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Marketing Faculty and Marketing Staff: Framework of Shared Opportunity

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ABSTRACT

Marketing faculty and university marketing professionals are finding opportunities to collaborate that deepen research in marketing for higher education, enrich the marketing student experience and enhance marketing effectiveness at their institutions. This exploratory research brief draws on two advancement experts to describe the potential-- and the challenges--of research in higher education marketing, reviews a sample of published research to identify the types of published collaborations and uses a case study of a public comprehensive university to identify types of marketing faculty/staff collaboration. As faculty across all disciplines are asked to take more leadership in marketing their schools and departments, marketing faculty have a unique opportunity to advance their research agendas and strengthen institutional brands through collaboration with their marketing staff colleagues.

INTRODUCTION

> Universities must work both hard and smart to build themselves as brands…to link themselves with that in which people take pride, with what they value as a society and with what they consider to be distinctive, central and enduring (Toma, 2003, p. 196).

Tenured and tenure track marketing faculty have a deep understanding about their university's strengths, values, and its distinctive, central and enduring character. Stories of the quality of faculty teaching, research and service--and of their impact on students--resonate with all stakeholder audiences. Faculty and students can speak with most authority about the distinctive and enduring impact of the institution. As service marketing theory suggests, marketing leaders encourage faculty (service providers) and students (clients) to integrate their messages and speak about the institution's impact.

Marketing faculty are uniquely positioned to tell the institution's story--defining and positioning the brand—with a strategic and research based approach. They bring to the university marketing effort conceptual frameworks and applied techniques. The power of faculty engagement in marketing work may have been overlooked in the past, but it is likely a direction of the future. The international Faculty Marketing Innovation Forum 2013 offers a "case study-driven

conference…providing a range of unique perspectives on how faculties, colleges and schools both leverage and contribute to their University's branding and marketing strategies." Can institutions leverage marketing faculty skills, while also enhancing faculty career success?

Initiating a research agenda

This exploratory research brief serves both academic researchers and marketing managers as they assess the potential and challenges of collaborating to advance teaching and research and to benefit their institutions. Two qualitative expert assessments of the potential for bridging the gap between marketing faculty and university advancement staff--both the scope of research topics in higher education marketing and the challenges unique to working in that environment are reported. Second, a sample of research articles from the leading academic journal for higher education marketing are reviewed for evidence of marketing faculty/staff collaboration. Finally, a case example identifying and classifying a cross section of marketing faculty and staff collaboration at a single public comprehensive university is presented. Directions for further research are proposed.

DYNAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION ENVIRONMENT

Engaging marketing faculty in marketing their institutions has been overlooked and underestimated for several reasons. One reason may be the stereotypical university tension between staff and faculty roles. Tenured faculty and untenured staff occupy very different roles and power bases in the organization. For years, marketing faculty worked hard to establish business as a respected discipline in liberal arts driven higher education institutions; the theoretical rather than the applied aspect of the field was emphasized. From the staff side, much marketing activity in higher education has been poorly funded, non-strategic, back of the house or consultant driven publications and logo design. Because the bulk of university staff work has been at the communications level, rather than the strategic marketing level, it has offered little opportunity for faculty research and publication.

However, marketing staff in higher education are taking on leadership roles at a new level, are responsible for larger budgets and need market research to direct their strategies. Similarly, an increasing number of marketing faculty members are focusing on higher education marketing, with the increasing status of the *Journal of Higher Education Marketing*. The new *American Marketing Association Higher Education Marketing Special Interest Group* offered its first conference track in 2012. Research engaging students, parents, faculty and staff or other stakeholders at one's home institution now provides a field for theory testing "right in the researcher's back yard."

When collaboration is facilitated by staff openness, marketing faculty can position themselves and their students to contribute to their university's branding and marketing strategies--and to leverage their results in academic publications. Following Boyer's model of the scholarship of discovery, application, integration and teaching, marketing practitioners and academics working together can shape future streams of academic research based on theory, hypothesis development and field testing in higher education marketing settings.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY

Wide scope of constructs to test in variety of university settings.

