THE GRADUATE COLLEGE
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN

2017 - 2022
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The Graduate College recognizes the importance of implementing a structured plan for communications activities that identifies with the college’s organizational policies and best practices. A communications plan will greatly facilitate the staff coordinating efforts with other groups or reporting activities and results to campus partners. The activities involved in communications planning identify the appropriate level of communication for each service area, what information should be distributed, and the frequency of communications. This plan also includes vehicles of communications (email, social media, and website). If followed, this plans should increase efficiencies, facilitate accomplishing project objectives, and minimize duplication of effort.

The Graduate College Strategic Communication Plan is based on detailed strategies, with a matrix of concrete actions addressing the communications needs of each staff member. Success for plan communications should be measured against planned objectives of each strategy. The intended audience of The Graduate College Strategic Communication Plan is the faculty, staff, and administrators whose support is needed to carry out the plan.

Loretta Daniels, MSCM
Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."
– George Bernard Shaw
I. Purpose
The purpose of this strategic communication plan is to support the objectives and goals for an organized communication system for The Graduate College (TGC). It will serve as the College’s first formal communication plan and represent a framework for managing and coordinating all internal and external communication regarding the college, its graduate programs, and graduate admissions.

All communication processes and initiatives align with the overall strategies governing the efforts to communicate messages to various audiences.

In addition to the outlined objectives, this document enables a communication environment conducive to accomplishing the following: distributing clear and consistent messages; articulating the College’s mission, vision, and goals; and adopting a culture of transparent communication as viewed by internal and external audiences. Ensuring the success of the plan, TGC leaders (e.g. deans, faculty, and staff) must recognize that communication is a shared responsibility. The Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning will measure the effectiveness of this plan and make appropriate adjustments to it as needed.

II. Audience Analysis
The College’s audience includes both internal and external targets. Identifying and understanding TGC’s audience and their relationship to the University is essential to creating and implementing a well-organized and targeted communication plan.

The Graduate College oversees, establishes, manages, and maintains institutional standards for the quality of the graduate programs the Graduate Faculty, graduate admissions processes, and the graduate student experience. As a result, all colleges offering post-baccalaureate program content (degrees and/or certifications) are expected to comply with all Communication Plan guidelines.

The College’s audience is divided into three categories: TGC Administration and Staff, KSU Graduate Faculty/Staff, and Graduate Students (current and prospective).
A. Audience Category One

The first audience category is TGC’s Administration and Staff

- **Administrators/Staff:** The College currently employs approximately 6 full-time administrators and 14 staff (summer 2017). The college is in the embryonic stages of reorganization and could increase personnel based on University needs and expectations for graduate education. The core emphasis of the reorganization is clearly summarized in the College’s mission and vision as outlined in the 2017 The Graduate College Strategic Plan.

B. Audience Category Two

The second audience is KSU’s Graduate Faculty and Staff

- **Graduate Faculty:** Graduate Faculty members promote the accomplishments of KSU’s Graduate Faculty and students, advocating for graduate education to both internal and external constituents.

C. Audience Category Three

- **Graduate Students:** Graduate students are students admitted to The Graduate College and accepted into a post-baccalaureate program of study. KSU annually provides educational services to more than 2800 graduate students from diverse backgrounds and with different interests. Communication between students is informal and social. Many students prefer to network socially via Internet sites (such as Snapchat, Facebook, and Twitter). Students use these sites to stay connected with friends and make new contacts. They also use technology such as texting to communicate with faculty and classmates.

- **Graduate Student Assistants:** The Graduate College currently employs approximately 400 graduate student assistants. A significant number of GRA’s are employed for extended periods during the course of their education. At present (Summer 2017) little formal organized communication either to or from these individuals.

