SOUTH DAKOTA MINES

An engineering, science and technology university

Marketing & Communications

Guide

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SOUTH DAKOTA MINES
Marketing & Communications Department Guide

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The Marketing & Communications (MC) office promotes the academic reputation of South Dakota Mines and tells the Mines story to all audiences through online media, social media, the Hardrock magazine, print materials, video, and the website. We can't do it alone. Our goal is to collaborate with departments across the campus community to share what makes South Dakota Mines great and inspire students to earn their degree(s) here.

This guide outlines ways we can work together.

MC's priorities are to increase brand awareness, support recruitment and enrollment needs, and support the president's office. All job requests are funneled through these priorities and scheduled accordingly. Job requests may be rescheduled to fulfill the most pressing priorities.

We also provide a number of services that are designed to increase success for you and your department. On the one hand, the marketing of today's world is much more affordable for smaller institutions such as ours. On the other hand, it has become much more complex with multiple potential channels and mediums that can be used. Below, we have outlined the kinds of services that we can provide to you along with some information as to potential marketing tools that we can use. We have included guidelines and checklists that can help assure that we can be of maximum benefit to you.

RNL

TOP 10 MOST EFFECTIVE OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND TACTICS FOR RECRUITMENT/MARKETING

We asked respondents to rate 17 outreach strategies for recruitment and marketing. The following are the **10 most effective strategies** and how they compare to our 2018 results.

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Email communications	98%	93%	100%	100%
Mobile responsive website	91%	95%	90%	100%
Text messaging	60%	96%	86%	100%
Videos embedded on your website	83%	97%	98%	98%
Virtual tours	60%	75%	98%	98%
In-person meetings (on and off campus)	98%	100%	98%	98%
Digital advertising	91%	95%	96%	98%
Online chat	51%	75%	73%	97%
Publications (student marketing search pieces, view book, etc.)	98%	93%	98%	96%
Social media	98%	87%	98%	96%

Objective: Implementing the university brand

Our brand is our identity. It is our public image and reputation. It is communicated through our media messaging, trademarked logos, name, and the story telling we use to distinguish and differentiate ourselves from other universities. We have recently completed a branding study and have developed branding guidelines to assure that we project a clear and unified image to our public. It is important to follow our brand guidelines which are essential in establishing our brand and creating brand integrity. While we are part of individual departments with individual identities, each is part of one entity – the university. The brand guidelines provide the guidance needed to stay in compliance with our brand. We encourage you to become familiar with these guidelines and to share with student groups who may want to create a logo, purchase merchandise, or create documents. They too are required to follow the university brand.

Our brand voice is how we talk about ourselves and the selling points that make our university unique. When talking with prospective students, we ask that you weave in the main points which have come out of our ongoing marketing research and are highlighted here: https://brand.sdsmt.edu/messaging/enrollment-campaign-overview/ and in Appendix D.

MC provides these branding services:

- Review of design, documents, swag, messaging, etc. that use university trademarks, colors, etc. to ensure brand is used appropriately.
- Provide direction on using licensed vendors - https://brand.sdsmt.edu/applications/licensed-vendors/

Cost: No cost at this time.

Getting started:

- Before ordering anything with the university name, logo or colors consult the brand guidelines. Contact MC if you have questions, marketing@sdsmt.edu.

Objective: Grow awareness and interest in your programs through advertising

Higher education is a very competitive landscape. Nationally, the number of high school graduates is declining. Other universities and state systems offer attractive scholarship packages and tuition discounts. There are many institutions in South Dakota and surrounding states that are recruiting the same students we are.

The advertising landscape is very diverse with multiple ways to reach your audience. The space is crowded and noisy, requiring multiple efforts to garner attention. Also be aware that, for advertising to be successful, a minimum level of saturation must be achieved or it will be a waste of money. We will work with you to determine an appropriate critical mass for a given type of advertising program.

MC provides these services:

- Developing an online advertising campaign based on your budget. See Appendix A "How Online Advertising Works" for more information.
- Assist you in vetting print advertising opportunities to reach target audiences.
- Assist you in vetting other traditional advertising options such as billboards and radio.
- Work with you to create content and design for your ads.

