IMPRENTA
COMMUNICATIONS GROUP
PUBLIC AFFAIRS | CAMPAIGNS | ETHNIC MARKETING

**LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT (LACCD)
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING PLAN**

"L.A.'s College. Colleges as Distinct and Diverse as the Neighborhoods of L.A."

I.   SITUATION ANALYSIS:

Imprenta Communications Group (Imprenta), a public affairs, strategic communications, and marketing firm, has been contracted by the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) to evaluate and recommend improvements to the organization's external and internal communications, and to develop a comprehensive marketing plan, which leverages the District's resources and reach.

Specifically, Imprenta was charged with analyzing, evaluating, and making recommendations, as necessary, related to the organization's past and current communications and marketing efforts.

One of the challenging in developing a coordinated and comprehensive marketing plan is that LACCD consists of nine (9) separate and individual colleges, each with their own President and bureaucracy to manage the college as an autonomous unit. LACCD is the administrative, policy, and budgeting authority of the 9 colleges, and is governed by a 7-member Board of Governor, elected by the voters of Los Angeles. Currently, LACCD operates with a decentralized approach in implementing communications and marketing strategies.

The first step in develop a district-wide marketing plan is assessing LACCD's current structure and communications efforts in addition to analyzing the activities of their competitors. This includes consultation with the various marketing and communications directors/public information officers (PIOs) at each of the nine (9) colleges. The conclusions from these various interviews helped develop an assessment and form the basis for LACCD's communications and marketing plan.

II.   PURPOSE OF THIS PLAN

- Develop a comprehensive communications and marketing plan, which may be implemented immediately and over three to five years. The plan will provide recommendations regarding organizational changes to implement the plan as well.

III.   GOALS & OBJECTIVES

- Increase enrollment and engender public and philanthropic support for LACCD;
- Leverage the combined media buying power of all nine (9) colleges to maximize the added value that LACCD receives from its media partners; and
- Promote district-wide message consistency and discipline when responding to crisis situations or discussing priorities such as the Los Angeles College Promise.

Note: Limitations of marketing and communications. The main goal and primacy concern of LACCD is increasing enrollment in district colleges. However, marketing is not a panacea and has its limitations. No amount of good marketing will make up for shrinking demographics, or unforeseen market changes. For example, if the number of potential students are shrinking this is a reality that will need to be addressed beyond marketing. Also, if other educational options/other colleges are more effective and have more resources to tell their positive stories then this is a factor that needs to be dealt with as well.

As noted above, the target audience of 18 to 24 year-olds for LACCD is decreasing in size. According to an article by Ashley Smith in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, enrollment in two-year colleges are declining at a national level. 88% of community colleges have reported decreased enrollment when compared to two years ago. Peak enrollment for California community colleges occurred in two-year colleges occurred in 2008-2009 during the Great Recession. By the end of 2012-2013 year, actual enrollment was 12% below the 2008-2009 peak in California.

Specifically in LA County, the size of the target audience of 18-25 year olds is currently in decline and is projected to further decline in size through 2030. The current cohort of 18-25 years olds were born between 1992 and 1999. Birthrates peaked in Los Angeles County in 1990 and have steadily declined since then. The replenishment rate of individuals moving to Los Angeles County through migration or immigration has not sustained any growth in this key demographic. Indeed, the child population of Los Angeles County for children under the age of 10 decreased by 17% in the last 13 years. This decrease in size has already resulted in decreased primary and secondary enrollment in L.A. County schools.

Source: Changes in Age Structure 2010 to 2030

18–24
Changes 2010 to 2030: –151,610
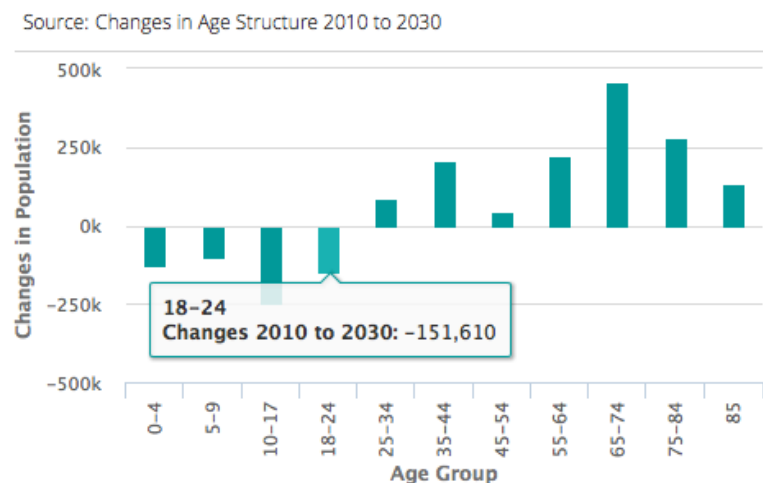
Trends will become much more pronounced through 2030, with large declines in the 0- to 24-year-old groups and large increases in individuals 55 years old or older.

IV. TARGET AUDIENCES

Each of the 9 colleges within LACCD target distinct populations, bounded by geographic proximity to the campus, programs offered, degrees or certificates conferred, and reputation of the colleges. With limited resources, we need to have a narrow approach which focuses on a few key target audiences.

- **Young adults seeking to transfer to 4-year university**. This key demographic is composed of 18-25-year-old young adults who attend community college out of convenience, necessity, cost, etc. who seek to go onto a 4-year university. To this demographic convenience and proximity are paramount to the decision-making process. Academic excellence is also important in terms of transfer rates to desirable 4-year universities.

- **Young adults seeking vocational skills/education.** This key demographic of 18-28 year olds seeks to attend community college to be obtain vocation skills necessary for them to gain employment. They are entering the labor force for the first time and are still accessing their interests, abilities and aptitudes before settling on an initial career choice.

- **Older adults seeking additional vocational skills.** Some of these individuals may be re-entering the work force after determining they need additional skills to get the type of job they desire. Most of these students will likely attend an LACCD college part-time, making them the least important of these target audiences.

- **High School Guidance Counselors, Coaches, Teachers, Parents and other Influencers.** A concerted effort needs to be paid to communicating to individuals who influence the college and career choices of young adults. Guidance counselors in particular, can play a key role, and in targeting parents. Special effort needs to be put in communicating in languages other than English, as many of the potential students in the target audience are the first in their family to go to college and their many of their parents are immigrants.

V.   COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE (NON-CRISIS)

For efficient coordination and a more collaborative flow of ideas and communications, we recommend developing organizational relationships that leverage the power of the 9 to share best practices, coordinate messages and maximize economies of scale where relevant.