Where are the best opportunities for academic researchers to develop and test theory-based hypotheses--while tackling the challenges faced by marketing staff practitioners closest to the action? Can marketing faculty drive research programs that are substantive, relevant and capable of building collegial marketing teams within an institution? It is not surprising that this emerging blend of academic and applied skills has been captured by two recognized university communications and marketing leaders who are tenured faculty members and higher education marketing consultants. Two applied higher education monographs published by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)[i], offer expert interviews on opportunities for marketing faculty/staff collaboration.

Hayes (2009), professor of marketing at Xavier University and international higher education marketing consultant, uses the theoretical schemas of services marketing to offer a "how to" manual for marketing higher education, beginning with the fundamental question, "What do students want?" Services marketing concepts familiar to marketing faculty are applied to higher education settings examples, building a bridge between hypotheses and settings in which they might be tested.   If as Hayes and others suggest, "Creating a marketing culture on campus is a challenging and critical task…[and] is everyone's responsibility," marketing faculty can play a key role in developing the campus marketing culture.

Tom Hayes himself serves as an example of a marketing faculty member who has focused his faculty and professional interests in higher education marketing. Not surprisingly, he defines the core mission of a university, education, as "a service industry" and argues that universities are simultaneously engaged in a portfolio of related service businesses: hospitality, entertainment, food service, book and fashion merchandising and financial resources businesses (p. 20). Hayes links the developing theoretical frameworks of services marketing to best practices in higher education marketing and proposes action-oriented recommendations. He cites service marketing research by Zeithaml, Berry, and Parasuraman (1988, 1993), Shostack (1984), and Kotler, Hayes and Bloom (2002) as direct and immediately useful to higher education marketing/communication professionals.

Applying marketing principles and strategies to colleges and universities presents unique challenges. Hayes identifies ten distinctive higher education marketing issues: "Third party accountability, Client uncertainty, Experience is essential, Limited differentiability, Maintaining quality control, Making teachers into sellers, Allocating faculty and staff time to marketing, Reorienting the reactive to the proactive, Conflicting views on advertising, Limited marketing knowledge base" (Hayes, pp. 29-35). Marketing faculty bring a sensitivity to the higher education context, and can be effective change agents on campus and research partners for advancement.

A significant research topic in higher education marketing is the definition and measurement of university quality/brand/image/reputation and distinctive brand strengths. Hayes recognizes the challenges of measuring educational quality, distinguishing measures of process quality versus outcome quality. He applies Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1988) classification of dimensions of service quality: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, tangibles to higher education contexts with pragmatic examples (Hayes, pp. 64-66). Hayes proposed nine common ways educational institutions fail to deliver on quality promises: "failure to segment the market, failure to understand the institution's markets, Ivory Tower syndrome, unwillingness to adapt to change, failure to acquire and train service-oriented employees, silo mentality, dispersal of services, improper management of expectations" (Hayes, 67-70).

Marketing faculty can strengthen the conceptual approaches, problem definition and research methods in advancement shops. Faculty have the ability and the charge to bring a framework of analysis to marketing problems, narrow research topics, select a single aspect of the entire marketing program for research, thereby offering their advancement colleagues a research partnership with focus, continuity and substantive results. The benefit to marketing colleagues of collecting data from student consumers of educational services, while giving the students a chance to learn by participating in a focus group or survey research doubles the effectiveness of such a research project. A faculty research partner within the same institution, with similar goals and needs for thoughtful, accurate research—and access to theoretical and applied studies, reports and research colleagues, is a significant asset to university marketing staff.

Published research: Examples of marketing faculty/staff collaboration

Methodology Articles addressing university image/brand/reputation/name published in the Journal of Higher Education Marketing were selected for review. Branding was a topic expected to be broad enough to support conceptual, strategic and tactical research and one which had attracted significant research interest. 21 articles were identified as meeting the criteria. The sample naturally could be spit into three categories: broad conceptual studies aimed at theory construction (rather than tactical application) generally conducted by faculty; applied studies conducted by faculty but with no stated connection to their university's marketing strategy and studies conducted jointly by marketing faculty and staff.

