
Justin R. Fraase

Strategic Communication | Executive Leadership |
Campus and Community Engagement

SUMMARY

Senior higher education leader with experience advancing institutional priorities through strategic communication, organizational leadership and cross-functional collaboration. Proven ability to lead complex initiatives, align strategy with operations and cultivate partnerships that elevate campus reputation and visibility. Brings a results-oriented approach grounded in strategic planning, operational insight and a commitment to enhancing stakeholder engagement.

EDUCATION

North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND - *Mass Communication (B.S.) and Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)*

EXPERIENCE

University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA - *Senior Director of Strategic Communications*

JAN. 2023 - present

- Lead strategic employee communications initiatives supporting more than 30,000 faculty, staff and student employees, aligning strategy with institutional priorities and employee engagement.
- Direct integrated communications strategy across email, web, SharePoint, social media, recruitment messaging and university-branded communication materials, implementing an employee-centered communication framework and employee value proposition strategy.
- Developed quarterly executive communications reports measuring email engagement, employee value proposition KPIs, web traffic, scroll depth, readability and audience behavior metrics to support data-informed decision-making and strategic content planning.
- Improved enterprise email marketing performance across a platform delivering more than 1.2 million emails annually, increasing open rates from 45.9% (2023) to 52.1% (2025) and click-through rates from 7.15% to 8.0% through strategic audience segmentation and content optimization.
- Led governance and migration efforts for a decentralized team of HR website contributors, reducing the site footprint by more than 300 webpages, simplifying more

than 130 pages and improving accessibility, quality assurance and user experience metrics.

- Partner with leadership, campus stakeholders and external agencies, including the Board of Regents Office, to develop coordinated communications and messaging related to major institutional initiatives, including paid parental leave, collective bargaining recertification, policy updates, inclement weather, retirement plan modernization and other situations impacting employees.
- Support campus efficiency and organizational change initiatives through strategic communications planning related to evolving hub-and-spoke service delivery models and change management efforts.
- Expanded visibility and employee engagement by scaling strategic content and channel optimization, more than doubling HR-related content across campus and health care channels year over year.
- Co-chair the Reward and Recognition Committee, leading development of campus-wide employee engagement initiatives, including the Hawkeye High-Five peer recognition program, expanded SPOT award eligibility for temporary and student employees and a pilot years-of-service recognition strategy.
- Serve on institutional leadership and governance groups, including the Human Resources leadership team, External Relations Council, University Brand Committee, Campus Communications Council and Internal Communications team. Co-founded and currently co-chair the Big Ten Academic Alliance HR Communications group to strengthen collaboration and knowledge-sharing across peer institutions.
- Lead and support employee engagement and institutional initiatives through Discover Your University, Hawkeyes for Charity giving campaign, and the Enterprise Summit planning committee, including the past development of the university's employee value proposition strategy aligned with Iowa's Strategic Plan Action and Resource Committee.

Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD - Vice President of Enrollment, Communications and Marketing

MAY 2020 - JAN. 2023

- Supervised Admissions, Financial Aid and Communications and Marketing.
 - Total operating and personnel budget of \$1.4 million.
 - Financial Aid administered approximately \$20 million annually.
- Led campus-wide enrollment strategy:
 - Graduate credit hours increased 38% from 2017 to 2022.
 - 5-year freshman cohorts maintained an average headcount of 332.
 - Campus achieved a 73% or higher freshman to sophomore retention rate in five of six years (2017-2022).
 - 6-year graduation rates increased from 52% to 58.7%.
 - Team increased undergraduate applications, admits and new student FAFSA submissions.