This model is most effective with a twice a month roundtable meeting where the 9 college PIOs/communications reps can share best practices, suggestions, and explore joint marketing-communications initiatives to maximize economies of scale. Strategically, there will be more collaborative messaging (instead of competing messages) that will highlight each college's strength.
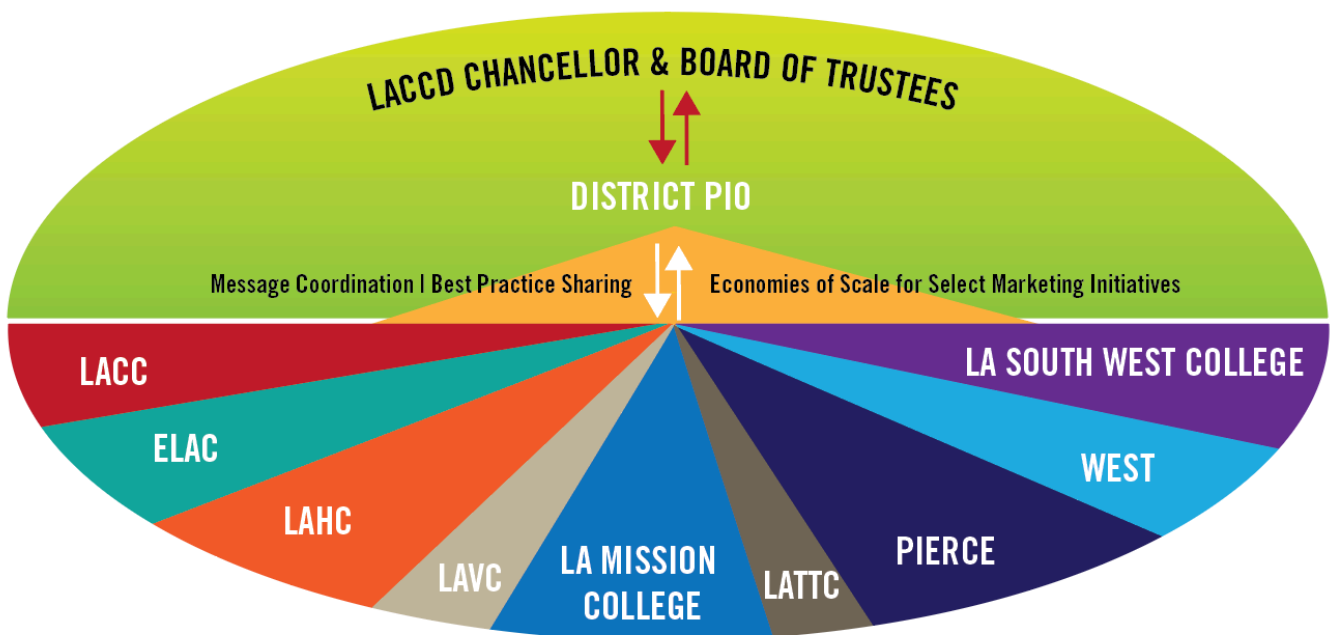
VI.   THE COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS

Harnessing the Power of 9. LACCD is made up of 9 unique colleges, each with its own brand persona. To strengthen the brand, we recommend harnessing the collective power of these entities by **identifying and addressing shared concerns to form the Marketing and Communications Steering Committee.**

SHARED CONCERNS

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STEERING COMMITTEE

MEMBERS TO INCLUDE:
PIO from each of the colleges
College President and / or their designee
Executive Staff from LACCD

The Advisory Panel implements a **communications framework** with the following components:

(a) reporting structure for crisis communications   (c) a forum for Best Practices
(b) reporting structure for non-crisis communications   (d) and the ability leverage economies of scale

COMMUNICATIONS FRAMEWORK

BEST PRACTICE SHARING

REPORTING STRUCTURE FOR CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

SHARED MISSION & OBJECTIVES

REPORTING STRUCTURE FOR NON - CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

LEVERAGE ECONOMIES OF SCALE
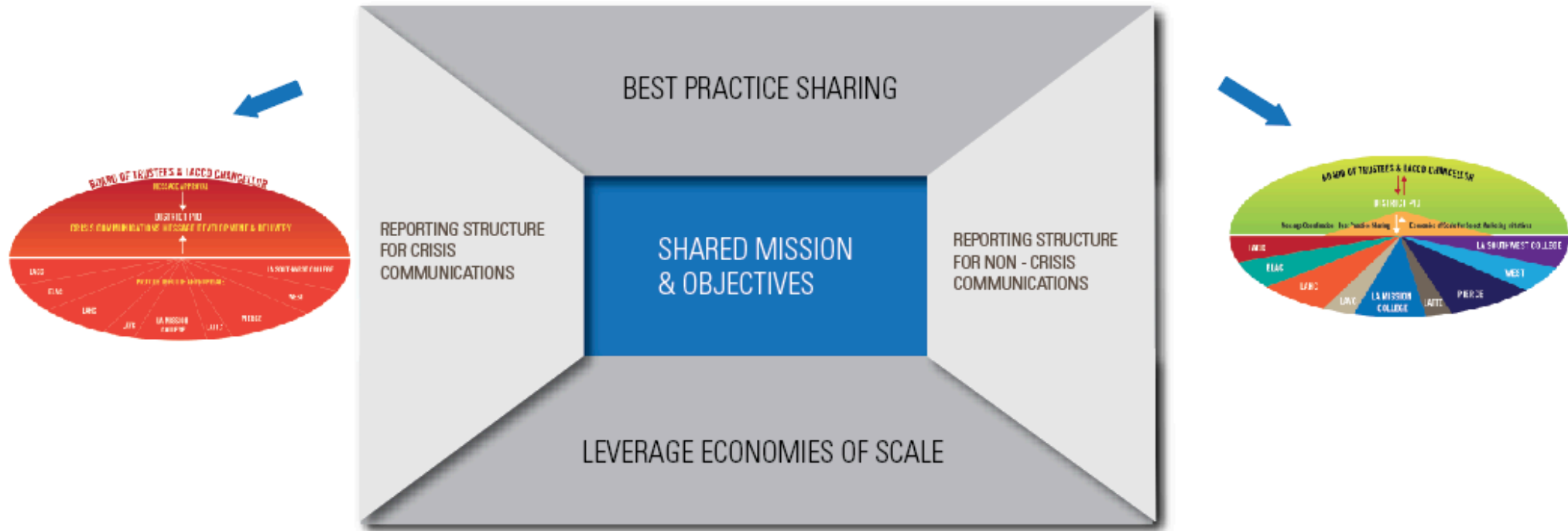
7 strategies on the following page provide a brand filter that will ensure communications are focused and reflect the LACCD's shared mission. **Sharing marketing communications initiatives** will benefit from economies of scale. The plan's ultimate success is dependent on effective **tactical execution**.

