

Board of Trustees October 2021 Report Marketing & Communications

From May 10 to Sept. 28, 2021, the Office of Marketing & Communications (MarCom) implemented numerous marketing and communications plans. Highlights of this work include the following:

- [Commencement 2021.](#)
- [Cannonball moment: a primer on Ignatian Year.](#)
- [President Garibaldi's remembrance of Sr. Maureen Fay, O.P.](#)
- [From defendant to attorney, Martell makes most of second chance.](#)
- [Mechanical Engineering professor finds beauty, renown with calligraphy.](#)
- [Detroit Mercy leads new Vehicle Cybersecurity Institute.](#)
- [Garibaldi says he will conclude presidency in June 2022.](#)
- [Detroit Mercy students and community work together to enhance community.](#)
- [Detroit Mercy freshman enrollment is largest since 2009.](#)
- [Detroit Mercy ranks again among top U.S. universities in U.S. News & World Report's 2022 rankings of Best Colleges.](#)
- [Detroit Mercy's undergraduate business programs achieve national rank in U.S. News & World Report's 2022 rankings.](#)
- [Nationally known religious leader kicks off Detroit Mercy's "Founders Week".](#)
- [Suicide awareness exhibit displayed on McNichols Campus.](#)

MarCom and its web services partner, Beacon Technologies, have implemented new design elements for the website and the department has received a great many positive responses from faculty, staff, students, media, marketing partners and community members. As a reminder, the key goals of this project are to improve site performance, usability and ADA accessibility compliance.

Alumni Communications/Activities

The Forever Titans Alumni Blog (sites.udmercy.edu/alumni) continues to enjoy a strong readership despite fewer stories as staff were reallocated to address other pressing needs. Content includes Coronavirus stories, website text, and print material for the bridge campaign.

Blog key performance indicators:

- Total number of hits on the blog since early 2017 is more than 95,000;
- Average daily readership is 40 unique users; and
- Spring 2021 issue of *Spiritus* was produced remotely.

MarCom has shifted publication dates of *Spiritus* from May and September to June and December. This change was made for the following reasons:

- Shifting dates allows the University to add more timely content, including coverage of commencements (which would appear in the June issue) and Homecoming (which would appear in the September issue). With the previous schedule, a great deal of time had passed

between those events and the publication. As a result, we were forced to include less information on these events due to timing.

- The September issue is difficult to fill because faculty are not quite yet back to campus in early August when issue development begins. Stories often require faculty sourcing and due to contract limitations, they may not be available.
- Our previous designer, Christine Busque, died suddenly in July during the early stages of planning the magazine. As a result, MarCom and Editor Ron Bernas felt we could create a quality product in the timeframe with an unfamiliar freelance designer.
- This postponement until December will allow MarCom to hire a new designer and work with him/her on the December issue of the magazine.

Graphic Design Services

Due to the sudden loss of Christine Busque, graphic design services were extremely limited. At this time, the department is actively interviewing applicants for the graphic design position that is now open. The goal is to hire this professional within the next month.

Media Relations

- From May 11-Sept. 29, 2021, Detroit Mercy faculty, staff, students, alumni and programs were mentioned and/or featured in approximately 4,500 online, print and digital media outlets. This is a decrease of about 27% during the last reporting period (Jan. – May, 2021).
- During this time period, Detroit Mercy received 569 national media mentions.
- Detroit Mercy's share of sentiment during this period was 39.5% positive, 44.8% neutral and 15.7% negative. During the previous period, Detroit Mercy's share of sentiment was 37.3% positive, 51.3% neutral and 11.3% negative.
- During the current period, the publicity value of news coverage was \$2 million and achieved a reach of more than 550 million people.

