Communications Handbook

Office of the Provost
Strategic Communications

University of Pittsburgh
Office of the Provost

Who We Are

Effective communication with any audience means planning and implementing creative strategies to maximize your message.

Strategic Communications leads the overarching communications and visibility strategy for the Office of the Provost; advances key priorities of the Provost to broad and diverse audiences; and connects those priorities to larger local, regional, and national conversations.

We also manage the daily operation of the office's central communications channels, including websites and social media accounts; guide media engagement; and provide strategic and executive communications counsel.

Our overall focus spans:

- Strategic marketing/communications counsel and collaboration with partners across campus
- Media relations and crisis communications expertise
- Writing and editorial development
- Management of a range of social channels and content that drives engagement
- Oversight of video, photography, and audio content
- Design for creative collateral
- Analytics for websites, social media, and email

Strategic Communications expertise within the Office of the Provost includes Associate Provost for Strategic Communications Louise Cavanaugh Sciannameo, Communications Director Amy Woodall, and Digital Project Manager Olivia Albert.

Reach Out to Us

For our colleagues in the Office of the Provost, we work in partnership with you to conceptualize, write, design, plan and execute your project within University brand guidelines.

Include our team early on in the planning of your initiatives, programs, events, and projects when you know a communications plan will be needed. This helps us to have a fuller understanding of the scope of the project itself, as well as to be aware early on of the timeline, milestones, and overall expectations.

Contact Us

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Louise Cavanaugh Sciannameo
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Amy Woodall
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Feeling Unsure? Come to Us First

If you're uncertain whether the project you're considering should come to us, you should still reach out. If it's not something we can handle ourselves, we can advise you about who can.

What We Do

The following pages outline some of the specific ways our award-winning, professional team can assist you.

Project Collaboration

Brand and Identity Guidance:
University marks and "logos," unit and sub-brand marks, brand colors and fonts, office-branded PowerPoint templates

Content Development:
Editorial consulting, writing, editing, proofreading, University style alignment

Crisis Communications:
Managing office responses that are sensitive, urgent, or challenging in nature

Event Collateral:
Coordination of invitations, programs, signage, banner stands, posters, table drapes

Leadership, Executive, and Unit Communications:
Announcements, dedicated messaging, newsletters, media availability and visibility

Media Relations:
Strategy, content development, placement, inquiry response management with internal and external partners

Project Management:
Scheduling, timelines and calendars, monitoring deadlines and deliverables, coordination with UCM

Project Strategy and Consultation:
Your trusted advisor during creative planning, development and execution

Publications and Graphic Design:
Brochures, flyers, programs, reports, pamphlets

Digital Marketing / Media

Accessibility Strategies:
Ensure inclusive user experience for web content and digital documents

Campaign and Website Analytics:
Reporting on social and newsletter or email activity and engagement as well as search, traffic, and engagement for websites

Campus Digital Screens:
Preparation of graphics and distribution to screen manager networks

Email Messaging:
Copywriting, editorial review of unit newsletters and mass communications, Campaign Monitor management

Multimedia Planning and Coordination:
Podcast development and management, photography, video

Online Content:
Events calendar listings, including ticketing and registration; website carousel features; online programs; accolades

Social Media:
Strategy and planning, content development, social graphics, scheduling, execution, management

QR Codes:
Generate targeted codes with ability to track scans and usage

Websites:
New site and page construction, maintenance and updates, targeted content development, search optimization

Come Prepared!

To help us help you, here are a few things to think about when preparing to discuss an upcoming project.

Be prepared to share information about:

- ✓ What your project is about and why it's needed
- ✓ The format/channels you're interested in, if you know; otherwise, leave that up to us!
- ✓ The intended audience: Who are we talking to?
- ✓ The intended message to the audience: What needs to be said?
- ✓ Specific details that should be included in messaging
- ✓ Your thoughts on overall look and possible graphics
- ✓ Key desired takeaway(s) for your audiences
- ✓ Desired calls to action, if applicable
- ✓ Expected results of campaign or outreach
- ✓ Timelines and due dates: When does it need to be sent, published, or available?
- ✓ Key people who should review proofs

Take Note:

If you get a query from the media, let Louise Sciannameo know before you respond.