Broad conceptual studies. Conceptual proposals to address higher education branding more appropriately and more strategically are common in the research literature. For example, Ng and Forbes (2009) present a conceptual argument for a more appropriate understanding of education and services marketing, based on core product, education, that is "a learning experience… the co-creation of the people within the university…the value is unstructured, emergent, interactive, uncertain and with a hedonic dimension."   McClung and Werner (2008) developed seven propositions to define a market value based approach to satisfy stakeholders in higher education, while expanding the scope of the marketing discussion to include segmentation, stakeholder type and the "strategic educational unit," the degree program. Helgesen (2008), introduced the concept of relationship marketing for retention   and measured several antecedents contributing to student "loyalty," arguing that retention was just as critical as customer acquisition in higher education. He sampled students from his own institution, a small (1600 students) maritime

oriented college on the western coast of Norway. Cetin (2004) selected two established public universities and two more recently opened "Foundation" (private) universities in Turkey and conducted quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with administrators regarding image. She identified assets and liabilities each university faced in its image development, contrasting characteristics of the two public with the two private universities.

Applied brand/image/quality studies: Alternatively, faculty have engaged in applied research that supported theory building, but without clear acknowledgment of collaboration with staff in their home institutions. For example, Warwick and Mansfield (2004), faculty at two different small private colleges, engaged in a study to compare the difference in risk assessment in the college selection process of parents and high school students on 19 college search criteria summarized as five factors.

Research studies conducted in collaboration with marketing staff. Limited research has analyzed the potential role of marketing faculty in interacting or directing research projects in the context of their own higher education institutions. However, that collaboration for publication is evident. Landrum, Turrisi and Harless (1998), two faculty members associated with Future Tech Inc and an employee of Future Tech Inc. published a study of statewide perceptions of university image measures and the likelihood of sending a child to the university studied. Karrh (2001) reported on an image study done for a Midwestern university to assess the effect of its re-positioning five years earlier and propose messaging to best position it in the future. Pike (2004), a Lecturer in the School of Advertising, published a study done for his university which was "one stage in an on-going perceptions and monitoring project at a small regional campus of the University of Queensland." In Haytko, Burris and Smith (2008) two marketing faculty and an administrator, report on the engagement of faculty, staff students and external constituents in the re-naming of University of Missouri-Rolla, which occurred in conjunction with a significant change in role and mission. Yang, Alessandri and Kinsey (2008), two members of the public relations staff at Syracuse University and a communications faculty member at Suffolk University, studied the constructs "university reputation" and "university-student relationship" using students in communication classes. No applied impacts were suggested, although the items potentially provide useful measures for on-going assessment of university reputation.

Bennett and Choudhury (2009) tested elements of a university branding model using perspective student subjects, focusing on three "post 1992" universities in East London. They argue that "branding is particularly important for the more recently created universities." [Post-1992 universities arose from the granting of full university status to tertiary level higher education institutions that formerly had specialized in the provision of vocational and occupational degrees and diplomas.] One of the most fruitful fields of research has clearly been in the context of the young university with a changing identity. In a smaller campus setting with a growth focus and a need to be nimble, innovation appears to emerge through collaboration.

Across all studies reviewed, no examples of the applied impact of the study on a specific university marketing strategy or tactics reported. Neither are there any instances of longitudinal studies that would validate the scales over time or assess movement in reputation levels. Similarly, scales were not tested across populations. In many cases, characteristics of the

population sampled were not clearly identified. Given the evidence that a university's reputation is similar to that of a multi-faceted diamond--a complex amalgam of differing perceptions amongst different audiences--this is a critical concern with many of the snapshot studies (Lowrie, 2007). The opportunity exists for on-going, longitudinal studies of university image or brand perceptions—the kind of work that tenured marketing faculty are uniquely equipped to offer their institution.