STRATEGIES

1. Establish a brand for LACCD; strengthen and brand LA College Promise
2. Unify and leverage the Power of 9 (across message platforms and messaging)
3. Demonstrate that LACCD colleges are the First Choice, not the Last Chance
4. Paint the face of the district
5. Establish a more centralized communications function
6. Focus on young adults
7. Utilize and enhance Digital Strategies

SHARED INITIATIVES
marketing communications initiatives best leveraged through economies of scale

Establish a unified brand for LACCD; Establish LA College Promise (LACP) brand

1. Build key messages into every initiative that promotes LACCD and LACP

2. Position Trustees, Chancellor, and College Presidents as Thought Leaders
- LACCD leadership should be positioned as a resource to the media, ready to give insights to the press on issues related to education, job training and the local economy.

3. Communications training with emphasis on Key Message and delivery for
- leadership
- communications leads
- staff
- student information teams (kiosks / online / organizations)

4. Spread key messages to students via digital and print communications, newsletters, e-news, video screens and school displays, website, email, mobile/text, social media and apps

5. Disseminate key messages on a consistent basis through integrated vehicles (earned and paid media)

Unify and leverage the Power of 9 (across message platforms and messaging)

1. Develop unified look and feel
2. Develop one brand promise
3. Explore brand treatment of each college and how it relates to LACC logo
4. Rename LACCD (delete "District")
5. Develop and maintain a master editorial calendar
- organizationally plan for and strategically monitor significant stories and events.
- each item can appear in all District and College communications channels, from Social Media to media briefings to community presentations to newsletter programming.
6. Align messages with master editorial calendar
7. Identify and Leverage benefits and features of 9 colleges under one umbrella
- transferable credits
- enrollment and class availabilty
- cross promote classes / programs
- incentives for alumni to attend events at sister colleges

LACCD is the first choice, not the last chance

1. Create a Speakers Bureau highlighting Trustees, leadership, faculty and outstanding students
- pitch the talent to event organizers and corporate speaker programs
2. Become host site(s) for TedX talks
3. Leverage earned media through story pitches about compelling student life / success stories
4. Develop op-ed and editorial pieces on pressing issues about education and inequality
5. Keep legislators informed about LACCD's milestones and successes
- Host quarterly meetings with elected officials
- Host functions for Latino, Asian, and Black Caucus
6. Attract veterans
- back-to-college program for veterans
- highlight veteran success stories
- create a Veterans Communications (Advisory) council
- composed of current students who are veterans
- can be surrogates/echo chamber for LACCD

Paint the face of the district

1. Identify issues that LACCD and sister colleges can take a leadership stand on
- mental health among students
- food and housing insecurity
- college to career pipeline
2. Position leadership, key staff, faculty as subject matter experts to comment on issues about education on TV and radio talk shows
3. Enhance earned media exposure through story pitches about compelling life and successes at LACCD
4. Develop an integrated ad campaign composed of transit/outdoor, radio, tv, print, online ads to promote key message(s)
5. Partner with tv / radio programs to sponsor/host/speak as panelists at community townhalls and forums to discuss pressing socio-economic issues
6. Proactive earned media
- Op-eds
- Editorial boards
- Press Conferences
- Pitches
7. Paid media
- Radio – Spanish and young adult
- Print – Spanish and neighborhood press
- Outdoor, Bus Shelter and Bus Ads
- Targeted Direct Mail
8. Special events
- college day
- commemorative days
- enrollment
- summer / spring break

Establish a more centralized communications function

1. Develop reporting structure
- identify members of advisory panel
- roles and responsibilities
- regular convenings
- agenda and action plans
2. Identify and create a database of key resource/ spokespeople and influencers / areas of expertise at all levels
3. Develop a district-wide style guide
4. Identify / develop communications vehicles
5. Conduct an assessment of existing collateral materials and determine whether these align with our core objectives, brand vision and guidelines
6. Strengthen internal communications among all 9 colleges
- Maximize the potential of intranet, email and viral videos

Focus on young adults

1. Identify faculty, students and alumni with compelling stories to share about LACCD
2. Identify and document student testimonials to reflect the message: "LA's College – Colleges as distinct and Diverse as the Neighborhoods of LA using the following means:
- viral videos
- tv / cable commercial
- web mini movie for website
3. Host competitions and events – involving student groups
- viral video / short films
- performances
- college band concerts
4. Host competitions and events – involving student groups
- viral video / short films
- performances
- college band concerts
5. Establish and maintain touch points:
- digital /social
- live events
- print and signage
- engage student groups

Utilize and enhance social media and digital strategies

1. Assess and enhance current online presence
- website revamp
- social media
2. Enhance prominence of LACP on all 9 websites
3. Create LACCD broadcast channel
- cable / internet TV
- streaming
- radio
4. Establish digital communications vehicles / forums
- E-news
- blogs and vlogs
- podcast
- video screens around campus common areas (lobbies, cafeterias, lounges, etc)
5. Develop an LACCD app

TACTICS

VII.   STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

1. Establish a brand for LACCD; strengthen and brand LA College Promise. The overall District needs a brand which respects the individuality and uniqueness of each of the colleges. The LA College Promise is where brighter futures begin.

Agree on a unifying overall message for LACCD and messages for each of the colleges which respects their individual brands, attributes and market segmentation, but also fits into the overall district message and brand.

- **Key Messages:**
  - L.A.'s College. The Promise of College for Everyone.
  - Affordable, Accessible, Available to All. We're LACCD. LA's College
  - LA's College. Fulfilling the Promise for College for All
  - L.A's College. Colleges as Distinct and Diverse as the Neighborhoods of LA

TACTICS:

1. Build key messages into every initiative that promotes LACCD and LACP
2. Position Trustees, Chancellor, and College Presidents as Thought Leaders
   - LACCD leadership should be positioned as a resource to the media, ready to give insights to the press on issues related to education, job training and the local economy.
3. Communications training with emphasis on Key message and delivery for
   - leadership
   - communications leads
   - staff
   - student information teams (kiosks / online / organizations)
4. Spread key messages to students via digital and print communications, newsletters, e-news, video screens and school displays, website, email, mobile/text, social media and apps
5. Disseminate key messages on a consistent basis through integrated vehicles (earned and paid media)

2. Unify and leverage the Power of 9 (across message platforms and messaging). There needs to be a consistent "look & feel" for each of the District and each of the colleges. Currently, there is no cohesion both in terms of messaging and in terms of "look & feel" for the district and the individual colleges. It appears that the nine (9) are completely detached and separate from each other.

From a practical and strategic point of view there needs to be synergy between the nine (9) colleges and the District. Monies and resources could be saved, and a coordinate and consistent messaging will only serve to help each of the colleges and LACCD overall in meeting their mutual objectives.