- Developed annual undergraduate recruitment and enrollment strategies, aligning efforts across statewide and regional initiatives, including the South Dakota Center for Statewide E-Learning, High School Dual Credit, Communications and Marketing, Admissions and Online and Continuing Education.
- Chaired the Enrollment Management Council, directing the initial development of Northern's first Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan, in partnership with EAB. Scope of consulting agreement included:
 - Target market analysis
 - Perception study
 - Communication and event audits
 - Financial Aid optimization
 - Scholarship modeling
- Implemented Slate (enrollment CRM) for cross-campus collaboration, workload efficiencies and new outreach methods to prospective students.
- Initiated implementation of TeamDynamix, a project management software for Communications and Marketing, and NextGen Scholarship Manager for Financial Aid.
- With an average marketing budget of \$450,000, developed omni-channel marketing campaigns, including digital, social, email, text messaging, video, print, radio, TV, streaming and billboards.
- Disseminated twice monthly email newsletter, *Northern News*, to approximately 20,000 individuals, including faculty and staff, high school counselors, parents, community members, legislators, Board of Regents members, alumni and donors.
- Member of Executive Leadership Team, Extended Leadership, Emergency Management Response Team, co-chair of COVID-19 Return-to-Campus Taskforce, and South Dakota Board of Regents Enrollment/Recruitment group.

Northern State University, Aberdeen, SD - *Director of Communications and Marketing*

JAN. 2017 - MAY 2020

- Led campus rebranding efforts, including a new university tagline, through surveys, focus groups and a student vote. Worked with the internal design team to brainstorm, create and implement a new institutional logo; obtained officially registered trademarks for Northern's two most widely used marks. Developed and enforced university brand standards, policies, online resources and brand guide.
- Working with the president, campaign co-chair and NSU Foundation, helped communicate the vision behind Northern's \$55 million Educational Impact Campaign. Spearheaded timely, relevant and strategic communications with campus, city and state officials regarding campus master plan, which totaled more than \$150 million in facility, scholarship and programming updates over a decade.
- To increase internal communication, implemented a unified digital TV network across campus, worked with campus editor to develop analytics for weekly campus email and create a monthly email that encourages sharing top campus highlights within departments. Coordinated regular town halls with the president and other administrators.

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- Increased likes/followers and engagement for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and YouTube. Initiated university Snapchat and TikTok channels and unified all social media channels to @northernstateu.
 - Coordinated the university's licensing program through the NSU Foundation, Wolf Shoppe, Athletics Team Store and external vendors. Licensing program through CLC, the licensing division for Learfield IMG College.

University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, ND - *Marketing Manager*

OCT. 2013 - JAN. 2017

- Created and implemented marketing campaigns and B2C lead generation for Office of Extended Learning programs, including online degrees, enroll anytime courses, and non-credit lifelong learning and professional development offerings. Campaigns ranged from local, on-campus promotions to nationwide coverage.
- Ran enterprise-level, Constant Contact email campaigns to an organically generated database that exceeded 50,000 prospective students.
- Managed a variety of ongoing and simultaneous projects, varying from bulk mailings of 25,000 to ordering promotional materials for membership-based programs.
- Member of the University & Public Affairs group and helped coordinate webpages, digital marketing campaigns, video shoots and social media campaigns for the institution.

Ulteig, Fargo, ND - *Brand Marketing Specialist*

JUNE 2012 - JULY 2013

- Inbound marketing tactics included website landing pages, search engine optimization, email outreach and calls-to-action to generate business leads. Managed B2B Google Ads.
- Formulated a company rebrand that included company voice, visual attributes, ads, new proposal and RFP format, and internal guides for client-focused employee groups. Developed a brand promise through employee and client surveys.

Wildflower Golf Course at Fair Hills Resort, Detroit Lakes, MN - *General Manager*

JAN. 2009 - JUNE 2012

- Coordinated and implemented a comprehensive five-year strategic plan for the golf course. The plan included marketing, operations, capital investments, course and maintenance improvements, employee structure, membership, competitors and threats, and future solutions.
- While maintaining staff levels, implemented 15% budget reductions, resulting in double digit net profit margins in 2010 and 2011.
- Increased members by 35% and membership revenue hit a 20-year high. Added a first-of-its-kind membership, the Mid-Day, expanding demand for mid-afternoon rounds, transforming an ordinarily slow time into a steady revenue stream.