CAVEAT FOR MARKETING FACULTY: POLITICAL CHALLENGE

Marketing faculty, even those who are active consults with external organizations, may face challenges working within their own institutions. Larry Lauer, who has led and consulted across advancement settings for 40 years, identifies "typical problems and barriers encountered by advancement professionals" within their own institutions--and recommends pragmatic tools and solutions (Lauer, 2010, p. vii). These case-based caveats identified by Lauer, an "expert judge," can facilitate understanding between faculty who teach and research and their university marketing and communications staff colleagues who design and implement higher education marketing programs.

Whether a politician is "one who is skilled or experienced in the science or administration of government" or "one who seeks personal or partisan gain," often "by intrigue or maneuvering within a group," (Webster, 1999), Lauer argues that because universities are fundamentally different in character from businesses, advancement professionals must: "Learn to love the politics."

> Faculty see themselves as independent of management control, academic deans and departments heads often think of themselves as masters of their separate kingdoms and even other administrative department directors can consider themselves as…operating independently on a day to day basis. Bringing them together into an integrated approached to advancement…will take half your time" (Lauer, p. 30).

Lauer focuses on the pragmatic realities of "doing marketing" in the higher education environment. Simple schemas--that also offer research opportunity--are discussed: the faculty life cycle, the athletics cycles, dynamics of academic institutions (new, under strong leadership, on a plateau, experiencing staff and faculty unrest, in financial stress), types of presidents (visionary, elite academic, corporate head, consensus seeker, relationship builder, and church leader). Advancement is best served by a facilitative leadership style--and teaching marketing across the institution is the critical activity. Tools of advancement professionals are "account executives to work with academic and program leaders, task forces for coordination, action teams to launch initiatives, editorial priorities committees to reinforce brand characteristics" (Lauer, p. 129).

Lauer's judgments can guide marketing faculty as they engage in the research and communications programs of their own universities. Seeing the world through the eyes of a non-tenured advancement professional—who opens the door to collaborate with tenured faculty in a high pressure, fluid, political environment of higher education marketing--can be helpful to a

potential faculty research partner. Higher education marketing professionals lead institutions that are constantly responding to shared governance, changing state and federal legislative priorities, uncertain federal student aid funding levels, and preferences of lead donors. While seeking to raise the visibility and recognition of the array of educational and other services their institution offers to students, their families, the communities they serve and other audiences, these advancement professionals face rapid changes in communications tools and strategies as well as increasing competition from peers and from much larger online and nonprofit education providers. Because advancement professionals operate in a complex environment, it is not surprising that Lauer describes the "paranoia" and "insecurity" of advancement roles (Lauer, pp. 32 and 49). It is a statement about the organizational realities of university advancement roles that both Lauer and Hayes are tenured faculty, so more willing to speak as experts. Marketing is highly visible work about which everyone in the institution has an opinion; shared faculty governance can create extreme pressures on untenured staff . Lauer's sensitive description of the context in which advancement professionals work can aid faculty colleagues as they seek to collaborate.

In their books, Hayes (2009) and Lauer (2010) act as expert judges, generalizing across many university marketing projects. Many of their professional observations lack grounding in a theoretical structure. However, using their lenses--the intuitive, inductive approach of the research of discovery, marketing faculty can identify research questions of substantive practical and theoretical interest. Lauer observes, "As governments cut back funding and the market place becomes more competitive, advancement professional will move "front and center" (Lauer, p. 76). There is certainly no reason for marketing faculty to be left behind.

Engaging marketing faculty and staff in marketing research collaborations appears to offer publication opportunities, however, much more is at stake. This review offers a common starting point for advancement professionals, marketing faculty and students to and "enjoy the political challenge of making exciting things happen" (Lauer, p. 129). That collaboration is also driven by the fierce reality of the new higher education marketplace: "the effort to make one's institution relevant and distinctive is crucial to survival" (Hayes, p.206).

EXAMPLE OF MARKETING FACULTY/STAFF COLLABORATION

The most likely place for marketing faculty/staff collaboration to emerge is smaller institutions with heavy emphasis on enrolment growth, a culture of rewarding faculty service, and entrepreneurial faculty. The literature review suggests that it is in smaller and newer institutions that the need for strategic marketing is greatest—and the barriers between faculty and staff the lowest. A case example of a newly baccalaureate, public comprehensive institution, the University of South Carolina Beaufort indicates faculty and staff are collaborating to accelerate the marketing work on many levels.

