

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Revise the Publicity Center mission statement.**

We would like to revise our mission statement. The following mission statement better captures the essence of what we do.

The Publicity Center provides high quality and personalized promotional services, products and support to the Associated Students organization and students of Western Washington University. We offer excellence in graphic design, print and electronic media, and distribution services while providing unique educational opportunities and leadership experience to student employees.

2. **Improve AS strategic communications.**

Explore opportunities to improve and better support AS marketing and public relations efforts, including considering combining the AS Communications Office with the AS Review/PC structure.

Currently, the AS Communications Office is responsible for compiling a full weekly list of AS events. The list is used for a variety of calendars. This is a challenging task, requiring multiple avenues of research to assure all events are included, and when not, filling in calendar data with University deadlines and important dates for students, so the calendars don't appear empty. The Communications Office staff attempt to accumulate this info, however, we're experiencing our third year of difficulty receiving punctual and complete event information needed to produce both the physical 6th floor calendar and the weekly AS Review events calendar. We could assist more effectively and support this effort by being physically located close to or within the same office. Additionally, this would allow us to collaborate more easily on developing brand guidelines, improving AS marketing efforts, and increasing content sharing between our offices. We recommend the AS consider combining the roles of our offices to better serve the AS organization and students at-large.

Through agreements reached with the Communications Office, immediate ways we will address this issue include scheduled talk times with AS Communications staff, inclusion in relevant PC staff meetings, and strengthening the connection between the PC Lead Designer and Communications staff through job description changes, (see #5). Additionally, the Communications Office Director has agreed that physically locating the Communications Office close to the Publicity Center would enhance communication and collaborative efforts.

The AS Communications Office will be going through assessment in two years. This will provide opportunity for a reflective and supplementary examination of this issue.

3. Address issue of late projects and put forth ideas for improving project timeline-compression problems.

The PC regularly faces issues of not making some deadlines established by PC staff through milestones set in our project management software. This is most often a problem from the client side where we do not receive finalized information until after the “Content confirmed accurate by client” milestone has passed, thus putting many aspects of the process behind schedule. This also may occur when Copy Services undergoes significant unexpected changes to their turnaround time (such as winter quarter of last year).

The PC will address this issue in several ways:

- Clearly communicate via email to all AS employees any changes to our usual six week turnaround time.
- Work with advisors and managers to assure programs stay within established program standards for the number of events produced, and consequent project requests submitted to the PC.
- Work with clients to develop templates for serial events (like Underground Coffeehouse weekly open mics, etc.)
- Exercise definitive denials when requests do not provide complete information or are not within our 6-week turn around.
- Require all clients to have an initial meeting with an Account Exec at time of placing first order to explain process and set agreed-upon milestones.
- Encourage AS directors to work with interning staff in Spring to submit “open house” and “kick off” event requests during their internship period to allow for PC staff to complete these projects over Summer, prior to the rush of Fall. This was done with ROP in spring 2014 with success.
- Assess the impact on PC staff time of supporting AS Clubs through the Club Package process and recommend changes as necessary.
- Explore adding a part-time permanent support staff to the PC to provide consistent year-to-year support at front desk and provide Coordinator with more time for strategic and supervisory duties.
- Increase space to allow for additional design staff to reduce overall workload per employee, allow for fewer denials due to capacity, and create faster turnaround times. This requires additional space which may become available if the ESC is relocated. The PC was reduced in size when ESC storage became a crucial need. This recaptured space would allow for an additional four workstations. Note: this additional space could be used by both AS Review and design staff, both of which are underserved with allotted space.
- Improve efficiency through change to computing platform – see #9

4. Utilize the expertise of the PC to promote student fee-funded initiatives.

Involve PC staff with promotions of student fee-funded initiatives. The PC would assist,

through consultation and design service, in promoting projects funded by student dollars, through the AS. An example would be to require involvement by the PC Lead Designer and other design staff in marketing and promotions decisions tied to GEF awards and other large scale student initiatives. Award recipients would be required to utilize the PC's design team to promote their funded cause. This will assure that any student initiative approved by the AS be promoted in the best, most effective way.

