Connections Working Group Recommendations (Results of 12/8/10 meeting)

I. Reorganization of Marketing and Online Communication

1) Recommendation:

Reorganize current advertising/marketing structure to create an Office of Integrated Marketing drawn from the offices of University Relations, Publications, and Technology Services. This office will be led by and staffed by experts in marketing and online communication. It is recommended that the director be a cabinet level position. This office will ensure that all areas of campus are providing a consistent and engaging message through the most effective and up to date electronic, print, and other media. The office will be responsible for the overall maintenance of the university’s web site and other online communications as well as print materials. Departments on campus will connect with this office as follows:

a) Every unit/academic department/office (hereon referred to as unit) at the university will identify a marketing/online communication administrator from within their unit who will serve as the liaison between their unit and the Office of Integrated Marketing. This could be an administrative assistant, a faculty member, a marketing intern, or any other designee suitable to that unit. They will be responsible for the following:

- Keeping the information on their unit’s website and other forms of online media current
- Regularly providing the Office of Integrated Marketing with notable announcements, events, initiatives, accolades, etc. from within their unit

b) The Office of Integrated Marketing will in turn provide each unit on campus with:

- **Strategy**: Articulating a message consistent with the highest standards of marketing and advertising that accurately and effectively reflects the message of individual units on campus ensuring the message is within the university’s overall “brand.”

- **Technical Support**: Provide each unit’s marketing/online communication administrator with regular training on the most up to date web/social media technology. Knowing that the needs of all the units on campus will vary, this office will assist in creating a sophisticated and visually appealing web design with features most suitable to a given unit’s unique needs. The office will provide guidance as well as regular and timely support to each unit on appropriate web design and other forms of social media including podcasts, e-newsletters, Facebook, Twitter, and video/audio streaming as appropriate to each unit’s needs. This office will stay current on the most up to date forms of online communication technology and trends and provide regular guidance and support to each unit’s marketing/online administrator as to what forms of online communication are available.
I. Reorganization of Marketing and Online Communication (cont.)

2) Rationale:
Accurate, effective, up to date, and state of the art advertising and marketing is critical to effective connections with the local, regional, national, and international community as well as with prospective students and alumni. Online communication in particular impacts the university’s reputation regionally, nationally, and globally, and is usually the first line of communication between the institution and prospective students. Consensus among the Connections Working Group is that the overall community (local, regional, national) is not aware of many if not most of the events, accolades, services, etc. that happen on campus beyond a few programs such as athletics and perhaps theater productions. The university is currently operating at a high level of excellence but its reputation has been impeded by a lack of effective and consistent advertising and marketing. The reputation of the university is inextricably linked to how well its message is broadcast.

3) Implementation:
Review other university marketing models for the most effective organization of the Office of Integrated Marketing. Questions to consider:
   a) Number of staff needed
   b) Budget; (As a point of reference, UE’s Office of University Relations has an advertising budget of $13,000 whereas Ball State University allots $100,000 annually to advertising.)
   c) How to coordinate with Office of Admission without impeding their efforts
   d) Consideration of a Vice President of Marketing

II. Growing Affinity

1) Recommendation:
   a) Create a campus-wide culture of “recruit to alumni” placing the emphasis not just on graduating but maintaining lifelong connections. Establish new annual traditions and ceremonies which create a greater sense of pride in and belonging to the university. Strengthen outreach efforts by the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations to help current students understand the value and responsibilities of a UE education.

   b) Increase visibility and opportunities for UE connections in identified key regional cities within a 250 mile radius of Evansville. This would include having more regular alumni gatherings, both of a social and educational (i.e. guest speakers, cultural events) nature, utilizing our alumni to recruit new students, and developing stronger corporate relationships in these areas. Targeted marketing efforts to prospective students, businesses, potential donors, etc would be increased in these cities.
II. Growing Affinity (cont.)

2) Rationale:

UE Alumni Surveys, conducted in 2008 and 2010, indicate that alumni are satisfied with the education received but do not feel a strong sense of belonging to UE. This sense of belonging was gauged by the degree of alumni engagement such as volunteering, attending UE events, and ultimately giving back to UE.

3) Implementation:

Bring together representatives from all areas involved (student life, alumni and parent relations, ceremonies committee, student representatives, religious life, etc...) to craft the Recruit to Alumni plan which would include the formation of new traditions. Some financial resources would be needed to support new programs or events, but no additional staff would be necessary.

III. Community Connections

1) Recommendation:

a) Begin to track and keep data on all the community outreach taking place from campus. This would include collecting information from all academic departments, athletic teams, student organizations and other offices. This information then needs to be shared with the community through all available media. This responsibility would fall on the newly formed Office of Integrated Marketing (Recommendation I.)

b) As the community becomes more aware of the university’s offerings to the community, begin to conduct market research on expanding offerings to the community, to include children’s and/or adult non-credit classes/workshops. Additional program offerings would be gradually phased in, and only those programs that can ensure revenue without sacrificing or overburdening current academic department needs would be considered.

c) Create more lifelong learning opportunities for the UE alumni population. Reach out to alumni by offering them free or steeply discounted content, such as courses, sample lectures, certification programs and online tutorials. In the short-term, these programs could be funded through a grant and then extended to other markets in order to produce a self-sustaining revenue stream.
III. Community Connections (cont.)

2) **Rationale:**

The amount of community outreach programs performed by various departments within UE is overwhelming. Most academic departments have programs that reach out to the community in some form. UE partners with the city of Evansville and other civic organizations to improve the community with numerous free performances, exhibits, and lectures enhancing the cultural life of the community. The exact amount of outreach is difficult to calculate and unfortunately not widely known. The lack of advertising of these events may create the false illusion that UE is not well connected with the community.

3) **Implementation:**

   a) Collecting the data on outreach from all units on campus (see point III, 1, a) and conducting market research for new community offerings (see point III, 1, b) would fall on the newly formed Office of Integrated Marketing (Recommendation I) in close consultation with Academic Affairs.

   b) Lifelong learning opportunities for alumni (point III, 1, c) would fall on the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations.

IV. Career Services

1) **Recommendation:**

   a) Grow the University of Evansville Professional Network (existing database for alumni) to a level where alumni resource persons could be available to all recent UE graduates. This program would create a worldwide network of alumni who are willing to answer students’/recent graduates’ questions about relocating to their city/region, their profession, etc. The Offices of Alumni and Parent Relations and Career Services will be more aggressive in recruiting alumni participants and making students aware of this strong network.

   b) Grow the current effort of reaching the goal of a $1 million endowment to provide one hundred $500.00 stipends per year for students completing non or minimally paying experiential education.

   c) Maintain the funding commitment of the existing stipend initiative of $37,500 per year beyond the current Lilly Grant cycle which ends in 2012.

   d) Fully fund the two positions currently associated with the Lilly Grant. Specifically this is a full-time position as Assistant Director of Alumni and Parent Relations for Career Development in the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and a half-time, 10 month Coordinator of Employer Relations in the office of Career Services and Cooperative Education.
IV. Career Services (cont.)

2) Rationale:

There is a documented track record of significant improvement over the last seven years that UE has greatly benefited from the programs, efforts and outcomes of the Offices of Alumni and Parent Relations and Career Services and Cooperative Education. These efforts have been subsidized or mandated through Lilly Grants and matching financial commitments. At the conclusion of the 2012-2013 budget cycle, several key positions and funding commitments will be eliminated and current levels of effort committed to the growth and expansion of Alumni Partnerships and Career Development activities will be curtailed.

3) Implementation: (mostly imbedded within the recommendations themselves)