Social Media

The increased engagement continues on Detroit Mercy's Social Network. Highlights are as follows:

Facebook selected posts, May 11, 2021 – September 27, 2021 (facebook.com/udmercy)

MarCom developed and posted 70 Facebook posts from May 11-Sept. 27 which totaled a reach of 165,674. Highlights include *a photo wishing Fr. Cavanagh a happy 90th birthday*, which yielded a reach of 6,275 and garnered 679 engagements, 419 reactions, 260 post clicks, 49 comments and nine shares; *the announcement of Antoine M. Garibaldi's presidency concluding*, which yielded a reach of 6,025 and garnered 573 engagements, 116 reactions, 20 shares and 457 post clicks; *a post congratulating the University's Class of 2021*, which yielded a reach of 5,306 and garnered 1,318 engagements, 504 reactions, 814 post clicks and 16 shares; *a Throwback Thursday post on previous freshman move-in days to promote 2021's move-in day*, which yielded a reach of 5,003 and garnered 798 engagements, 136 reactions and 662 post clicks; and *a photo gallery of first-year*

convocation and PTV service work photos, which yielded a reach of 5,401, garnered 896 engagements, 111 reactions, 785 post clicks and six shares.

Twitter, May 11, 2021-September 27, 2021 (@detmercy)

The Detroit Mercy Twitter page achieved 96,300 impressions. The average engagement rate was 1.4% and we received 287 link clicks. In addition, we experienced 146 retweets, 363 likes and 14 replies.

Instagram, May 11, 2021 – September 27, 2021 (@detmercy)

MarCom's Instagram account currently has 3,904 followers, up nearly 300 since early May. Some posts during this time included 2021 graduation photos and profiles of students, move-in day and the start of the current school year as well as major University releases and news. Instagram stories have provided information on the various activities around campus for students, staff and alumni. Insights are up more than 50% and the number of accounts reached across all stories and posts is well over 200,000.

Snapchat, May 11, 2021 – September 27, 2021 (@detmercy)

Detroit Mercy has more than 810 followers on Snapchat. Our Snaps are viewed 250-350 times on average.

LinkedIn, May 11, 2021 – September 27, 2021

The Detroit Mercy LinkedIn page has 41,791 followers. For the period of May 11 — Sept. 27, MarCom achieved a total of 315,726 impressions, 170,907 unique impressions, 13,866 clicks and 6,236 likes. In September, we wished a Happy 90th birthday to Fr. Gerald Cavanagh. This post produced 24,391 impressions, 684 reactions and 105 comments. In July, former Titan basketball star Willie Green was announced as head coach of the New Orleans Pelicans. This post produced 25,434 impressions, 613 reactions and 57 comments.

Web Site Traffic & Development

Thanks to a year of analysis, design, coordination, and coding, an improved design for the Detroit Mercy websites was launched on July 29. On both desktop and mobile layouts, we streamlined webpage headers and navigation menus, added an enhanced alert notification banner (currently used for COVID info), added a homepage highlight video, improved the design of "call-to-action" buttons, and made other refinements. All the primary changes are focused on improving our overall website usability, particularly in navigation and for prospective students. The enhancements provide:

- better accessibility and compliance with ADA mandates,
- better consistency – both across our sites and between user devices (desktop/mobile),
- better availability of critical University links across sites, especially related to recruitment,
- quicker-loading pages for visitors, and
- more prominent "call-to-action" links to encourage strategic user interactions like applying for admission.

Also, by simplifying webpage code, the project achieved a significant performance boost for our website management system (Cascade CMS), making the process of editing

of webpages significantly faster.

Finally, we expect that over time, the new website design and code changes will improve search engine rankings (SEO) for Detroit Mercy webpages.

We have lost some website maintenance capacity, due to one of our two part-time Web staffers dropping to just a few hours per week availability. Our part-timers have become important for reviewing, updating, and improving our hundreds of pages of existing Web content. We continue to clean up website content that has been modified by non-expert Web contributors across the University.

According to Google Analytics (Universal version), from May 11 to Sept. 26 of this year, the main website at www.udmercy.edu received the following user activity:

- 201,847 users
- 383,801 sessions
- 48.6% first-time visits (estimated)