Materials Guidelines

Content Tips

- ✓ Provide your text content to us in a Word document.
- ✓ The text you provide us should be as complete as possible. Later rewrites, content additions, and additional review cycles will extend the delivery time for the final piece.
- ✓ Keep "Track Changes" on during the editing and review processes.

Image Tips:

- ✓ Don't download images from other websites for use.
- ✓ Provide high-resolution (300-dpi) artwork and photos for print projects.
- ✓ For digital projects, make sure your images are large enough (file size and dimensions) to reproduce well.
- ✓ Submit images as individual files—not embedded in a Word file.
- ✓ Don't have photos? We'll source University-owned photos or licensed stock photography for your project needs.
- ✓ Using a QR code? They're best applied for access on the go or when users are away from their computers. In emails and on social posts and webpages, stick with the classic hyperlink.
- ✓ Use of the University Seal and Pitt Script spirit mark are reserved for particular applications and audiences. Use the shield and signature institutional mark instead.

Allow Enough Time

There's always a lot going on in the Office of the Provost, so make sure you plan ahead for any projects. Keep the timelines below in mind.

If your project will require graphic design and print production, please be sure to build in time for the whole process, from design request to delivery.

Note: Italicized items below indicate those that will likely have involvement by University Communications and Marketing.

These time frames should be considered estimates. And don't forget: The number of rewrites and other revisions requested during the proofing review process can extend this time.

Turnaround time for items with asterisks (*) may be affected by amount of content provided.

Same Day-1 Day
Event calendar posting
QR codes
Social post
Webpage updates

1-3 Days
Campus digital screens
Editing, proofreading*
Flyers
Graphics
Invitations
Online program
Webpages (new)*
Writing*

2 Weeks
Posters
Wordmarks and iconography

2-3 Weeks
Pamphlets
Postcards
Programs
Signs (large, with foam-core backing)

3 Weeks
Brochures

3-4 Weeks
Banner stands (retractable)

4-8 Weeks
Reports*

8-12 Weeks
Websites (new)*

Brand Resources

Sometimes you may decide to create a quick informal report or graphic yourself. You'll still want to make sure it aligns with the Pitt brand and uses approved assets. Please share with us for review, or follow the instructions provided at brand.pitt.edu. Some useful items there include:

University Writing Style Manual

Following the University's writing style helps to ensure consistency in communications across departments, offices and schools.

University PowerPoint Templates

Three University Powerpoint presentation templates are available for download—but come to us for the approved Office of the Provost versions!

Institutional Marks

If you download the "shield and signature" mark (aka the "logo"), make sure you refer to the Brand Guidelines PDF to understand the right way to use which visual identity marks, including position, size, and other details.

The Office of the Provost's formal unit mark and sub-brand marks are available by request from our Strategic Communications team.

Visual Identity

Find the official color palettes to support Pitt's brand identity. For example:

Pitt Royal = HEX #003594

Pitt Gold = HEX #FFB81C

Current Messaging Channels

Newsletters

Faculty Affairs, Faculty Advancement and Leadership Development | Faculty and Leaders Forward | Graduate Studies | HAIL Connects | Pre-Health Resource Center | Student Success (Undergraduate Studies) | University Educational Outreach Center

Podcast

From the Office of the Provost

Social

Facebook: /PittFALD • /PittEOC

Instagram: @pittprovost • @pitteducationaloutreach • @pittfacultydevelopment • @pittgradstudies • @pittstudentsuccesshub

LinkedIn: University of Pittsburgh Office of the Provost • Pitt Faculty Advancement and Leadership Development • University of Pittsburgh Graduate Studies • University of Pittsburgh Hub for AI and Data Science Leadership (HAIL) • Universitiy of Pittsburgh Mentoring & Advising

TikTok: @pitteoc

X: @pittprovost • @pittFALD • @pittgradstudies

Websites

provost.pitt.edu • aihub.pitt.edu • art.pitt.edu • eoc.pitt.edu • facultydevelopment.pitt.edu • facultyhandbook.pitt.edu • facultyunionization.pitt.edu • gradstudentunionization.pitt.edu • gradstudies.pitt.edu • ir.pitt.edu • pathways.pitt.edu • postdoc.pitt.edu • studentsuccess.pitt.edu • sustainabilityinstitute.pitt.edu • tutor.pitt.edu • undergradstudies.pitt.edu