The University of South Carolina established a two-year regional campus in Beaufort in 1959 on the original site of the antebellum institution, Beaufort College. The campus opened with 57 students and consistently increased enrollment while slowly expanding from its initial footprint. By the 1980s, USCB had developed into an eight-acre campus on the Beaufort River, which

included a renovated elementary school to which a theater had been added, historic homes converted for faculty offices, an art studio, and two other buildings.

The University began offering classes on Hilton Head Island in 1985. By 1989, students had the opportunity to pursue a few baccalaureate degrees through USC Aiken and USC Columbia cooperative programs. The specialized programs offered many classes on USCB's campus with students also occasionally travelling to Aiken or Columbia.

When International Paper donated 80 acres of land near Hilton Head Island to the school in 1994, campus leaders began to contemplate an expansion of USCB's two-year associate degree programs into four-year baccalaureate programs. Support from a variety of university and community leaders led to the state of South Carolina authorizing USCB to pursue provisional accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, thereby expanding its role and mission to a four-year, full service university and awarding its own baccalaureate degrees in 2002.

To enhance educational opportunities, USCB opened a new campus on 200 acres at the gateway to Hilton Head Island in Bluffton, South Carolina (30 miles from Beaufort) in August 2004. The new campus is just off of Interstate 95 and only 30 minutes from Savannah, GA. In the fall of 2005, on-campus student apartments opened on the Bluffton campus and occupancy increased each academic year. By 2012, USCB offered baccalaureate degrees in 26 areas of study, including nursing. A campus center with fitness facility, bookstore and dining was operating and on-campus housing had expanded to serve almost 500 students.

The 2002 change in university mission led to a dramatic increase in student enrollment. From 2002 to 2012, USCB increased its full time equivalent (FTE) enrollment from 690 to 1573. Reaching 3000 student enrollment in a competitive market environment remained the chancellor's goal. For this reason, advancement was led by a marketing-oriented vice chancellor, rather than historic practice of having a fundraiser head the unit.

With an entrepreneurial, marketing oriented chancellor eager to grow enrolment and firmly establish a larger footprint for the new university, the opportunities for collaboration are significant. Table 1 (following page) suggests the range of joint applied projects that might lead to research opportunities; the discussion below highlights specific examples.

University branding leadership. Faculty have historically played a leadership role in university branding. Moorer (2007) compares two case studies of university naming projects in which qualitative data suggest the power of faculty engagement in a name change. When USCB engaged in name change discussions in 2010-2011, faculty stepped into leadership. The marketing faculty researched academic studies on name changes and served on the senior university task force, providing critical direction and professional feedback.

Enhancing student marketing internship effectiveness. Marketing and communications faculty have provided very strong support of student interns working in USCB Marketing and Communications. By nominating students for internships and then coaching, mentoring and reviewing some of the work done by social media, web design interns, both the department and the students gain more from the internship experience.

Table 1

Marketing Faculty and Maketing Staff Collaboration:

Blending Skills for Faculty, Student and Institutional Advancement

Marketing Staff Role	MarketingTask	Marketing Faculty Role
• Initiate and structure project • Hire and manage consultant • Structure internal research • Maintain timeline to deliverables	**University Branding**	• Committee to select consultant • Identify relevant academic literature • Project scope determination • Subject expert on university branding committee • Engage students in focus groups, etc.
• Structure position • Set project goals • Hire/manage to deliverables	**Student Intern**	• Recommend top students • Coach and mentor student
• Formulate research question • Review research design • Participate in final presentation as client	**Student Research (for course credit)**	• Oversee research design to insure research question addressed • Monitor research implementation • Structure final presentation of deliverables to marketing staff
• Establish objectives and scope • Monitor quality of implementation • Mentor students to completion	**Student Initiated Projects**	• Comment on project/research design • Advise and review implementation • Review project results • Coach and mentor student
• Provide first two levels of architecture, templates, logos, photos, videos • Policies on links that take user off website • Web writing support • Specialist projects, e.g. faculty biographies	**Business Department Website**	• Draft key messages • Suggest student story ideas • Critical links • Deep content--e.g. curriculum listing • Engage students in evaluation
• Establish budget • Hire specialist firms, purchase media • Direct creative • Manage plan implementaion	**Business Department Recruiting Communications**	• Research current students' media use • Encourage students to participate in message formulation • Propose communications plan ideas • Provide annual recruiting data to evaluate communications plan