TACTICS:

1. Develop unified look and feel
2. Develop one brand promise
3. Explore brand treatment of each college and how it relates to LACC logo
4. Rename LACCD (delete "District")
5. Develop and maintain a master editorial calendar
   - This is the best method to organizationally plan for and strategically monitor significant stories and events.
   - Attention to each item can appear in all District and College communications channels, from Social Media to media briefings to community presentations to newsletter programming.
6. Align messages with master editorial calendar
7. Identify and Leverage benefits and features of 9 colleges under one umbrella
   - transferable credits
   - enrollment and class availability
   - cross promote classes / programs
   - incentives for alumni to attend events at sister colleges

3. **Demonstrate that LACCD colleges are the First Choice, not the Last Chance.** LACCD colleges are ideal because of they offer unique opportunities for those who believe that with education, a better life is within their grasp.
   - **Affordable** – best investment in higher education
   - **Convenient** – LACCD colleges are your neighborhood colleges. With nine (9) campuses throughout Los Angeles there is a college near you that's affordable and convenient.
   - **Accessible** – LACCD will meet you at your level. Whether you're a fulltime student, working full-time, part-time, looking to transfer, gain stills, new career, or just exploring options, and everything in between LACCD has a college for you.

TACTICS:

1. Create a Speakers Bureau highlighting Trustees, leadership, faculty and outstanding students -- pitch the talent to event organizers and corporate speaker programs
2. Become host site(s) for TedX talks
3. Leverage earned media through story pitches about compelling student life / success stories
4. Develop op-ed and editorial pieces on pressing issues about education and inequality
5. Keep legislators informed about LACCD's milestones and successes
   - Host quarterly meetings with elected officials
   - Host functions for Latino, Asian, and Black Caucus

6. Attract veterans
   - Back-to-College program for veterans
   - highlight veteran success stories
   - create a Veterans Communications (Advisory) council
   - composed of current students who are veterans
   - can be surrogates/echo chamber for LACCD

4. **Paint the face of the district.** Tell positive and compelling stories of LACCD students and alumni. Show the success of past students and demonstrate that LACCD represents everyday people of L.A. It's important that potential students see themselves at LACCD and that LACCD is not a faceless government bureaucracy. Feature real students in all communications whenever possible. Visibility can best be achieved through synergistic messaging, and by cultivating recurring themes and stories that are featured consistently through special events, as well as proactive earned and paid media

TACTICS:

1. Identify issues that LACCD and sister colleges can take a leadership stand on
   a. mental health among students
   b. food and housing insecurity
   c. school to career pipeline
2. Position leadership, key staff, faculty as subject matter experts to comment on issues about education on TV and radio talk shows
3. Enhance earned media exposure through story pitches about compelling life and successes at LACCD
4. Develop an integrated ad campaign composed of transit/outdoor, radio, tv, print, online ads to promote key message(s)
5. Partner with tv / radio programs to sponsor/host/speak as panelists at community town halls and forums to discuss pressing socio-economic issues
6. Proactive earned media
   - Op-eds – use local elected officials, local dignitaries, and prominent alumni to write op-eds. Local elected, particularly Trustees, are naturals to use to obtain press.
   - Editorial boards – the Chancellor, College Presidents and Trustees should regularly meet with Editorial Board and reporters to build relations, become resources, and enhance media opportunities.
   - Press Conferences – The District and Colleges should work together to find opportunities to hold joint press conferences when appropriate. When individual press conferences are warranted then the individual college(s) and the District should leverage each other's resources.
   - Pitches – proactive pitches are different from and potentially preferable to press conferences. If pre-existing relationship with key editors and reporters exist, then pitching is a matter of cultivating and constant communications with reporters and editors.
7. Paid media
   - Radio – Spanish and young adult
   - Print – Spanish and neighborhood press
   - Outdoor, Bus Shelter and Bus Ads
   - Targeted Direct Mail

8. Special events
   - college day
   - commemorative days
   - enrollment
   - summer / spring break

5. **Establish a more centralized communications function.** LACCD currently operatives in a decentralized, almost independent model. Functionally, LAACD is one district with nine colleges. However, in terms of its communications and marketing it functions almost as nine (9) independent colleges with no connection to a District. Brand strength and unity is best achieved through cohesion in branded collateral materials, environmental displays, online and social media presence, and other actions, activities and imagery that are authentic to LACCD's brand promise.

TACTICS:

1. Develop reporting structure
   - identify members of advisory panel
   - roles and responsibilities
   - regular convenings
   - agenda and action plans
2. Identify and create a database of key resource/ spokespeople and influencers / areas of expertise at all levels
3. Develop a district-wide style guide
4. Identify / develop communications vehicles
5. Conduct an assessment of existing collateral materials and determine whether these align with our core objectives, brand vision and guidelines
6. Strengthen internal communications among all 9 colleges.
   - Maximize the potential of intranet, email and viral videos

6. **Focus on young adults.** Message to young adults 18-25 in ways that are relevant to them. Enhance social media and speak to them in languages they understand and resonate with -- English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean.

TACTICS:

1. Identify faculty, students and alumni with compelling stories to share about LACCD
2. Identify and document student testimonials to reflect the message: "LA's College --
3. Colleges as distinct and Diverse as the Neighborhoods of LA using the following means:
   a. viral videos
   b. tv / cable commercial
   c. web mini movie for website
4. Host competitions and events – involving student groups
   a. viral video / short films
   b. performances
   c. College Band concerts

5. Establish and maintain touch points:
   a. digital /social
   b. live events
   c. print and signage
   d. engage student groups

7. **Utilize and enhance Digital Strategies.** Since the primary target audience is young adults, social media is key. It appears the District and the individual colleges do not have a comprehensive or consistent approach to social media. The is an area that can be quickly and easily addressed.

TACTICS:

1. Assess and enhance current online presence
   a. website revamp
   b. social media
2. Enhance prominence of LACP on all 9 websites
3. Create LACCD broadcast channel
   a. cable / internet TV
   b. streaming
   c. radio
4. Establish digital communications vehicles / forums
   a. E-news
   b. blogs and vlogs
   c. podcast
   d. video screens around campus common areas (lobbies, cafeterias, lounges, etc.)
5. Develop an LACCD app

VIII.   CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS

The recent work by LACCD Board of Trustees and the 9 colleges to create a rapid-response and cohesive strategy to safeguard student rights in the face of mounting pressure for immigration enforcement at a local level is just one example of the need for a comprehensive and wholly separate crisis communications plan.

Imprenta has outlined a crisis communications strategy below, but this does not take the place of a comprehensive plan involving key stakeholders, such as the L.A. County Sheriff's Department and key public safety officials at the 9 campuses.

A. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

LACCD is comprised of several sites across a large geographic area. For the purposes of this plan, a crisis is any situation that prompts a significant, often sustained, news coverage and public scrutiny, and has the potential to damage the integrity, image, financial stability, or reputation of the District, or one of the divisions of the District. This may include a natural or man-made disaster or emergency, a controversy, legal dispute, or the failure to appropriately respond to any one of these types of occurrences.

The goal of this section is to establish broad principles and guidelines for handling a crisis at any division of LACCD. It is Imprenta's recommendation that a wholly separate and comprehensive effort involving all stakeholders be undertaken to create a District-wide crisis communications plan.

B. CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Spokespeople. While the Chancellor is the chief public relations officer and the personification of LACCD — and each President of the nine (9) LACCD colleges speaks for her/his respective college — it is prudent to have designated official spokesperson as well as a backup official spokesperson who will able to address critical issues and deliver statements on behalf of LACCD, as appropriate.

Criteria for the Spokesperson.
- someone with media training experience, or experience disseminating information through the media
- someone comfortable in front of cameras
- someone who is credible with reporters, respectful of the media role
- has the temperament to remain calm

The LACCD Crisis Communications Team may be comprised of the following individuals, depending the nature, duration, and severity of the crisis:
1. The Chancellor
2. The District PIO
3. The Vice Chancellors
4. The President of the impacted site
5. The Chief of Police or LA County Sheriff's Deputy
6. LACCD Counsel
7. Communications coordinator (someone with ready access to LACCD webpages and social media accounts who can communicate and maintain up-to-date needed communications vehicles).

- Good organizational strategies *before* a crisis erupts is key to successfully responding to the crisis. Therefore, we recommend that LACCD Crisis Communications Team create and maintain a list of the team members with correct titles, home, work, and cell phone numbers, email address, and areas of responsibility and expertise.

- **Identify a media center**. Designate an area away from the affected College or location, to direct media so they are not in the way of first responders, or compromising the safety of LACCD personnel. It is important for the media to see how LACCD is responding to a crisis, but safety is paramount. If needed, identify a backup media center should the situation change and media need to be directed further away from the crisis site.

- LACCD should ensure there is enough District staff at the media center to take media calls and escort media who show up at the scene.

- Respond to media calls promptly with accurate and complete information. The Spokesperson should clearly state if facts are incomplete or developing.

- **General Principles**.
    - Act fast to acknowledge the situation
    - If a mistake is made that led to the crisis, consider admitting to it, then begin doing whatever is possible to re-establish credibility and confidence with both external and internal audiences.
    - Consider the view of the crisis from the position of the public.
    - People remember what they hear first and last.

- **Responsibilities of Crisis Communications Team**. The Team should determine the appropriate positioning or message with which to address the emergency. The team will:
    - Create and maintain fact sheets for distribution. These will be used to update websites, emails, news releases, and phone messages.
    - Ensure that fact sheets are approved by the Chancellor and appropriate leaders _prior_ to circulation.
    - Ensure that the Chancellor and LACCD leadership receive timely copies of these fact sheets.
    - Consider the legal aspects of the information on the Fact Sheet prior to dissemination:
        - FERPA, HIPPA and other privacy issues
        - Public's Right to Know
        - Concerns about security on and off college/site
    - Set regular meeting times of the team to review changing facts, assess whether key messages are reaching the desired audiences.
    - Designate a member of the Crisis Communications Team to record meeting notes. These may be important for record keeping beyond the moments of crisis.
    - Create a list of known and unknown facts, and determine which facts can be released publically.
    - Create key messages to be included in all communications: ensuring safety; looking forward; restoring confidence; balancing concern with resolve and action.

- **Pre-Crisis Priorities**.
  For the District, pre-emergency priorities are:
    - Preparing and maintaining plans, procedures, checklists, and contact lists
    - Developing sample news releases, or radio/TV messages
    - Identifying the types of emergency instructions the public may need to be given
    - Identifying individual and hearing impaired and non-English speaking populations, and developing procedures to provide information to these populations.
    - Responding to media questions regarding the state of readiness for the District.
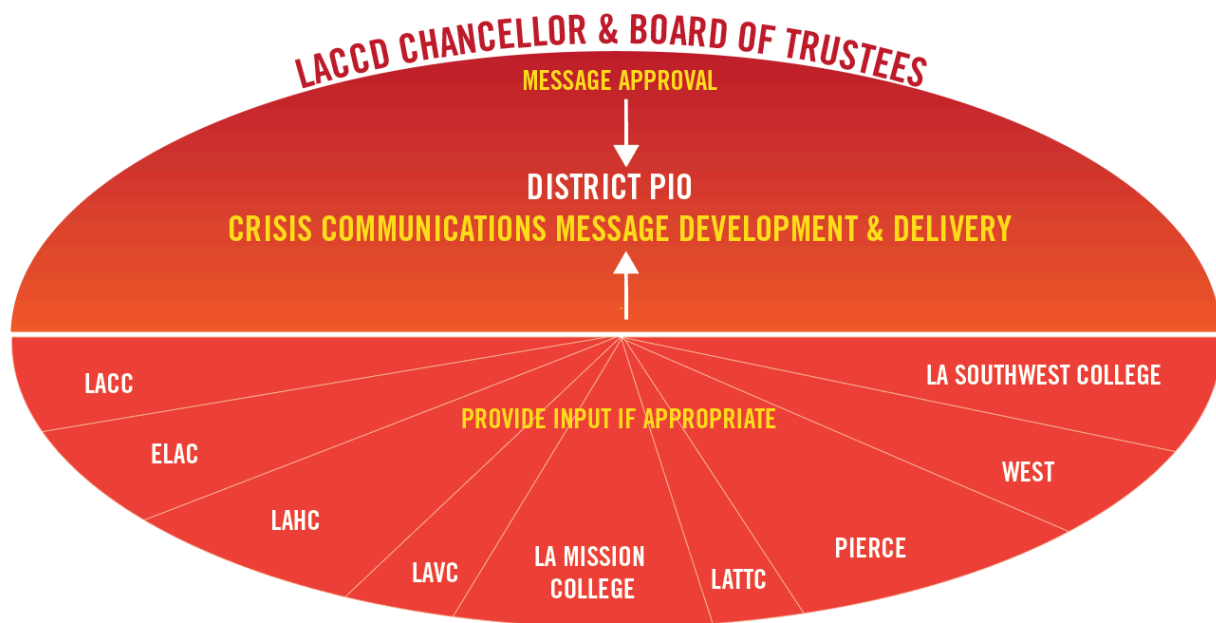
- **Crisis Priorities**.
  The order of emergency priorities for LACCD include:
    - Lifesaving/health preservation instructions
    - Emergency status information
    - Other useful information, such as:
        - Warning the public, District, Colleges of an imminent hazard
        - Providing instructions on protective actions
        - Organizing and training staff
        - Opening a Media Center
        - Coordinating information with any on-scene fire or law enforcement PIOs
        - Obtaining accurate damage assessment figures

- **Post-Crisis (Recovery) Priorities**.
  After the crisis, the District's priorities are:
    - Continuing to release appropriate information
    - Tracking progress for restoration of essential services and travel restrictions.

LACCD CHANCELLOR & BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MESSAGE APPROVAL

DISTRICT PIO
CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS MESSAGE DEVELOPMENT & DELIVERY

PROVIDE INPUT IF APPROPRIATE

LACC
ELAC
LAHC
LAVC
LA MISSION COLLEGE
LATTC
PIERCE
WEST
LA SOUTHWEST COLLEGE

We recommend one source of information and one point person for message delivery.