5. Change the Lead Designer job description to better reflect scope of responsibilities.

The Lead Designer position would be changed to have the additional responsibility of working closely with the AS Communications Office and the Board to provide more holistic and collaborative branding of the entire organization in order to better serve and represent the Associated Students. We also propose that the position be reclassified from the current Assistant Coordinator position classification to Coordinator classification, based on the current level of responsibility of the position. See proposed updated job description. This change in classification will require an increase of just over \$500 to the PC budget.

6. Encourage AS offices to limit departmental rebranding to the AS Assessment Process.

Require that AS offices limit departmental rebranding to the office's assessment year to improve long-term marketing and reduce work load.

The PC often receives requests from offices to change their logo. Sometimes this is based on the functionality of the logo, and sometimes it's the personal desire of the office staff. Logo design takes a long time to do well, and impacts staff hours in the PC significantly. Also, changing a logo too often leads to reduced recognition of an office year-to-year, and undermines our efforts to create strong student affiliations with AS offices. Requiring AS offices to limit their rebrands to no more than once every four years makes sense for a four-year institution, and the AS Assessment Process is an ideal time to evaluate departmental rebranding.

If a change to an AS office name or charge drives the need for an immediate visual rebrand prior to their assessment year, the PC and AS Communications Office will review the request jointly to determine the appropriate action necessary to support the change.

Note that many departments of the AS do not go through the assessment process as a whole department but on an office by office basis, so these guidelines would not apply at the department level to areas like ASP, ESP, or ROP.

7. Improve internal assessment of the Publicity Center.

Work with VU Manager of Assessment, Training, and Special Projects to develop and implement rubrics for measuring customer satisfaction, production efficiency, and other performance indicators.

8. Replace current Publicity Center hardware with Apple iMacs.

Specify and budget for replacing all design computers with industry design-standard Macs to provide a functionally better, more efficient and relevant work environment. This has been a request from design staff for years. Recently, with the emergence of animation and additional software functionality, the computing power of Mac's floating point processing has become crucial to our productivity. We currently experience regular freezes with Dell machines that otherwise are equipped to do the job. These delays, of waiting for a computer to restart or finish a process, cost the AS valuable staff time and decreases our productivity. Additionally, it's a stress to the design staff who already feel rushed to get their work done. The difference of how the Mac calculates many of the sophisticated processes necessary for the work the Publicity Center does would substantially improve staff work experience and our delivery of service to the Associated Students.

We recommend the AS purchase Apple iMacs to replace all graphics related computers in the PC. Account Executives and Distribution Coordinator machines would remain Dells. This will result in a budget increase of \$1,390 per machine. The VU Finance Manager, AS VP for Business and Operations, and the VU IT Manager have been consulted regarding funding this proposal since it will result in an increase to the current repair and replacement cost for Dell machines. Dollars have been identified in the AS discretionary reserves that the Budget Committee could recommend be used to fund this proposal.

9. Improve digital workflow and AS promotions with a video wall.

Take steps to propose and secure budget and facility approvals for replacing the existing analog AS Calendar in the 6th floor lobby with a four-screen video wall. This would allow for immediate updates of changes to information, a complete digital workflow between the PC and the AS Communications Office, and a huge impact on our ability to promote events and display content. We already own the software and produce the content for our existing screens. This would provide for significant opportunities for students to develop interesting and engaging graphics in both still and animated formats.

This idea has been discussed with VU IT, and proof of concept has been completed. The project would need to be completed collaboratively with them. The screens would become part of the VU digital signage system, allowing for other departmental content like our current screens do. The PC would manage the wall like we do all screens in the current system across campus.

While this project may not make the Viking Union budget for the coming year, the AS Communications Office Director feels this is an appropriate area for a supplemental funding request to the AS Board to help fund it, and has agreed to help draft the proposal should SPAC and the Board approve this recommendation.