Brand perception research. USCB Marketing Communications has benefited greatly from student marketing research projects. One example is on-going brand perception research. Two years after USCB introduced its Sand Shark athletic brand, a student market research team conducted research on student perceptions and student adoption of the brand mark (Author, 2011).

Student initiated marketing projects. Two sub-branding projects have been proposed and led by student government at USCB: Spirit mark creation (sub branding of the athletic mark) and branding of the alumni association. Student government and staff have conducted joint research and the student government undertook one project as part of a market research class. Faculty coaching and input is much more effective in these settings than staff input, which is perceived as "heavy handed administrative power wielding."

Marketing academic program promotion. USCB offers a Saturday Business plan for degree completion. Employed adults with 30 hours of earned credits complete their degrees in business in a Saturday class format. To target this segment, the marketing faculty leader collaborates in designing a recruiting and promotional plan with USCB marketing/communications and conducts student research to evaluate the results.

Decentralized website design. Faculty leadership in departmental web design has been critical for USCB, given the rapid development of academic programs. Faculty have led modifications of the department architecture to meet the unique needs of specific programs, captured key messages in department meetings and converted to copy for web and print, obtained student quotes and stories, uploaded student project information and provided external validation/sources for department accomplishments. In several cases, faculty from English, Studio Art and Computational Science have loaned their skills to their colleagues to sharpen the impact of departmental websites.

Social media. Faculty have collaborated with student interns to develop student-led social media policies. At the end of a successful internship, the students have been invited by faculty to communications classes to share initiatives they led and update the class on latest practices in this emerging communications medium. Marketing faculty led in creating and maintaining program Facebook sites. A marketing faculty initiative led the marketing staff into new advertising media—Facebook and LinkedIn ads.

CONCLUSION

As higher education continues to experience the 'chaotic disruption' caused by technology, the emergence of the for-profit sector and the reduction in state funding, school and departmental level branding and marketing are becoming more critical. For example, the Faculty Marketing Innovation Forum 2013 offers a "case-study-driven conference…proving a range of unique perspectives on how faculties, colleges and schools both leverage and contribute to their

university's branding and marketing strategies." This exploratory research brief identifies this emerging issue in the dynamic business education environment and suggests three perspectives from which to view the opportunities it creates.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This exploratory study needs focus and deepening to contribute to research and practice. As a research brief, it has suggested opportunities (and challenges) of marketing faculty and marketing professional staff collaborating within a single institution. The brief suggests three directions for future research. First, qualitative research to identify additional marketing staff/faculty collaborations in several universities to develop a typology that describes scope and impact of resultant projects. Interviews or surveys of marketing staff in public comprehensives and small privates might reveal other, non-published collaborations with faculty. Through polls of university marketing staff members, one might capture examples, methods, and strength/weaknesses of engagement/reliance on faculty to support marketing work. This research would test the proposed framework of opportunities—or expand it.

Secondly, a larger cross-section of articles from Journal of Marketing for Higher Education might be reviewed—or a broader range of periodicals considered—to identify more accurately the scope of published research conducted by faculty/staff collaborators. This data might lead to assessments of the most likely areas of successful, high-impact collaboration.

An issue raised by this research is the distinction between paid research work conducted by professional consultants and applied academic research. A study of models for differentiating consulting applications and original research in other fields such as medicine or engineering might be useful as the field of higher education marketing develops.

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[i] CASE is the international professional association for advancement officers. "Advancement" is the American termto describe the university unit responsible for fundraising, marketing and communications--and the staff and activities associated with it.

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