IX.   IMPLEMENTATION AND WORK PLAN PRIORITIES

PHASE 1: DEVELOPING THE BRAND AND COMMUNICATIONS STRUCTURE

	Tactic	Timeline	Milestones / Deliverables	Responsible
1	Develop Key Message Build key messages into every initiative that promotes LACCD and LACP	Jun / Jul / Aug	Finalize Key Message(s)	MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
2	WEBSITE(S): Review, assess, coordinate website improvements Enhance prominence of LACP on all 9 websites	Jun / Jul / Aug / Sep		MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
3	Develop reporting structure • identify members of advisory panel • roles and responsibilities • regular convenings • agenda and action plans	Jun / Jul / Aug		MarCom Steering Committee
4	Position Trustees, Chancellor, and College Presidents as Thought Leaders	Jun / Jul / Aug	Database / List of names	Imprenta
5	Identify faculty, students and alumni with compelling stories	Jun / Jul / Aug		MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
6	Identify and document student testimonials to reflect the message	Jun / Jul / Aug		MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta

7	Communications training with emphasis on Key Message and delivery for
	   o leadership
	   o communications leads
	   o staff
	   o student information teams (kiosks / online / organizations
		Jul / Aug / Sep	Provide media training	Imprenta

8	Conduct an assessment of existing collateral materials and determine whether these align with LACCD core objectives, brand vision and guidelines	Jun / July / August	Audit report	Imprenta
9	Identify and Leverage benefits and features of 9 colleges under one umbrella • transferable credits • enrollment and class availability • cross promote classes / programs • incentives for alumni to attend events at sister colleges • Strengthen internal communications among all 9 colleges.	Jul / Aug / Sep / Oct	Develop Fact Sheet	MarCom Steering Committee
10	Review / Refresh / Enhance Social Media	Aug / Sep / Oct		MarCom Steering Committee

#	Task	Timing	Vehicles	Responsible
11	Identify / develop / enhance communications vehicles	Jul / Aug / Sep	• Website • Digital / Social • Print / Broadcast • Environmental displays	MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
12	Develop a district-wide style guide	Jul / Aug / Sep		Imprenta + MarCom Steering Committee approval
13	Develop an integrated ad campaign composed of transit/outdoor, radio, tv, print, online ads to promote key message(s)	Start Jul / Aug / Sep / Oct then run in the FALL	Paid media • Radio • Online / Social • Print • Outdoor • Bus Shelter and Bus Ads • Targeted Direct Mail	Imprenta
14	Develop and maintain a master editorial calendar	Jul / Aug / Sep		Imprenta
15	Align messages with master editorial calendar	Aug / Sep / Oct		Imprenta + MarCom Steering Committee approval
16	Leverage earned media through story pitches about compelling student life / success stories	Aug / Sep / Oct then Ongoing	Media hits / interviews	Imprenta
PHASE 1 TACTICAL REVIEW – AUG 31				
17	Develop op-ed and editorial pieces on pressing issues about education and inequality	Sep / Oct / Nov then Ongoing	Media hits	MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
18	Spread key messages to students via digital and print communications	Sept / Oct then Ongoing	newsletters, e-news, video screens and school displays, live events, website, email, mobile/text, social media and in app ads	MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta support
19	Establish and maintain touch points: • digital /social • live events • print and signage • engage student groups	Oct / Nov / Dec then Ongoing		Imprenta
20	Proactive earned media	Ongoing	Media hits / interviews	Imprenta
PHASE 1 TACTICAL REVIEW – DEC 31				

21	Enhance earned media exposure through story pitches about compelling life and successes at LACCD	Jan / Feb / Mar	Media hits	Imprenta
22	Position leadership, key staff, faculty as subject matter experts to comment on issues about education on TV and radio talk shows	Jan / Feb / Mar	Media hits / interviews	Imprenta
23	Identify issues that LACCD and sister colleges can take a leadership stand on	Jan / Feb / Mar		MarCom Steering Committee
24	Keep legislators informed about LACCD's milestones and successes	Jan / Feb / Mar	• meetings with elected officials • functions for Latino, Asian, and Black Caucus	Imprenta
PHASE 1 COMPLETE + REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS – MAR 31				

PHASE 2: EXECUTE AND REFINE

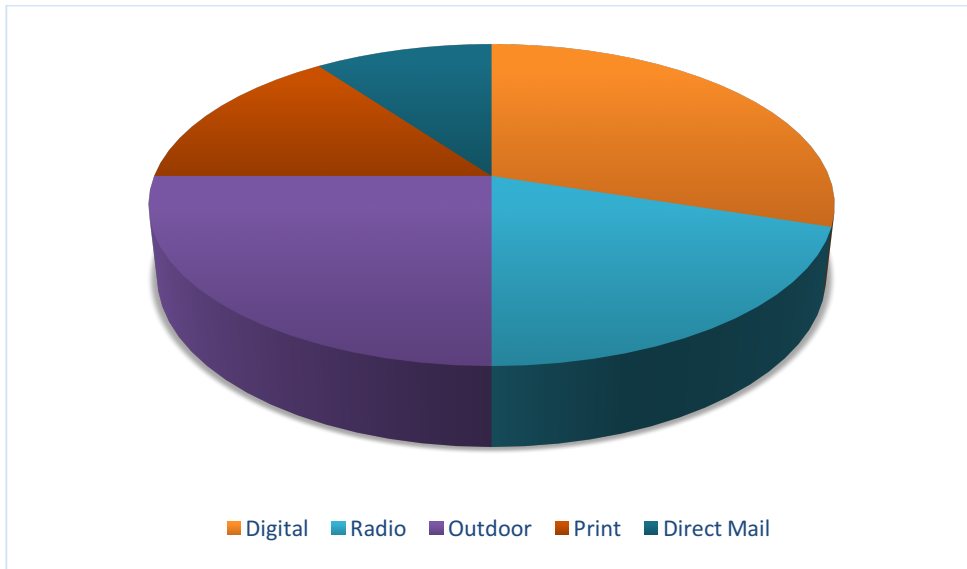| **PHASE 2**				
25	Review, update, and maintain master editorial calendar for 2018	Jan / Feb / Mar		Imprenta
26	Align messages with master editorial calendar	Jan / Feb / Mar		Imprenta + MarCom Steering Committee approval
27	SPRING QUARTER Develop an integrated ad campaign composed of transit/outdoor, radio, tv, print, online ads to promote key message(s)	Jan / Feb / Mar	Paid media • Radio • Print • Outdoor • Bus Shelter and Bus Ads • Targeted Direct Mail	Imprenta
28	Partner with tv / radio programs to sponsor/host/speak as panelists at community town halls and forums to discuss pressing socio-economic issues	Mar / Apr / May		
29	Identify and create a database of key resource/ spokespeople and influencers / areas of expertise at all levels	Mar / Apr / May		
30	Proactive earned media	Ongoing	Media hits / interviews	Imprenta
31	Develop Speakers Bureau highlighting Trustees, leadership, faculty and outstanding alumni	Mar / Apr / May		
PHASE 2 TACTICAL REVIEW – MAY 30				