- **Prospective Graduate Students:** Currently, formal College communication with prospective graduate students is limited the following platforms: Radius (an enrollment management system), the college’s website, and the KSU Facebook page.
III. Communication Challenges

The most prominent challenge is the need to create a strategic, formal, and cohesive process and channels for distributing internal and external messages. These channels will help distribute messages to targeted audiences that express the College's overall strategic goals, objectives, mission, and vision. Additional plans must include vehicles to reach all targeted audiences.

No coordinating body exists by which to focus a comprehensive message throughout all channels of communication to graduate staff or other campus partners (including colleges that serve as a support system to Graduate Faculty members and students). Message development and distribution is left to individuals within the departments.

Additionally, the College is faced with the challenge of communicating with alumni and currently has no formal process for coordinating alumni communication at The Graduate College level.

Internal Communication

A. Graduate program Graduate Faculty, staff and administrators:
   • Current internal communication resources:
     a. Mailing lists for Graduate Faculty, program coordinators, program directors and admins, as well as contact groups for members of the Graduate Faculty.
     b. The Graduate Policies and Curriculum Committee (GPCC) that coordinates the University's graduate policy and curriculum, and serves as the shared governance body for graduate education.
     c. Individual email messages regarding admissions are directed on an as-needed basis to the Registrar's Office.

B. Graduate students:
   • Current internal communication resources:
     a. HTML formatted email messages sent via an ITS portal.

External Communication

While efforts to improve internal communication with regard to message development and channel coordination can be addressed by formalizing the process, communication the use of communication tools graduates and graduate students embrace such as social media, mobile technology, digital signage monitors, and web-based videos.

A. Alumni:
   • At present (Summer 2017), communication with former students is for all practical purposes non-existent. The Office of Alumni Affairs tracks and communicates with existing alumni, but has not formally designed a program to partner with The Graduate College.

B. Prospective Graduate Students
   • Currently, Graduate Admissions take a reactive approach of responding to inquiries via the Radius system. The system allows the creation of tailored communication plan.
     a. Lack of awareness
     b. No formal recruiting plan
     c. Differing and inconsistent efforts a program levels.

C. Media Relations
   • The staff at University Relations currently has no assigned representative to work with The Graduate College, but will print the occasional article regarding research or student and program accomplishments.

D. Resources
   • While the University devotes significant resources to communicating with undergraduate students and prospective students, nothing similar exists for graduate students.
IV. Communication Channels Analysis

The following is a listing and analysis of the College’s current communication channels (see Table A1). It is likely that others exist as the process for developing channels is informal.

Table A1 – Communication Channels Analysis

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<th>Channel</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td>College Website</td>
<td>The Graduate College website is positioned as the primary source of information for all target audiences. Currently there is not one dedicated assigned Webmaster. The site provides basic information for current and prospective students. It will need to be enhanced to provide videos, photos, social media, and high-level messaging, as well as more user-friendly links to apply or seek additional information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Radius</td>
<td>Radius serves as the College’s tool for responding to prospective graduate student inquiries, developing on-going communication plans and enrollment. Currently (Summer 2017), the system has inconsistencies based on a lack of optimization.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSU Zimbra Email</td>
<td>Currently Zimbra email is used for all forms of communication to current students, staff and faculty. This is effective communication, but offers little in the form of marketing messaging or tracking the responses for receipt of messages.</td>
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<tr>
<td>KSU Zimbra Calendar</td>
<td>The Zimbra Calendar is used to efficiently manage the schedules of the Executive Leadership Team.</td>
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The following is a listing and description of the college's communication strategies and tactics (see Table A2)

