



DIVISION OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE ACTION PLAN 2023-2028

Introduction

Background

Mission

UVM competes intensely for students, scholars, professional talent, and financial resources. As the center of gravity for professional communications and marketing, the Division of Strategic Communications informs and engages key stakeholders, positions UVM competitively among leading public research universities, illuminates UVM people and their success, and aligns messaging in support of the university’s strategic imperatives.

Strat Comm supports every academic and administrative unit of the university. Collectively, we amplify the university’s impact by producing *uvm.edu*, *UVM Magazine*, *Inside UVM*, *Success Matters*, *Research Matters*, *Vermont Matters*, UVM’s flagship social channels, and on-going campaigns supporting student recruitment, stakeholder engagement, internal communications, and university leadership initiatives.

History

Strat Comm is a new division, with roots that coincide with the arrival of President Garimella in 2019 and includes offices and functions that operated independently plus some new functions, such as internal communications and marketing. He created the Chief Communications Officer role—UVM’s first executive level central communications and marketing role. In 2021, the division became Strategic Communications, and the Chief Communications Officer became Chief Communications and Marketing Officer.

Points of Note

Strat Comm is evolving to incorporate more of the full-time communications and marketing professionals who work in different academic and administrative units. Number and composition of staff will be changing as we continue towards a more centralized model.

Inclusive Excellence Committee/Implementation Team Members

Name	Title	College/Division/Department/Unit
Joel Seligman	Chief Communications and Marketing Officer	Division of Strategic Communications



Barbara Walls	Managing Creative Director	Division of Strategic Communications, UVM Studios
Jeanne Nauheimer	Strategic Communications Manager, DEI	Division of Strategic Communications, Academic and Administrative Communications
Tatjana Salcedo	Digital Communications Director	Division of Strategic Communications, UVM Studios

Unit(s) within College, Division, Department or Unit

- UVM Studios
- University Marketing
- Academic and Administrative Communications
- University Communications

Part 1 – Recruitment and Retention

Divisional Demographics & Climate

According to the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment’s [Catamount data dashboard](#), as of November 1, 2022, Strat Comm is comprised of 22 employees. Twelve (54.5%) self-identify as female and ten (45.5%) identify as male. Eighteen (81.8%) identify as white, two (9.1%) as Hispanic, and 2 (9.1%) are unknown.

Strat Comm’s responses for the 2022 Campus Climate Survey was grouped with responses under the Office of the President. This group also included Audit Services, General Counsel, Compliance, and University Relations. There were 25 total respondents from this group and data cannot be disaggregated.

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Goal	Responsible Group	Time Frame
Prioritize recruiting staff from backgrounds often excluded from higher education and staff who show a commitment to diversity. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Require diversity statements in cover letters <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish rubric to use in searches that looks at how 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring managers & folks on search committees • Part 3 – Comms Leadership team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediately. Require it for 100% by 2025 • Part 3 – working to have a SOP by 2024 and it can be assessed again by division leadership



<p>well a candidate captures this statement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Continue to prioritize at least one question about advancement of DEI during each interview round 3. Create process for the convening of hiring committees <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Collect data on our current practices b. Reassess in 2024-25 		
<p>Work with HRS to establish more classifications within the Strategic Communications family and pathways to promotion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HRS • Joel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
<p>Recognize staff for their exceptional work related to DEI.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building in opportunities to celebrate 2. Add “How do you like to celebrate” information to onboarding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebecca • UDC reps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023-24 Set up some form of recognition • Set up a space/time of year where this could be emphasized
<p>Annually assess division climate and track trends.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create annual division climate survey (small, 15ish questions) 2. Support the Campus Climate Survey in 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders & personal responsibility • Jeanne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting a group to make the survey by 2024 • Offer first climate survey in June of 2024

University-wide

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Goal	Responsible Group	Time Frame
<p>Enhance sense of belonging for historically marginalized and underrepresented identities on campus through environmental branding.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify the strategic needs and resources needed to execute this goal authentically 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DEI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lots of this is ongoing. Measure annually • Banners scheduled for Waterman columns



<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Partner with other units and groups on campus *to support*3. Heritage month displays4. Social media campaigns5. Identify some keywords for News Tool and train staff. More robust and diverse storytelling (need to inventory and define our terms)		
<p>Broaden imagery reflective of DEI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Photoshelter AI search• The public content• Develop better relationships with	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing



Part 2 – Professional Development

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Goal	Responsible Group	Time Frame
<p>Identify specific training needs related to DEI.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using inclusive language • Learning effective cross-cultural communication strategies • Improving the accessibility of content (print and digital) • Assessing competencies pre and post trainings (and ongoing) – figuring out how to do so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey will gather input from staff • Rebecca Stazi will lead PD planning • Senior leaders will determine priorities based on survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By August 2023
<p>Establish process and annual fund allocation to professional development opportunities; prioritize items focused in DEI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joel to work with Finance & Administration each FY • Department heads will have more oversight of budgets and will have discretion over requests (starting FY25) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funds were not available for FY24 beyond union and staff council
<p>Integrate DEI goals into the annual performance evaluation process.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. FY23 will be first year of evals 2. FY24 specific goal in eval for every Strat Comm employee related to DEI 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors • Ensure staff are aware and thinking about this process moving forward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 2023 for staff goals
<p>Continue to write and develop DEI expectations and values into new positions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hiring managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review annually
<p>Increase staff participation in DEI-related professional development opportunities offered division- or university-wide as they become more available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisors to encourage participation and track attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review annually



<p>Tie into professional development offerings that Strat Comm can facilitate to UVM community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trainings in web• Storytelling• Strat Comms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dual approach includes (a) specific PD centered on DEI and (b) weaving DEI into all training topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beginning Summer 2023
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Part 3 – Accessibility

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Goal	Responsible Group	Time Frame
<p>Improve accessibility within unit spaces.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inventory barriers and structures that do not meet ADA standards 2. Identify other alternative plans in case of mobility impairments 3. Establish what is the responsibility of Strat Comms unit to remediate 4. Incorporate introduction to UVM accessibility resources and tools into onboarding process 5. Hold accessible division meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
<p>Update UVM brand with accessibility and inclusion in mind.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create and provide new or updated UVM-branded digital templates 2. Include updated signage design 3. Champion and model consistency across multiple means of representation (e.g., building signage also has braille, is referenced correctly on the digital campus map, etc.) 4. Work with physical plant to ensure physical signage is posted at correct height and has proper color contrast 5. Build out comprehensive style guide align to brand mission and to include definitions, standardized terminology, and cultural and identity-based considerations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UVM Studio 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
<p>Improve on processes for maintaining website and social media accessibility.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform accessibility assessment/audits of web content 2. Provide training resources and tools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initial audit ○ Training (how-to) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital Communications Team • Internal Communications Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Assessment3. Establish SOP for developing and maintaining website accessibility		
<p>Provide and model best practices for the use of inclusive and plain language in digital messaging.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• UVM.EDU• Email communications• Print publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Studios and Internal Comm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing

Part 4 – International Inclusion and Global Education

Analysis of Systems

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Goal	Responsible Group	Time Frame
Develop language access plan for division-created content. 1. Research other unit or institution's plans	•	• Will not start until FY24 or 25
Provide best practices for creating multi-lingual content on the website and other digital channels	• Web Team	• By 2025

Analysis of Support

S.M.A.R.T. Goal(s)

Goal	Responsible Group	Time Frame
Create and share content in languages other than English. 1. Identify content types to prioritize	• Marketing	• Will not start until FY24 or 25
Utilize iconography and plain language in content created for general public and large university events (e.g., commencement, campus tours). 1. Incorporate more iconography and signage into the 2023 UVM Commencement Ceremony.	• 1. UVM Studios, partnering with Presidential Events • 2. UVM Studios, Internal Communications, DEI (Jeanne Nauheimer), and others	• Ongoing
Build out UVM Style Guide to incorporate multicultural competencies and practices so that they are part of the UVM brand.	• UVM Studios	• 2024
Broaden the representation of international students and global education in campus environments. 1. Story features	• Internal Communications • DEI Comms Manager	• Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Utilizing content management system and keywording to inventory the kinds of stories we are telling (Starting with FY22)b. OIE videos <p>2. Flag display in Davis Center</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Identify key personnel to organize this project, including Davis Center and facilities staffb. Identify funding sourcec. Create plan for identifying flags and for adding new ones as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UVM Studios	
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