32	Partner with tv / radio programs to sponsor/host/speak as panelists at community town halls and forums to discuss pressing socio-economic issues	May / Jun / Jul		
33	Review and update Key Message(s)	May / Jun / Jul		MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
34	Create LACCD broadcast channel • cable / internet TV • streaming • radio	May / Jun / Jul		
35	FALL QUARTER ADS Develop an integrated ad campaign composed of transit/outdoor, radio, tv, print, online ads to promote key message(s)	Start Jun / Aug / Sep / Oct then run in the FALL	Paid media • Radio • Print • Outdoor • Bus Shelter and Bus Ads • Targeted Direct Mail	
36	Establish and maintain touch points: • digital /social • live events • print and signage • engage student groups	Jul / Aug / Sep		Imprenta
37	Identify and document student testimonials to reflect the message	Sep / Oct / Nov		MarCom Steering Committee + Imprenta
PHASE 2 TACTICAL REVIEW – SEPT 30				
38	Proactive earned media	Ongoing	Media hits / interviews	Imprenta
39	Populate LACCD broadcast channel • cable / internet TV • streaming • radio	Ongoing		
40	Promote Speakers Bureau highlighting Trustees, leadership, faculty and outstanding alumni (anticipate graduation ceremonies for 2019)	Oct / Nov / Dec / Jan		
PHASE 2 TACTICAL REVIEW – JAN 31				

PHASE 3: AMPLIFY

PROPOSED FUTURE INITIATIVES			
Attract veterans • Back-to-College program for veterans • highlight veteran success stories • create a Veterans Communications (Advisory) council • composed of current students who are veterans • can be surrogates/echo chamber for LACCD	Prepare for 2018		
Host competitions and events – involving student groups	Prepare for 2018		
Create LACCD broadcast channel • cable / internet TV • streaming • radio	Prepare for 2018		
Become host site(s) for TedX talks	Prepare for 2018		
Create LACCD app			

X.   BUDGET

Recommended paid media allocations

- Digital – 30%
- Radio – 20%
- Outdoor – 25%
- Print – 15%
- Direct Mail – 10%

Events
Suggested $60,000 – $80,000
   o   1 in 2017
   o   2 in 2018

XI. <u>METRICS FOR SUCCESS</u>

1. Develop measures to evaluate media buys / any offers being advertised
   a. Impressions
   b. Responses to offers
   c. Attendance at events
2. Enrollments and Applications submitted
3. Philanthropic giving to LACCD and individual colleges
4. Positive News Media reports and number of impressions
   a. Impressions
5. Social media
   a. Likes, shares, clicks
   b. Responses to posts
6. Evaluate effectivity and socialization of the plan

APPENDIX A

ASSESSMENTS
KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned previously, one of Imprenta first steps was to assess the marketing and communications structure and function of the District. In doing so, we interviewed or met with representatives, communications directors/PIOs from each of the nine (9) colleges in addition to two (2) of the LACCD Board of Trustee Members. In addition to individual conversations, a larger workshop with the Communications Task Force was convened.

From these initial conversations we were able to conclude the following:

1. ***Need to have a consistent look and feel for LACCD and the 9 colleges.***
   - There is awareness that the District style/branding must be updated and compiled into a guide that is widely distributed with related training for all faculty/staff to ensure its consistent use is managed carefully by communications staff.

Recommendations:

- *Adopt a District-Wide Style Guide for Social Media and Digital Assets.* Currently, LACCD has no standards for social media or digital content across the colleges of LACCD. This decentralized approach has resulted in inconsistent results. Some colleges having a robust online presence where they interact with students and members of the surrounding communities. Other colleges have no social media strategy and no cohesive style guide for digital content creation and the use of social media. Developing basic social media and digital assets style guide that creates baseline guidelines will provide structure, guidance, and basic expectations of each of the colleges.

- *Establish Guidelines for District-Wide Social Media.* Many colleges are struggling to understand how to effectively use social media as a tool to disseminate information to current students, and to reach prospective students. And while its true that each college targets unique audiences that are diverse in ethnicity, backgrounds, and ages, social media and digital content is perhaps the lowest hanging fruit that every college can be taking advantage of with minimal cost. Still, many college representatives interviewed did not understand the best ways of using social media, and often relied on vendors for information on using social media.

- *The District must leverage a common brand while leveraging the unique cultures of each of the 9 colleges.* Insofar as it will aid in enrollment and philanthropic giving, the District may provide invaluable assistance to each of the 9 colleges by promoting enrollment District-wide. For example, students class schedules or checking quarterly grades

2. ***Improve Communications Through Collaboration and Coordination***
   - There is a clear perception of inconsistent management of communications messaging, strategy, and prioritization of tactics.
   - There is a desire among communications coordinators at the colleges to meet with their colleagues and share best practices, or coordinate using a centralized calendar.
   - Some colleges use direct mail strategies to target diverse populations, or use the college course bulletins as a way of promoting the offerings of the college.
   - There is an interest in tracking metrics and understanding how marketing efforts do/don't affect enrollment, but most communications coordinators at the colleges don't know where to begin or what metrics to track.
   - Several colleges remarked that advertising on transportation, such as LA Metro buses or trains was an effective communications strategy.

"If the timing [of media buys are] not in sync, [the colleges] are competing against each other."

"Colleges are in their own silos. Plans are dependent on enrollment: more ads because enrollment is down, or we're doing this because we've done it before."

"No one has audited themselves to see what is/isn't working. The practices need to be 2017."

"Can the District negotiate the rates and have individual colleges pick when to run their advertisement?"

"We need education and guidance on how to reach high school students."

"I saw the biggest bump when we had pure bus ads… our student body takes the bus."

"There is no correlation between any one strategy and a boost in enrollment."

Recommendations:

- *Disseminate Best Practices for External Communications.* Colleges were interested in learning what may work at other colleges within the District, but there is no established formal mechanism for communications professionals at each of the colleges to coordinate and share information. <u>Creating a community of mutual respect and learning among communications professionals will enhance a unified LACCD narrative and will better help each college conduct marketing and outreach</u>.

- *Share communications strategies District-wide*. To better coordinate external communications across the District, we recommend a District-wide Communications Advisory Group that District-wide marketing and communications support the strategic goals and objectives for both enrollment and philanthropic giving across the District. This group will also assist in the development of an annual District communications plan that will <u>coordinate media buying across the 9 colleges, and look for cost-effective strategies to leverage the buying power of the 9 colleges</u>.