**Table A2 Communication Operations Plan, Strategies and Tactics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 1: Develop a Graduate College Strategic Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tactic 1.1:</strong> Develop a strategic plan (created by the Executive Leadership Team in consultation with Graduate Faculty members and programs) to serve as a roadmap for all of the College's goals and objectives. This plan will be posted on the College's website for both internal and external audiences. The plan will also include an action plan (not for publication) outlining tactics, responsible parties, due dates, and cost forecast.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy 2. Develop a Graduate Strategic Marketing Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tactic 2.1</strong> Develop a marketing plan based on the goals and objectives outlined in the Graduate College Strategic Plan.</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy 3. Develop a Graduate College 5-Year Recruiting Plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tactic 3.1</strong> Develop a recruiting plan that outlines all of the recruiting efforts to meet the predetermined student/program enrollment goals. The plan will include both domestic and international recruiting efforts.</td>
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<td><strong>Strategy 4: Enhance College Website</strong></td>
<td><strong>Tactic 4.1:</strong> Assign Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning as the College's webmaster. All deans will have access to update content, but structural change will be the responsibility of the webmaster.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Tactic 4.2:</strong> Redesign the current website to include: videos (instructional and testimonials), user friendly formatting, photos, publication pages, and a donation to the college page.</td>
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<td><strong>Tactic 4.3:</strong> Create and run weekly Google analytics reports to display website visitor activity.</td>
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<td>Strategy 5: Create/Enhance Social Media Messaging</td>
<td>Tactic 5.1: Establish the following social media accounts: Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tactic 5.2: Develop guidelines for posting frequency, content criteria (i.e. graphics, hashtags, and organizations).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 6: Develop and Implement Marketing Guidelines and Standards</td>
<td>Tactic 6.1: Develop guidelines and criteria for all marketing materials (internal and external).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tactic 6.2: Create a clearinghouse for all publications to ensure College/University branding.</td>
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<td>Strategy 7: Establish Communication with Alumni</td>
<td>Tactic 7.1 Collaborate with Alumni Affairs to create an alumni database to be used for recruiting and news distribution.</td>
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<td>Strategy 8: Publish a Monthly Newsletter</td>
<td>Tactic 8.1: Publish a monthly newsletter targeted to Graduate Faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students. Showcase student research and accomplishments, as well as faculty achievements. Distribution channels will include KSU Inform, Zimbra Email and the Graduate College website.</td>
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<td>Tactic 8.2: Publish and annual Year-in-Review publication during the month of January.</td>
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<td>Strategy 9: Publish a Monthly Dean's Message</td>
<td>Tactic 9.1: Publish a monthly graduate message from the Dean. The distribution channels will mirror the college newsletter’s channels.</td>
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<td>Strategy 10: Publish a Quarterly Magazine</td>
<td>Tactic 10.1: Publish a premier publication that features news, events, research and stories about the Graduate College's target audience. This publication will be in digital format and occasionally in print. The distribution will be via KSU Inform, Digital Signage, Zimbra Email, and the college's website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy 11: Publish an Annual Report</td>
<td>Tactic 11.1: Publish an annual report designed to provide comprehensive visibility to the college’s programs and accomplishments. This report will include financial transparency and indicate how financial decisions have supported strategic initiatives. The publication will be in both print and electronic versions. Distribution will be via mail, Zimbra Email, and the college’s website.</td>
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<td>Strategy 12: Media Relations</td>
<td>Tactic 12.1: The Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning will work closely with University Relations to proactively pitch and promote stories regarding the achievements of graduate students, faculty, staff, and administrators.</td>
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<td>Strategy 13: Create Graduate College Events</td>
<td>Tactic 13.1: Create College events to promote and highlight student and program success.</td>
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<td>Strategy 14: Digital Signage</td>
<td>Tactic 14.1: Promote monthly announcements on the KSU OWL TV digital venues throughout both the Kennesaw and Marietta campuses.</td>
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V. Communication and Strategic Alliances

a. The Graduate College has several on-campus communication and strategic alliances. The alliances listed below will be instrumental in the college’s growth and success.