Fair Hills Resort, Detroit Lakes, MN - *Marketing Director*

JAN. 2007 - JAN. 2009

- Outside sales and planning for 120+ annual summer events consisting of corporate retreats, board meetings, reunions, lake cruises and golf outings.
- Prepared a regionally focused marketing plan for the resort and golf course. Campaigns included digital and email marketing, social media, television, radio, direct mailing, billboards, print and a website redesign.

John Deere Electronic Solutions, Fargo, ND - *Communications Intern*

OCT. 2005 - JAN. 2007

- Wrote, evaluated and designed internal documents and training modules.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE

Incoming member, International Executive Board, FarmHouse Fraternity (2026-2032)

Co-chair, Greater Iowa City, Inc. Business Support Innovation Council (2025-present)

Business Connections Mentor, North Dakota State University College of Business (2025-2026)

Communications Committee, FarmHouse Fraternity (2024-present)

Board of Directors, Aberdeen Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (2021-2022)

Advisory Board (2022 president), Salvation Army of Aberdeen, South Dakota (2019-2022)

Committee Member (2022 chair), Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce Enhance Aberdeen Committee (2019-2022)

Steering Committee, 1 Million Cups Aberdeen (2018-2021)

Pearls & Rubies Editorial Board, FarmHouse Fraternity (2018-2021)

Board of Directors, Fargo Post 2 Legion Baseball Club (2013-2016)

LICENSES, CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Proficiency: University of Iowa (2025)

Google Project Management: Professional Certificate (2024)

Executive Leadership Program presented by Greater Iowa City, Inc. and the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business (2024)

National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI): Conflict and Controversial Issues (2024)

The Trade Desk Edge Academy Certified: Executive Program (2023) [*programmatic advertising*]

Amplifying Your Message Through Powerful Framing and Storytelling - LinkedIn Skills (2023)

Building University of Iowa Leadership for Diversity (BUILD) trainings (2023)

- Beyond the Numbers - Foundations for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Exploring the Influence of Implicit Bias in our Work and Lives

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- Putting it all Together - Strategies for Managing Difficult Conversations
 - Making the Paradigm Shift - From Diversity to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
 - LGBTQ Safe Zone: Trans Awareness

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - LinkedIn Skills (2022)

Google Ads - LinkedIn Skills (2021)

IS-909 Community Preparedness: Implementing Simple Activities for Everyone - FEMA (2020)

IS-29.A Public Information Officer Awareness - FEMA (2020)

IS-100.C Introduction to the Incident Command System - FEMA (2020)

G290 Basic Public Information Officer - State of South Dakota Office of Emergency Management (2020)

Inbound Certification - Hubspot (2016)

NOTABLES

Senior Leader Panelist, American Marketing Association Symposium for the Marketing of Higher Education Senior Leader Experience (2024) – Explored how relationship-building supports strategy, institutional reputation and professional leadership in higher education

Presenter, University of Iowa Artificial Intelligence Lightning Talks (2024) – Presented on the use of Microsoft Copilot to improve HR web content and readability

Contributed to the University of Iowa's nationally recognized retirement plan modernization initiative, which won a 2026 Pensions & Investments Eddy Award for employee communications and engagement strategy

Participant, TIAA Employee Value Proposition Summer Workshop (2023)

Presenter, UPCEA Central Regional Conference (2015) – *How to increase your university's inquiries with \$5,000*

Adjunct instructor, COMM374: Principles of Strategic Communication, University of North Dakota (2016)

Excellent understanding of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and SharePoint

Experience with Adobe InDesign, Photoshop and Premiere Pro, cPanel, Drupal, WordPress, SiteNow, Siteimprove, OmniUpdate, BrightEdge, SEMrush, Constant Contact, Hootsuite, Slate CRM, Everbridge (emergency management), Google Analytics (UA and 4), Google Tag Manager and Search Console, and Microsoft Copilot, ChatGPT, and Google Gemini.