- *Coordinate a District-Wide Timeline for Communications and Outreach*. In interviews with representatives from the Colleges, it was clear that each college conducting its enrollment outreach and marketing differently, and on different timelines. Indeed, some colleges maintain a team, distinct from the public affairs team, whose sole purpose is to conduct outreach for enrollment purposes. But there is no clear coordination regarding the timing of outreach and enrollment. <u>Coordinating enrollment outreach across Colleges who engage in media buying is the first step in leveraging the collective buying power of the 9 colleges.</u>

- *Coordinated marketing and media plans will result in efficiencies*. Some colleges conducted survey research to identify and refine messaging in marketing materials. While these surveys were not scientific, they provided useful information for the marketing and outreach teams at the colleges, which in turn helped them refine messages and understand how students are learning about the colleges.

- *Maintain a Master Editorial Calendar*. In interviews, college representatives remarked on the lack of support or recommended structure for organizing communications offices. A master editorial calendar can be one framework to help communications professionals understand the rhythm of communications in the District.

3. ***Identify Opportunities to Strategically Promote an LACCD Brand***
   - Sharing of faculty/staff "people stories" is a compelling method to improve morale and focus public attention on personnel beyond executive management.
   - The biggest challenge some colleges face to increasing enrollment is the perception that their college provides a second-rate education.
   - Alumni success stories are not emphasized enough in District communications tools, particularly the District website.
   - The opportunity cost of attending college is one barrier to increasing enrollment. Some students face an opportunity cost when deciding to enroll at an LACCD college: do they work a minimum wage job, or take time off to complete a degree or certificate.

> *"Students don't apply to the District; they are applying to each college with a different culture, feel, and personality. Those personalities are important and they need to be sustained."*
>
> *"Resist the desire to use a 'one size fits all' approach to a centralized communications plan… One kind of marketing does not fit each of the nine campuses. Who we are attracting and why [students are enrolling] is different [at each college]."*

Recommendations:

- *Build Key Message Development into Every Project/Issue*. All major District initiatives should have key messages. Board agenda item, which might generate media interest or be of broad interest in the community should have key messages. Individual college presidents, department heads, deans, vice presidents, and all other project management staff within each department should work with College communications staff to prepare key messages regarding their programs.

  Press releases from both the District and individual colleges should be featured prominently on the home page to contribute to the timely and current feel of the website. Attention should also be given to developing a subtle, but still unifying, branding approach that continues into each college's website that reinforces LACCD brand recognition at every level of online engagement.

4. **Digital Strategies Are Cost-Effective and Easily Scalable**
   - There is interest in a student-centered smart phone app with modules for registration, counseling appointments, and financial aid.
   - There is a strong desire among college communications coordinators for assistance with digital campaigns at each of the colleges. Some colleges have well-maintained websites and use social media platforms to promote content they generate. There is no uniformed standard for how each college handles digital content.
   - Colleges are investing in social media paid advertising and digital content promotion were impressed by the results.

"We need a District standard with the look and feel. There needs to be a banner of consistency."

"In this market, there is no one place where we can safely reach the students. We have to spread out: social media is key.

More mobile ads, some outdoor, some cable TV ads."

Recommendations:

- *Reorganize the District website to reinforce key messaging and direct students to individual colleges*. The District Website reorganization should include wide input from students, faculty, staff, and members of the public. Specific focus should be on navigation and easy access to useful information. Navigation should follow predictable rules and should feature a strong search tool. The home page should be used to focus on how District colleges benefit a diversity of individuals, and how each college serves a unique population

- *Review and coordinate web presence*. Currently there are at least 12 websites that are associated with LACCD. We recommend developing an overall strategy to enhance each site, eliminate redundancies, consolidate functions where appropriate and "cross market" individual sites with key functions and information to reinforce brand unity and build awareness about the Power of 9.

WHAT OTHER DISTRICTS ARE DOING

Marketing and Advertising Spending
- According to LACCD's finalized budget report for 2016-2017 year, the District is currently allocating $456,273 toward marketing costs.

Marketing and Communications Budget by LACCD College

COLLEGE	2016-17 FINAL BUDGET	2016-17 CURRENT BUDGET
LA City College	$4,001	$3,801
East LA College	$52,024	$37,009
LA Harbor College	$6,500	$200
LA Mission College	$25,000	$25,000
LA Pierce College	$117,056	$119,056
LA Southwest College	$100,000	$99,898
LATTC	$116,000	$116,690
LA Valley College	$25,699	$5,699
West LA College	$130,902	$171,852
TOTAL	$577,182	$579,205

Regional Community College Advertising, Marketing, Public Relations Budget

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	2015-2016 BUDGET	2016-17 BUDGET
Glendale Community College	N/A	N/A
Pasadena City College	$48,024	$84,338
Santa Monica College	$1,148,739	$1,260,231
El Camino College	$1,811,224	$2,496,832

Sources:
Pasadena City College: http://pasadena.edu/business-administrative-services/fiscal-services/docs/adopted-budgets/2016-2017/2016-17adoptbudget.pdf

Santa Monica College: (2016-17 Advertising Budget: 9% of Contracts and Services Line Item) http://www.smc.edu/BusinessServices/budget/Documents/2016-2017_%20Adopted_Budget_Report.pdf

El Camino College: http://www.elcamino.edu/administration/board/agendas/2016/ECC%20Final%20Budget%202016-17.pdf

Community College Enrollment

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	2015-16 Enrollment	2014-15 Enrollment	2013-14 Enrollment
Glendale	14,879	15,055	15,092
Pasadena	25,319	28,327	33,588
Santa Monica	33,409	33,204	33,196
El Camino College	22,654	19,163	N/A

Social Media user comparison (April 2017)

	LACCD	El Camino Community College District	Pasadena City College	Glendale Community College	Santa Monica College
Facebook Likes	582	37,159	23,795	19,080	28,214
Twitter Followers	1,210	7,710	4,626	3,076	8,996
YouTube Subscribers	N/A*	353	1,161	315	714

* LACCD does not have an official YouTube channel.

- LACCD's social media presence is lacking in comparison to other public agencies and competitor community colleges. This presents LACCD with an opportunity to push out key messaging via social media channels. Social media presents a way for LACCD to link to the 9 colleges and highlight the activities at these institutions. Social media also allows LACCD to showcase and highlight the uniqueness and culture of each individual LACCD college, and interact with key target audiences.

- **Facebook.** LACCD has multiple pages on Facebook. It is our recommendation that LACCD consolidate into one Facebook page that is used as the primary social media tool for the District. Targeting Facebook allows for much more engagement and commentary, enabling residents, students, faculty, staff and District personnel to engage and develop a relationship with LACCD.

- **Twitter**. LACCD's Twitter following is much less than its competitors. LACCD can use Twitter as a news repository and encouraging news outlets to follow. We recommend the creation of a new Twitter handle for LACCD: @LACCDNews.

- **YouTube**. LACCD currently does not have an official YouTube channel. It is our recommendation that LACCD create a YouTube channel with the primary focus of disseminating news information regarding the District and each of the 9 colleges. Content for this channel can be driven by the individual colleges and the Board of Trustees.