- All colleges providing post-graduate programming
- University Relations
- Office of Advancement and Development
- Alumni Affairs
- Division of Global Affairs
- Division of Student Affairs
- The Office of the President and Provost/VP of Academic Affairs

VI. Communication, Marketing and Public Relations Guidelines and Standards

a. **The Graduate College Communication Advisory Committee** advises and consults with the Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning regarding public relations and internal and external communications. The purpose is to provide critical information regarding public relations issues facing the College, internal and external communications including publications, and distribute the College’s multiple messages campus-wide and to regional and national media.

i. The committee meets annually to discuss critical issues. The committee members will consist of The Graduate College Leadership Team with input from the GPCC, Graduate Council, GSA, and strategic partners.

b. **College Website Posting Guidelines**

**Strategy 2: Tactics 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5**

i. The Graduate College will redesign the website beginning May 2017. The leadership team will have the option of updating content and graphics on the web pages. The individuals with access to update the website will be required to adhere to the Kennesaw State University and Graduate College website guidelines and standards:

1. Each department is responsible for notifying the webmaster within seven days of any change in personnel.
2. The website should list only active employees: **Full-time Faculty and Staff only**.
3. **New Employee Submission Guidelines:**
   a. Submit a professional headshot (photographed by University Relations). Use the following link to schedule an appointment ([http://www.kennesaw.edu/ur/creativeservices.shtml#PhotoServices](http://www.kennesaw.edu/ur/creativeservices.shtml#PhotoServices))
   b. Zimbra Email Signature Line should include the following information:
      - Title
      - Name (first and last)
      - Phone number (including extension)
      - Email address
      - The most recent Graduate College logo
c. **Social Media Strategy 3: Tactics 3.1, 3.2, 3.3**

   i. Social media includes social networking (i.e., Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) video hosting sites (i.e. YouTube and Vimeo), and photo sharing sites.

   1. The following Graduate College guidelines build off the already-established university-wide guidelines. Kennesaw State's official social media guidelines can be found at [http://www.kennesaw.edu/ur/publications/KSU_SocialMedia_Styleguide.pdf](http://www.kennesaw.edu/ur/publications/KSU_SocialMedia_Styleguide.pdf).

   2. The Graduate College's University website ([graduate.kennesaw.edu](http://graduate.kennesaw.edu)) is the official communications vehicle for the college. Contact the Loretta Daniels ([Loretta.daniels@kennesaw.edu](mailto:Loretta.daniels@kennesaw.edu)) to create a social media account. A social media coordinator will be assigned to manage all social media accounts.

   3. The social media coordinator will review sites periodically to determine if information can be added to the main Graduate College sites.

   ii. **Social Media Guidelines**

   1. **Content:**

      - Always include images/photos in posts
      - Tag people, organizations, and companies when you mention them if appropriate.
      - Post shareable and engaging posts for a broad range of people (students, faculty, public etc.)
      - URL links should be included on each site
      - Use hashtags when appropriate (Check and make sure the hashtag is not offensive or does not has another meaning.)

   2. **Frequency:**

      - Post 4 – 5 times a week (ideally once a day)
      - Frequency may depend on the social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
      - Aim to post in the morning and lunchtime (more people are online at these times)

   3. **Management:**

      - Develop a social media calendar
      - Use the KSU academic calendar and deadlines to help schedule posts ahead of time to keep followers informed
      - Follow industry influencers as well as other institutions in higher education and network when posting to all social media sites
VII. Marketing Guidelines and Standards

The Graduate College's works in partnership with the University's Office of Strategic Communication and Marketing to ensure that the College is adhering to University Policy and Procedures. The Graduate College provides an array of graphics, web, marketing and communication services. The communication and marketing staff is responsible for internal and external communication on behalf of the Graduate College and all graduate level programs and adheres to the guidelines put forth by University Relations (styleguide.kennesaw.edu).

The following guidelines have been developed to serve as a resource for faculty and staff.

a. Marketing Collateral

i. The Graduate College is available to assist in developing and designing various marketing collateral including, but not limited to flyers, brochures, advertisements, postcards, and promotional items.

