Brand Narrative, that it will not resonant. It sets too high of an expectation, especially for current students who struggle with mental health.

Ms. Balog responded that this Brand Narrative was the most resonant with the focus groups of prospective and current students, and stated they would be intentional about using “Wild” versus “Wildly” in building out the Brand Strategy.

Mr. Blanton stated that Trustee Blonder made a good point regarding finding the balance between being supportive of kids but also being aspirational. However, Mr. Blanton shared that UK has not done a good job of marketing how great the institution is and referenced the \$87 million HEAL grant that UK was just awarded.

Trustee Young stated her concern that “Wild” does not have the right connotation since UK is trying to promote itself as a center of excellence; that the branding is cartoonish; that UK is trying to get away from the Wildcat being its only identity; and a serious student would not consider UK because of the word “Wild” being front and center in marketing.

Ms. Balog reminded the Committee that they were reviewing an internal document. The marketing would be tailored to resonate with different student groups, and the message they are trying to impart is that a student can come to UK and achieve at a high level.

Trustee Webb shared her appreciation of the Brand Narrative and the stories that highlighted the opportunities such as the HEAL grant, scholarships and programs, and how it takes something broad that applies to many universities and makes it personal to UK.

Trustee Hawpe is interested in seeing how specific groups, such as the Debate Team or a Rhodes Scholar, are integrated into the marketing plan.

Q. Trustee Hamilton shared his concern that while See Blue created a strong personal connection and relationship with UK, this narrative missed out on inclusivity and the belonging aspect that See Blue created. Trustee Hamilton asked what the plan was to counter the loss of the personal connection See Blue created with a Brand Narrative that is so achievement driven.

A. Ms. Balog responded that as materials are created, they will contain the achievement plus community concepts. Focusing on achievement only would not work.

Q. Trustee Blonder asked if the Brand Platform will include graduate and professional students.

A. Ms. Balog responded in the affirmative and spoke about the tailoring of the messaging map to each individual college and program at UK. She shared the recent messaging that occurred after the announcement of the HEAL grant award. Mr. Blanton responded that his team works with each college to find stories that include what graduate students are doing as well as highlighting research done at UK that impacts the state and broader world.

Ms. Balog shared samples of a Brand Narrative mood board, potential website, signage, and social media presence with the Committee, and then opened the floor for questions and comments.

Trustee Blonder and Trustee Young reiterated that dropping the word “Wildly” from the Brand Narrative should be considered, that it does not resonate.

Chair Grant stated that the Brand Narrative the Committee was reviewing was not a finished product, that many hours of market testing had been completed, and that different visuals will strike individuals differently.

Q. Trustee Grossman asked if the Brand Narrative had been tested in international markets.

A. Ms. Balog responded that they reviewed the Brand Narrative with Sue Roberts and Andrew Gills who recruit international students for UK, and they responded positively to the combined focus on achievement and community.

Trustee Brockman spoke about the Committee's response to the word "Grit" in the Brand Promise June 2018 University Relations presentation and reminded the Committee that the next presentation will go into more depth.

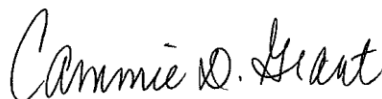
Trustee Hawpe stated that he liked "Wildly Possible" because it supports the fundamental message he believes – "At UK you can get where you need to go; at UK you can get where you want to go".

Trustee Melanson thanked Ms. Balog for the presentation and stated that the messaging will be a collaborative effort with colleges and units providing input and feedback.

Chair Grant thanked Ms. Balog for the presentation and asked if there was any further business to come before the Committee. Seeing none, she asked for a motion to adjourn. A motion was made by Trustee Shuffett to adjourn and seconded by Trustee Edwards.

With no dissent, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,



Cammie DeShields Grant
Chair, Human Resources and University Relations Committee