Cost:

- Cost of advertising is absorbed by your department. This will vary depending on factors such as platform, target audience, timeline, and competition. We recommend a campaign run no less than 3 months.
- Minimum budget for Google ads: $1000 per month.
- Minimum budget for social media ads: $1000 per month.
- Print advertising varies considerably by publication. Example: Lincoln High School (Sioux Falls) student magazine = $300 for a half page ad. South Dakota Magazine half-page ad is $900.

- Billboards vary depending on static vs digital and location. For example, an 8-week digital board campaign in Sioux Falls costs ~$2,800. A static billboard on I-29 is ~$10,000 for 12 months.

Getting started:

- Consider who your target audience is and where we can find them (states, regions, high schools, universities, organizations).
- For online advertising, identify what keywords might your target audience be using to find information about your program.
- Identify what makes your program different from the competition.
- Have a ballpark idea of what kind of budget you can spend.
- Gather photos or videos that show your faculty, staff, or students in action. Make sure the people in the photos have given permission to be included in advertising. An image release form can be found here: https://brand.sdsmt.edu/visual-design/photography/
- Once you've gathered this information, send a job request to MC.

From Ruffalo Noel Levitz "2020 Marketing & Recruitment Practices for Undergraduate Students"

ADVERTISING STRATEGIES: PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018		2020	
	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE	USED	SOMEWHAT OR VERY EFFECTIVE
Online display advertising	84%	89%	90%	98%
Search engine marketing (such as Google advertising)	67%	87%	88%	98%
Re-targeted ads that appear on other websites after students visit your campus website	71%	91%	81%	97%
Social media advertising	78%	86%	96%	96%
Video advertising (YouTube, Streaming TV)	N/A	N/A	73%	94%
Television ads	48%	64%	63%	80%
Billboard, bus, or other outdoor advertising	62%	64%	79%	79%
Print media ads	87%	65%	79%	76%
Radio ads	67%	53%	65%	71%

Objective: Create awareness of research happening in your department

The innovative research being conducted at Mines is important for the future of societies that span the globe. It is also a contributor of the economic development in our area, state, region, and beyond. When researchers are ready to reveal their discoveries, MC can help tell the story. We can work to get it distributed to various media outlets and trade publications and share it with our own social media and internal audiences. In marketing terminology, getting publication in media outlets and trade publications is know as "earned media" because you don't have to pay for such publicity. Earned media serves as a complement to paid media (advertising) and can be considered part of a broader marketing effort for our department.

MC provides these services:
- Meet with researchers to develop the story about research awards, developments, discoveries, and current or potential impacts.
- Take photos and/or capture video of the research
- Determine best avenues to share the story – press release, social media, Hardrock article, research blog – and push news out accordingly.

Cost: No cost at this time.

Getting started:
- Complete the News Checklist found in Appendix B.
- Gather any photos or videos your researchers have taken that can help tell the story.
- Determine who will be interviewed for the story and who will do follow-up interviews with media.
- Determine if photos or video are needed/allowed.
- Once you've gathered this information, send a job request to MC.

Objective: Nurture students who have expressed an interest in your program

MC can help you develop a communication plan to reach prospective students interested in your program(s). We can also help develop professionally branded materials to hand out to your visitors. Your department materials should have a cohesive branded look and message which gives students and their parents a positive impression of not only your program but the university in general.

MC provides these services:
- Develop content for emails, mailers, and handouts to prospective students.
- Provide graphic design for mailers, brochures, and handouts.

- Provide specifications for print pieces in order to get print quotes.
- Social media takeovers and posts that highlight student-run organizations related to your department and the fun aspects of STEM.

Costs:

- We recommend professionally printing brochures and postcards. Costs will vary based on quantity and size of pieces. Single sheet handouts can typically be printed in house if you have a quality color printer. We recommend 80# matte finish paper stock for a more professional-looking piece.
  - ◊ Cost Estimates (*not official quotes*) for a quantity of 250
    - » Brochures: $563
    - » Postcards: $92
    - » Flyers: $84
    - » Posters (11x17): $169
- Email communications can be sent via Slate at no cost. Slate is an automated marketing system that can be set up to send out periodic email communications to prospective students to help stay in communication with them and further engage them in your program. This must be coordinated with admissions, but we can assist you with that.