1. KSU design standards:

a. Color Codes:

i. Black: #000000
ii. Gold: #FEBD11
iii. Blue: #007A95 (website accent text color)

b. Kennesaw State Logo: the approved logo must be included on all printed materials.

i. File type: EPS
ii. Logo size: a minimum 1 inch diameter

c. Photograph Resolution:

i. File type: JPEG or PNG
ii. Resolution: 300 DPI or better

d. Design Approval Guidelines:

i. Design approval is responsible for reviewing all submissions of artwork for correct use of the logo and general university branding and is not responsible for the prior departmental approval procedures within the College units.
ii. Prior to printing and distributing, all marketing, advertising materials, and campaigns must be approved by the Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning.

e. Submission Guidelines:

i. This applies to the Graduate College staff, any marketing materials not designed by the Graduate College office must be submitted to the Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning for review and approval.

ii. The Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning will submit all approved marketing materials to University Relations for final design approval.
iii. Any materials submitted directly to University Relations (i.e., designapproval@kennesaw.edu) will be rerouted to the Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning for submission which will delay the approval process.

iv. All design approval request(s) will be processed within 48 hours.

VIII. Video Production:

a. The University Information Technology Services (UITS) team will record video on location or at its in-house studio. The team will be able to help with the production of university-related projects.

b. The Graduate College is also available to produce video projects or allow you to use the facilities and/or equipment for production.
   i. All video requests should meet The Graduate College standards and overall messaging and core values.
   ii. The following steps are required for video production:
      1. Discuss the production project with The Graduate College.
      2. Complete the production request form and facilitate documentation, and development.

IX. Digital Signage:

a. The KSU Digital Signage Network is an enterprise-wide visual communications medium that informs students, faculty, staff, and visitors about the happenings at Kennesaw State University. The Graduate College's marketing team is available to design slides.

   i. All designs must include the branding identity of the Graduate College and adherence to all Kennesaw State University Visual Identity Program Standard and Style Guidelines. For more information, please visit: styleguide.kennesaw.edu.

   ii. Check with your department to determine the individual assigned to manage the Digital Signage account.

      1. Submission Requirements:
      2. Send design requests to Loretta_daniels@kennesaw.edu
      3. Submit completed design to Loretta_daniels@kennesaw.edu for final approval
      4. The marketing team will approve and post new slides within 48 hours after submission.

   iii. Digital Signage guidelines (uits.kennesaw.edu) and design standards:

      1. Color Codes:
         a. Black: #000000
         b. Gold: #FEBC11
         c. Blue: #007A95 (website accent text color)

      2. Kennesaw State Logo: the approved logo must be included on all printed materials.
         a. File type: EPS
         b. Logo size: a minimum 1 inch diameter
         c. File type: JPEG or png
         d. Resolution: 300 DPI or better

      3. Image Dimensions:
         a. File Type: JPEG
         b. Size: 960x540
         c. Resolution: 72 dpi
         d. Font Size: 22 (bold, non-serif fonts preferred)
X. Newsletter

1. Submission Requirements by article type (only Graduate Faculty or graduate students are eligible):
   a. Submission Options:
      i. Provide facts/information for an article
      ii. Provide a fully-written article
      iii. New Graduate Faculty/Administration Announcement
      iv. Photo
      v. Bio
      vi. Start Date
      vii. Name and description of position
   b. Publication Announcement
      i. Name of publication
      ii. Publication date
      iii. Book or chapter title and/or article title.
      iv. A brief description of the purpose and potential impact
      v. Photo(s) of author(s)
   c. Presentations (international conferences or any pre-conference or invited presentations)
      i. Name of event
      ii. Presentation date
      iii. Presentation title
      iv. A short description of the purpose and potential impact
      v. Photo(s) of author(s)
   d. Awards/Grants
      i. Name of award, grant or project title
      ii. Funding agency
      iii. Amount of grant
      iv. Funding period
      v. A description of the purpose and potential impact
      vi. Photo(s) of project or grant recipient
   e. Student Recognition
      i. Name of the faculty member associated with the student
      ii. Name of student
      iii. Description of project or achievement
      iv. A short bio of student
      v. Photo
f. New Program Initiatives
   i. Name of initiative/program
   ii. A short description of the purpose and potential impact
   iii. Photo(s)
g. Program Assessments
   i. Name of program
   ii. A description of the program (including history)
   iii. Data that represents change (gain or loss)
h. Special Events
   i. Name of Event
   ii. Date, place and time
   iii. A description of the event(s)
   iv. Contact information

