

# Summary of the Organizational and Operational Review of VT's Marketing and Communications function

Virginia Tech engaged Segal to perform an operational and organizational assessment of the communications and marketing function at the University

This assessment included over 140 individual interviews of those working directly for University Relations, those performing communications and marketing work for various academic and administrative units, leaders and “customers” throughout the University, and various external stakeholders. Segal also conducted a survey of 86 other individuals who devote some portion of their day-to-day responsibilities to communications and marketing activities.

The overwhelming view uncovered from the review is that University Relations is a high performing and well-respected unit within the University, led by a highly competent communications professional with deep skills and experiences

- More broadly, the review revealed that the University employs many skilled communications and marketing professionals, with some reporting into University Relations and others that do not
  - The result is an organizational model that produces inconsistencies across the University and an unevenness in the quality and effectiveness of the communications and marketing function
- **The review found that University stakeholders are seeking the following:**
  - Continued support and recognition of the extraordinary results achieved by University Advancement enabled by the advancement model
  - Greater balance of internal and external communications
  - Better alignment of messages (both externally and internally) across the University to present a more united and consistent front
  - Balanced distribution of communications and marketing resources throughout the University that reduces pockets of resource scarcity, and improves levels of sophistication and expertise
  - Increased nimbleness and agility to match the complex and frequently changing environment
  - Improved structures and processes to meet the growing expectations of university communications and marketing “customers” and Virginia Tech audiences
  - Improved recognition of the strategic importance that communications and marketing plays in the development and execution of the University’s overall mission and vision
- **With these goals and objectives in mind, the following recommendation were advanced for consideration:**
  - Restructure the current role of Senior Associate Vice President of University Relations so that it reports dually to the University President with a functional reporting line to the Vice President of Advancement.
    - Elevate the role to the level of Vice President to support the importance of the role and to seat University Relations properly as a peer and member of the President’s Cabinet.
  - Provide an option to College Deans who currently have an embedded Director of Communications within their College to alter the reporting relationship of the embedded Director from the Chief Advancement Officer and University Relations to the Dean and University Relations
  - Create a new role within University Relations to better organize and align activities and efforts among Directors of Communications
  - Design a path for aligning marketing and communications objectives, roles and activities
  - Create a comprehensive 5-year marketing and communications vision and strategy through the development of a university-wide Communications Master Plan

An **Implementation Team** commissioned by the President and the Vice President of Advancement and led by the current Senior AVP, should be charged with developing and implementing the necessary details required to accomplish these recommendations