Getting started:

- Determine your goal: reaching out to prospective students, improving your visit information pieces, etc.
- Contact admissions to discuss reaching out to your prospective student base.
- Determine how you want to reach your student base (email, mail, phone, social media).
- Consider different age groups and messaging to each. For example, reach out to high school seniors with a message about your department scholarships.
- If you want a mailer or brochure, determine the selling points of your program, what makes it unique and differentiated from other programs (such as student/teacher connection, curriculum, industry engagement), quotes from students, examples of faculty with industry experience, successful alumni.

From Ruffalo Noel Levitz "2020 Marketing & Recruitment Practices for Undergraduate Students"

USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media tools used to engage prospective students

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	2018 USED	2020 USED
Instagram	79%	90%
Facebook	94%	88%
YouTube	72%	84%
Twitter	87%	80%
Snapchat	49%	52%
LinkedIn	26%	31%
Pinterest	6%	9%

Objective: Keep your website up-to-date and SEO friendly

The university website is our #1 marketing tool. It's imperative that web pages are up-to-date and contain content that students are seeking out. This will not only help students learn about why they should attend Mines but will also help your program improve search engine optimization (SEO) rankings.

MC provides these services:
- Training your department staff on how to use the website editor in order to make updates to your pages. Training is available online and in person if needed.
- If your editor cannot make certain changes to your web pages, our team will make the updates.
- Assistance in SEO-friendly content development.
- Requests for websites outside the scope of the university website are not supported by MC. Currently, ITS and MC are discussing options for a free, user-friendly website builder where faculty or researchers can create personal websites for research, conferences, events, etc.

Costs: No cost at this time.

Getting started:
- To begin the process to gain publisher access to the Content Management System (CMS), submit a job request.
- Review your website on a regular basis (we suggest once a semester) and if your department publisher cannot make needed updates, submit a job request.

Objective: Develop professional communications for your campus community audience

When sharing events, speaker series, announcements, etc. with the campus community you want your pieces to look professional and to be on brand. The MC department has created several branded templates to help you create flyers, TV signage, and PowerPoint presentations. These are found on the Marketing & Communications website.

Cost:
- Printing costs are absorbed by your department. An estimated cost to professionally print 250 single-sided flyers is $84.

Getting started:
- From the template page on the website, choose a format that works best for your project.
- Remember that less information is better. People don't read flyers, signs, etc. with excessive content. Keep language simple and to the point.

- Check our [Flickr site](#) for photos.
- Have a better-quality paper on hand (80# matte finish is a nice option). Check what your printer can handle.

Objective: Recognition of student, faculty, staff, or alumni success by sharing the joy of STEM

There are a lot of great stories happening every day on this campus. From CAMP team competitions to faculty awards to our alumni making an impact, these stories help build our reputation and show the world what can be accomplished at this amazing regional STEM university. Furthermore, market research shows that prospective students want to see the "fun" they can have in college. And potential students will relate to stories about current students. Any photos or videos showing students engaged in STEM research can benefit your department, the university as a whole, and our overall effort to bring more students to STEM.

MC provides these services:
- Pitch your news to our communications team by providing basic information that would be included in a press release. See Appendix B "News Checklist".
- The MC team will vet the story for coverage in news media and/or social media.
- MC will coordinate requests from the media with subject matter experts.
- MC will prep the interviewees for media interviews.
- MC has a social media series called #RockinBosses that features alumni who have achieved success in their careers. If you know of any alumni who have advanced in their career, invented a new product, patented intellectual property, etc. please send their contact information to Lynn.TaylorRick@sdsmt.edu and she will follow up with them.
- The MC team can help craft social media posts telling your story across multiple social media platforms with a combined following of more than 70,000.
- MC will promote and share photos / videos of your students engaged in STEM research or classwork via our social media platforms.

Cost: No cost at this time.

Getting started:
- Consider what newsworthy things are happening in your department and determine what you want people to know about.
- Complete the News Checklist in Appendix B.
- Gather photos or videos your faculty, staff, or students have taken that have permission to be used for promotional purposes.
- Submit this checklist through a [job request](#).