2. Article Requirements:
   a. All articles should be written in Word format
   b. Attach photos if applicable
   c. Provide full URL if there is an option to view the article

XI. Media Relations Strategy:
   a. The Graduate College supports freedom of speech and the press as outlined in the First Amendment and has established the following guidelines to describe the College’s position with respect to interacting with members of the press.

For the purpose of these guidelines, “members of the press” shall refer to representatives of newspapers, magazines, newsletters, online publications, television stations and programs, and radio stations and programs.

   i. Media Relations Guidelines
      1. Submitting Story Ideas:
         a. To assist in generating story ideas, the Graduate College is interested in all newsworthy story ideas. Ideas should be sent to the Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning.
            i. Submission Requirements:
            ii. Provide a fully-written article or content only
            iii. Articles should be written in Word format
            iv. Attach photos
            v. Send article or content to gc@kennesaw.edu on or before the 25th of the calendar month
b. How to Respond to Press Coverage:
   i. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director of Communications and Strategic Planning to initiate and communicate with the University's Office of Strategic Communications when dealing with all media calls. When a staff member of The Graduate College is contacted by the members of the press who are reporting on the Graduate College, the faculty or staff member should notify the college.

   c. Authorization is required for photographs taken with the intent to publicize the institution. This consent allows the college to incorporate these photos in situations appropriate to the image of an academic institution. Contact the Graduate College for a copy of the required form.

XII. Electronic Magazine
   a. The Graduate College Magazine, Graduate News, is a quarterly digital publication that features news, events, research, and feature articles to a general audience (internal and external). The publication is published by the marketing team and by volunteer faculty, staff and students.

   b. The purpose of the magazine is to brand The Graduate College programs as innovative postgraduate degrees and certificates. The quarterly publication will feature the following segments:
      i. Message from the Dean
      ii. Faculty/Staff Spotlight (featuring achievements, credentials, areas of expertise, etc.)
      iii. Student Spotlight (center spread)
      iv. Program of the Month (feature one program per edition)
      v. Faculty Research, presentations and publications
      vi. Feature Articles
      vii. Brand Strategy

XIII. Press Releases
   a. The Graduate College works in partnership with the University's Office of Strategic Communication and Marketing on all press releases. The marketing team is available to assist in developing and writing press releases and will work with the University's Office of Strategic Communication and Marketing to secure university approval and to work on distribution to the appropriate local media outlets. Press releases are an excellent tool to inform the media of a possible feature story. Please submit information to Loretta_daniels@kennesaw.edu.

XIV. Email (Faculty & Staff Emails)
   a. Faculty and staff emails can be used to “spread the word” about The Graduate College and what it represents. Your email should include a “Signature” line which includes the information listed below. When setting up your signature—please select the HTML format. If HTML format is not selected, the font will not reflect the “gold” or bold letters in signature:
      i. Name
      ii. Phone number
      iii. Title
      iv. Department (if applicable)
      v. Social Media Icons (if applicable)
      vi. The most recent Graduate College logo
      vii. During Graduate College marketing campaign initiatives, faculty and staff will be asked to add a “tag line” to promote to internal and external audiences.
XV. Annual Report Publication:

a. The Annual Report Committee meets annually to discuss what information will be included in the upcoming report (i.e. research trends, program development, faculty and staff achievements, etc.). The report provides detailed information regarding the College's financial status and summarizes the activities and accomplishments of the college.

b. The Annual Report will include the following information:
   i. Research
   ii. Financial
   iii. Grants
   iv. Initiatives
   v. Student and Faculty Achievements
   vi. Improvements