

CASE STUDY

Informing Cabinet-Level Decision Making

Duquesne University



How We're Helping Duquesne University

The Division of Marketing and Communications (DMC) is a sought-after unit that develops strategic communications plans for each of the university's 10 colleges and schools as the university becomes more audience-centric. The team is building brand alignment and data-informed communication strategies to expand strategic capacity and help senior leaders understand the impact of social and earned media conversation on brand health and awareness, and university goals.

Partnership Goals

A key goal for the team is finding ways to develop effective collaboration across campus. They're proactively trying to overcome silos while trying to speak with a coherent voice and message.

Partnership Outcomes

- **Monthly insights inform reporting**, surface brand connections, and facilitate communicating relevant findings with leadership and key campus partners.
- **Support enrollment management** with first-person admissions insights, competitive intelligence, and engagement opportunities.
- **Optimize sharing forum insights** with relevant parties across campus.
- **Activate campus-wide collaboration strategies** and create a culture of mutual support with established working groups.
- **Train auxiliary communicators** on best practices.
- **Plan regular executive briefing** with partnership experts on the value of social intelligence and Duquesne's conversation trends.



"The team has become a partner we learn with. They provide access to expert conversations for our staff through their network, send along insights that emerge as important outside the cycle of reporting, and bounce ideas off me and my team as we're developing new applications."

— Gabe Welsch, Vice President of Marketing and Communications

Duquesne's Progress

Four key goals are helping Duquesne move toward marketing maturity and contribute to strategic leadership on campus.



Assess and improve brand alignment

The social media audit helped the team identify dormant or off-brand accounts and support their efforts to overcome brand fragmentation. They're also working toward brand alignment across campus in their working groups with education sessions and promoting cross campus collaboration.



Support data-informed decision making

The data-informed monthly insights support the policies and best practices they've developed. **Sharing the insights and examples with communicator groups contributes to their goal of fostering a culture of mutual support across campus.**

An issue on campus with multiple layers, including an impact on internal employee relations and campus safety, gave the partnership team an opportunity to support decision making. Timely insights and context for how the topic compared to the rest of their overall conversation supported the Duquesne team in creating a report to share with leadership.



Build strategic marketing capacity

They're well on their way with their journey to building capacity in central marketing and with marketing colleagues across campus. **Using frameworks developed from strategy sessions and their work to increase engagement with the working groups, they're increasing their value as an expert team with important resources and insights.**



Educate university leaders on how online conversation contributes to brand health

The social media audit enabled the team to articulate best practices for brand health and cohesion and share them at the cabinet level to support the benefits of a cohesive message. Monthly reports and insights empower the team to make connections between online conversation and their brand, providing relevant examples to share with leadership.

Why It's Working

Duquesne regularly applies strategic insights to their day-to-day work.

- The Director of Social Media (DSM) uses insights and dashboard data to evaluate:
 - A multi-layer campus issue discovered while examining changes in volume over time and top topic spikes. With our support, the DSM considered how the spikes were shaping their brand narrative. Looking at sentiment, we found it didn't affect their overall negative mention volume.
 - Another notable topic surfaced when a planned event held on campus was canceled. The DSM and team considered the ramifications for their community and how to respond and engage to show their support.
- The results inform the director's issues management reporting for leadership, who reference the recommendations in conversations with cabinet and other campus stakeholders.
- Monthly insights and a strategy session help the team identify opportunities for admissions engagement to share with the enrollment team.

The team is invested in developing strategic marketing capacity.

- They're using insights to inform decision making at the cabinet level, and in building a shared understanding of the value of brand health across campus.
 - The audit and strategy session on cross-campus collaboration informed a conversation with the cabinet and deans around campus-wide approaches to social media account creation, including how to evaluate starting new accounts and/or sunsetting dormant ones.



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