Note: If your department has its own social media pages, be sure posts are made regularly. We encourage users to follow [these guidelines](#).

Objective: Create a video that highlights your program(s)

Video is an important medium because studies show that students utilize YouTube (video) searches more extensively than Google searches. Starting in November 2020, MC has a full-time videographer on staff. Recruitment and enrollment projects are the top priority. Creating a video is a time-intensive process, requiring planning and preparation before the video shoot can begin. The time from a video shoot to final product can take 6-8 weeks. For this reason, expect a significant wait time for your video request to be honored.

MC provides these services:
- Upon receiving your request for video, MC will follow up with planning documentation to identify purpose, expectations, storyline, and resources.
- Once planning documentation is received by MC, a meeting will be set to confirm video details and timelines.
- Video equipment, video recording, editing, and production.
- Provide final video for department use.
- Host video on University's YouTube.
- Share on university social media if applicable.
- If MC cannot meet your timeline, we will recommend freelance videographers in the area.

Cost:
- All standard services are provided at no cost at this time.
- Special equipment or resources specific to the department will be the cost of your department.

Getting started:
- Complete the Video Checklist found in Appendix C
- Determine the video's purpose.
- Identify the target audience.
- Identify the key message.
- Identify the call to action.
- Make a list of shots you want to get (labs, classrooms, project areas).
- Confirm a group of students and/or staff to be involved/featured in the video.
- Decide how and where this video will be used (in advertising, on your website, social media, email, etc.)

Appendix A

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How Online Advertising Works

There are multiple online advertising platforms including: Google, Social Media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat), Connected TV (Hulu, Sling, Pluto, Amazon), music streaming services (Spotify, Pandora), gaming services (Twitch). Costs vary considerably among the different platforms as does how advertising can be measured. There are also opportunities to work directly with organizations to advertise on their websites (news media, lead generators like Niche and Cappex, industry sites).

Cost

Costs vary depending on platform, target audience, timeline, and competition. If you are interested in online advertising, we will consult with our agency to create a platform and budget recommendation. It is very helpful to know your budget range up front to provide a practical recommendation. A recommended budget is $1000/month for Google and $1000/month for social media ads for a campaign that runs no less than 3 months.
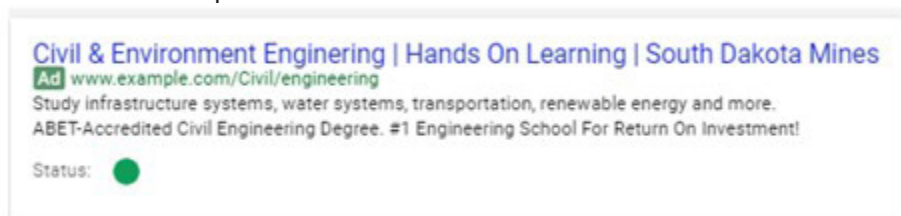
University Campaigns

Currently, MC works with the enrollment management team and the president to determine how the Marketing & Communications advertising budget will be allocated.

In FY21, the budget is being spent in the following ways with ads shown in our eight target states – SD, MN, IA, NE, ND, CO, MT, WY:

Google Search Ads: Depending on multiple variables, these ads will show up 1) at the top of the page, 2) on page 1, or 3) in a visible location on the search page when searched for – the frequency of our ads showing up is based on the amount of impression share we can afford which is also affected by competition. We are running ads for low share/high demand programs and those with greatest potential for growth: Biomedical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Pre-Med. Each search ad has keywords attached to it. These keywords are reviewed regularly to determine if they are positively influencing ad performance.

Search ad example:

Civil & Environment Enginering | Hands On Learning | South Dakota Mines
Ad www.example.com/Civil/engineering
Study infrastructure systems, water systems, transportation, renewable energy and more.
ABET-Accredited Civil Engineering Degree. #1 Engineering School For Return On Investment!

Status:

Google Display Ads: The Google Display Network reaches 90% of internet users worldwide, across millions of websites, news pages, blogs and Google sites like Gmail and YouTube. We are running a brand campaign for general university awareness. We are using this format to create brand awareness and are targeting individuals who have expressed an interest in STEM. We are also using this format with a specific campaign to names admissions has purchased.

Display ad example:

Retargeting ads: These ads are served through the Google Display Network to people who visit our website. Retargeting means that once they have visited our site, our ads will continue to pop up at other websites that they visit. We run ads with what are known as "calls-to-action" (for example: Schedule a Visit). This helps to move students through what is known as the recruitment funnel - explore degrees, schedule a visit, request info, and apply. We are able to take prospect lists from Slate and add them into the retargeting pool in order to serve ads directly to those who have previously expressed interest in the university to help nurture them through the funnel.
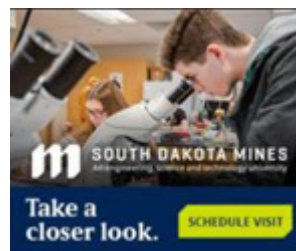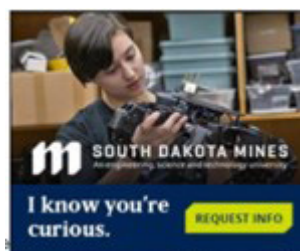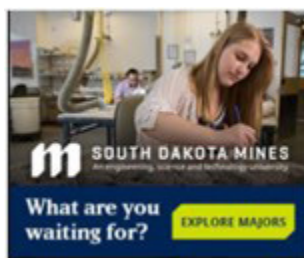
Facebook/Instagram/YouTube ads: These platforms perform well because of the high volume of followers they have. According to RNL, these platforms are used for college search while other social media platforms are used for awareness building. In a perfect world, we would use all but we put our budget toward what we can afford and where we can best track performance. Ads can be targeted based on interests and geographies and look-alike audiences can be created from an existing prospect list (from Slate). Facebook is also a good place to reach the influential parent market. Facebook and Instagram ads can be static photos, carousel ads, or video.

This is a Facebook carousel ad:
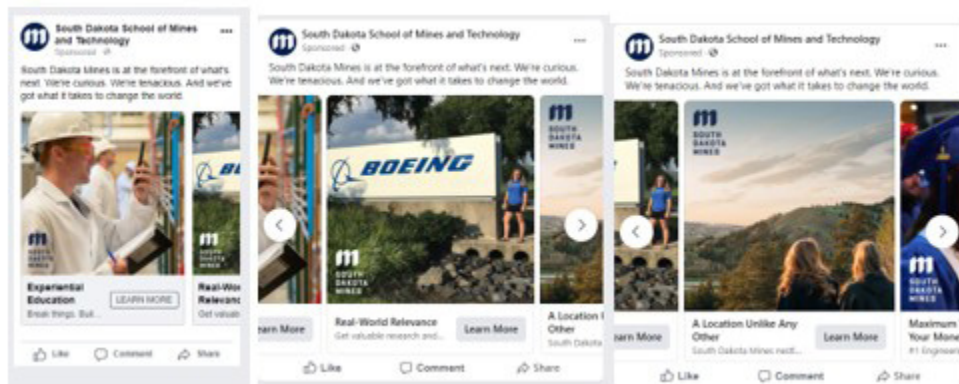
YouTube ads are primarily video ads although you can run a display ad in the suggested video column. We are running video ads and are experimenting with the display option.

Video ads can be :15, :30 or longer. For ads :30 or less, you are charged only if the viewer watches the whole video. For ads :30 or more, you are charged once the viewer watches for at least :30.

Geotargeted Ads: Ads can be directed at individuals who are located in a specific geographic target. For example, we target ads to specific high schools in Eastern South Dakota and ads are served to those who are at the school at least four days a week. These ads are served primarily through mobile apps. Geotargeting can generally be done on any location. For example, if you want to target specific companies to market an online grad degree or specific universities to market a graduate program, this is the way to do it.
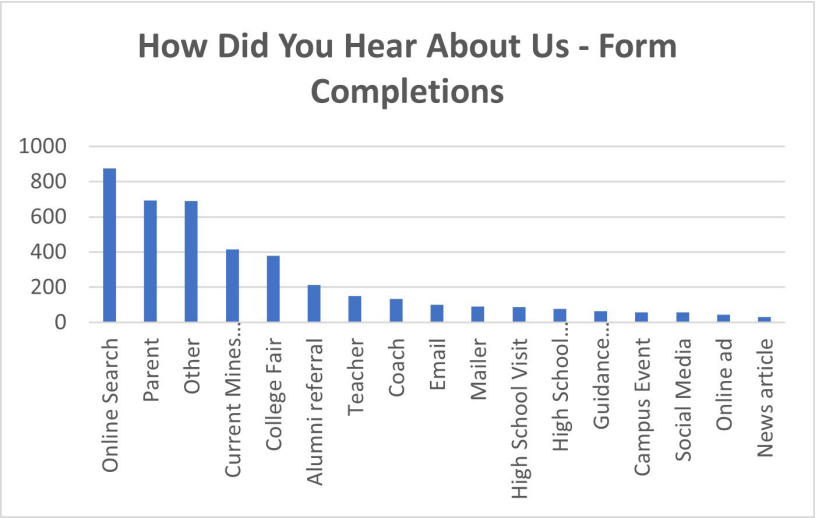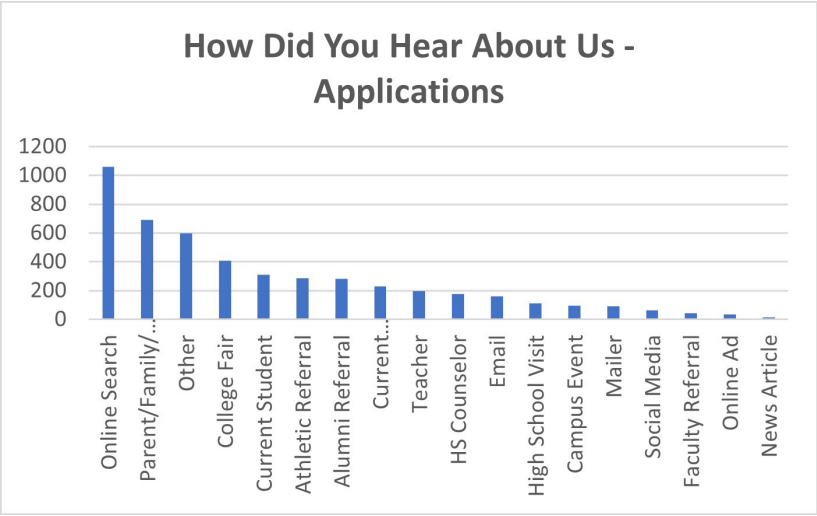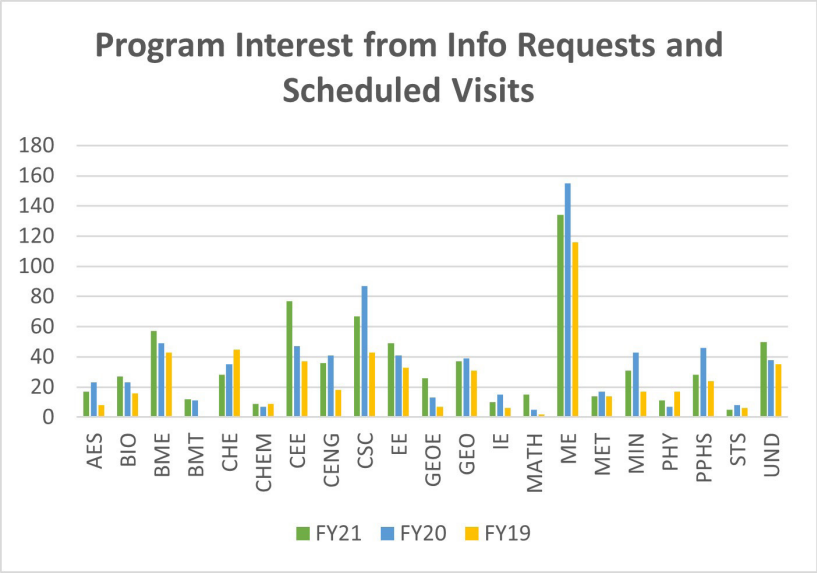
Geotarget ad example:

How Ad Performance is Measured

Direct attribution: We can measure if a user completes a goal once they click an ad. Our goals include schedule a visit, complete an info request form, and apply button clicks.

Indirect attribution: Not everyone will complete a goal when they click on an ad. To provide some insights, we pull reports from Slate for visits scheduled, info requests, and applications.

Other things we look at are the number of stealth applications received (meaning we did not have the student in our system until they submitted an application) and answers to the How Did You Hear About Us question on the visit and info request forms, and the application.

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Program Interest from Info Requests and Scheduled Visits

How Did You Hear About Us - Applications

How Did You Hear About Us - Form Completions

Appendix B

News Checklist

Topic / title / headline:

Who is involved:

What is happening:

When is this happening:

Why is this happening:

Where is this happening:

Other important points of the story:

If this is a research story, awarding organization (NSF, DOD, Epscor) and the award amount, and website address.

Expectation of the research grant:

Quote(s) from those involved:

Appendix C

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Video Checklist

Please complete this checklist in full. This helps our videographer and team to schedule and prepare for your video project.

1. **Purpose of Video (include how this meets objectives of the university's strategic plan):**

2. **Target Audience (who is this video for):**

3. **Decide how and where this video will be used (in advertising, on your website, social media, email, etc.):**

4. **Key Messages (Please provide lots of details. This helps develop the storyline which is critical in determining what type of shots are needed for the video):**

5. **Who will be in the video (students, faculty, staff, alumni):**

6. **Call to Action (what action do you want someone to take as a result of this video):**

7. **Look and Feel (casual, funny, serious, informational):**

If you have examples of other videos that you like the style of, please include links to them:

Video requests are prioritized based on the video's strategic plan objective and when the request was received. The timeline to produce a video can be 6-8 weeks from the time it is started.

Quick turn-around videos that target students or prospective students can often be done via Snapchat or TikTok by student workers. Let us know if this alternate option would suit your goals.

Appendix D

Core Messaging Points

STEM Education With Real-World Relevance

Our programs emphasize hands-on learning in maker spaces and labs that feature the same equipment you'll use on the job. Break things. Build things. Then get paid to do it professionally. Want to test-drive your future career while you're still in school? We can help you connect with valuable research and internship opportunities in the local area and beyond.

Here, You're Never a Number

A world-class education calls for faculty who are excellent instructors—and exceptional mentors too. At South Dakota Mines, you'll benefit from small class sizes and ample face time with experienced professors who are every bit as invested in your success as you are. With their extensive knowledge, personalized guidance and valuable industry connections at your disposal, you'll have all the support you'll need to bring your goals to life.

A Location Unlike Any Other

There's a reason the Black Hills attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. There's tons to see and do! Our campus is nestled in the eastern slope of the Black Hills, just minutes away from the vibrant streets of Rapid City. Walk or bike downtown to grab a bite with friends, check out the local shops or put your puzzle-solving skills to the test at an escape room. Want to get away from it all for a while? Embark on an outdoor adventure in Badlands National Park or the Black Hills National Forest, where you can enjoy hiking, biking, fishing, skiing, snowboarding, rock climbing, hunting, kayaking, trail riding and so much more.

Maximum Value for Your Money

South Dakota Mines students get hired—often before they've even finished school. Our graduates have an average starting salary of $66,516, so you can be sure that you'll get an excellent return on your college investment.

Collaboration Over Competition

Students at South Dakota Mines are smart, but nobody's perfect. We believe that with cooperation and support for one another, we can empower every member of our campus community to reach their full potential.

Appendix E

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What High School Students (and their parents) Want to Know

Students
- The kinds of experiences they will have in the classroom/on campus
- Activities can they get involved in / social life
- What its like to live on campus
- Things to do off campus / location
- Details about academic programs
- A feel for the school and how they will fit in
- Affordability / Scholarships
- Program rankings
- Path to a finding a career
- Job placement and outcomes

Parents

All of the above, plus:
- Health and safety
- Academic performance
- Services available