

**DIVISION:** Division of the President  
**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs  
**PLAN ID:** 1316

## 5. Working in Partnership

### 5.1 Support the opening and operationalizing the Markham Centre Campus.


**Action/Strategy:**

- i. Increase broad public awareness and understanding and support for York's Markham Centre Campus.
- ii. Work with internal and external partners to execute an integrated communication and marketing plan, in support of MCC's community/ government relations, research and advancement strategies.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

- i. and ii. (Metrics will depend on the plan to be developed)

**Evaluation Status:**

 On Track


- iii. Participate in and support the work of the MCC Working group committees.

- iii. Membership and active participation on the following committees:  
Academic Planning, Engagement  
and Communication Capital Project and Operational Planning

 On Track

- iv. Participate in defining how MCC Communications will be supported and managed after opening.

- iv. Develop Communications Service Model and corresponding budget.

 On Track

### 5.2 Support GCRE initiatives to strengthen York's partnership network

**Action/Strategy:**

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

**Evaluation Status:**

**DIVISION:** Division of the President  
**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs  
**PLAN ID:** 1316

i. Continue to strengthen York’s partnership network by:  
 Developing a Partnership Website, and  
 Develop a CEO kit  
 Develop a webpage & communication product to convey the key findings from the Economic and Social Impact Report

Website and CEO kit developed



**6. Living Well Together**

**6.1 Strengthen and enhance Institutional Reputation by incorporating and amplifying York’s distinct, persuasive, and differentiated brand that clearly sets York apart from the competition.**

**Action/Strategy:**

i. Drive and support the institutional brand differentiation strategy by incorporating York’s brand in marketing and communications activities and divisional planning and operations including:

Embedding the institutional brand promise/positioning and messaging and design in C&PA divisional planning;

Integrating the York Brand Filter as a divisional decision-making tool;

Actively support and leverage institutional internal and external Communication strategies including Web, Social Media and Media Relations.

Actively participate in pan-university campaigns and initiatives.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

Broad Reputation Measured by:

Rankings: Maclean’s National Reputation Ranking  
 Target: Maclean’s: Maintain or improve ranking at 21/49

THE Impact rankings  
 Target: maintain 33/767 universities

THE world university rankings  
 Target: maintain 401-500 ranking

QS ranking  
 Target: maintain 531-540 current

ICMC Theme measures:  
 % participation rate generating original content  
 % participation rate amplifying C&PA content  
 Potential Reach  
 # of posts  
 Total engagements

**Evaluation Status:**



**6.2 Drive the institutional brand differentiation strategy across the university by incorporating York’s brand in divisional planning and operations.**

**Action/Strategy:**

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

**Evaluation Status:**

**DIVISION:** Division of the President

**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs

**PLAN ID:** 1316

i. Support operationalizing the Brand across the communications eco-system and university

Partner with EP&C to develop and implement brand training modules (i.e., brand filter, templates, messaging) for York faculty and staff about the importance of the brand to York and their role in helping to bring it to life.

Soft launch to introduce brand marketing & communications tools.

Launch impactful multi-layered paid advertising campaign (institutional, faculty, program marketing).

Brand embedded in IRP Framework and divisional IR Plans (to inform business planning, decision-making and reflect in operational processes and procedures).

Develop plan to monitor, assess, and address pan-university brand communications adoption.

Embed brand language and visuals in all C&PA communications including Digital, MR, YFile and York University Magazine content; create central News hub and editorial team.

Advance high profile initiatives with impactful marketing and communications support to ensure brand launch is successful and breaks through (i.e. UAP, Pres Report, ESIR).

Support branded assets for C&PA division.

i. Campaign launch; TAD organizational learning program, brand guidelines, messaging adherence, tools and templates usage (website activity), creative/messaging reflected in program marketing and Faculty advertising

On Track

Reputation; campaign effectiveness and message break through

Embed Brand in IRP Framework

Audit of marketing efforts against brand messaging and visual guidelines performed by C&PA and ICMC members resulting in report to PVP (tbc 6 months and one year).

Impressions from paid media (Brand, Digital and traditional (except for Influencer), local and international advertorials etc.). Target: Maintain impressions of 138M for paid media.

ii. Support Strategic Enrolment Management Program to help diversify our student base and strengthen domestic recruitment and conversion through lead generation (advertising campaign).

ii. maintain or increase lead generation vs. year prior.

Completed

**6.3 Broaden Pan-University Digital Strategy.**

**Action/Strategy:**

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

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**DIVISION:** Division of the President

**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs

**PLAN ID:** 1316

i. Execute pan-university Web Optimization strategy to align York’s multitude of web properties. Phase 1:35 website optimized Sept 2020. Increase the marketing and brand focus on website development through C&PA consultation and guidance with Faculties and Divisions regards web optimization.

Educate York’s digital community on best practices for web optimization including effective web architecture, writing for SEO, AODA compliance, and usage of Wordpress expertise and google tracking and reporting.

Standardize guidelines to help ensure consistent user experience (i.e. Consistent navigation by type of page/site, linking to single-source content, facts, figures, testimonials, etc.).

Create consistency and efficiency for university web designers by introducing “modular design” approach and evolving modules to meet user needs.

Launch the new/improved main yorku.ca web page and navigation (sub pages) that reflects new brand and UAP priorities using SEO and rich media.

- Phase 2: 2021

Continue to expand broad adoption of web optimization strategy across the institution including sub-brands, ORU’s others not on 2014 theme.

Formalize and implement Search Engine Optimization Strategy.

Complete single source content strategy.

- Faculty profiles
- Course descriptions
- Financials
- Grad studies
- Campus maps

Introduce performance marketing practices to measure digital and social media advertising/campaigns.

Improve digital reporting.

Leverage new pan-university web governance structure (Digital Experience Council), ensuring consistency and maximize user experience across York’s websites.

Measures:

Adoption and completion of phase 1 (aug. 31, 2020) and 2 of web optimization strategy (Sept-April 2021).

Audit of C&PA sites and improved web metrics YOY (Pageviews, Unique pageviews, Avg. time on page vs. industry standard, bounce rate vs. industry benchmark avg, feedback from button on site).

Tools for ICMC members to report on same metrics and also reduction of pages on sites (before and after).

Formalized SEO strategy and tagging strategy – April 2021.

On Track

**6.4 Increase awareness, audience reach and understanding through high quality, visually engaging content.**

**Action/Strategy:**

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

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**DIVISION:** Division of the President

**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs

**PLAN ID:** 1316

Enhance digital content creation across all institutional platforms.  
 Adopt and evolve content creation strategy to work within the new COVID19 environment.  
 Improve speed of institutional content sharing on digital platforms (i.e. SOPs).  
 Continue to improve standardized templates and protocols.  
 Improve "local" freedom to act in responding to unexpected situations and trends in community management.  
 Capitalize/leverage new digital platforms or technology to enhance/expand priority content (ie. Launching new TikTok channel).  
 Improve digital team's agility while continuing to create engaging and innovative content incl. animation & interactive content.  
 Evolve brand voice and personality to become more approachable on specific social channels (Instagram to start).  
 Prioritize engaging content – focusing on strong visual media that fits with the audience it is being shared with.

i. Target: Maintain top 3 ranking vs competitors in cross channel engagement rate per follower  
 Achieve 20% growth in cross channel audiences (social) YOY

On Track

ii. Performance of C&PA institutional platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube) vs. the global higher education sector benchmark for engagement rate per post and cross channel audience growth.

On Track

(Note: in order to be consistent with Rival IQ's terminology, engagement rate per post is now engagement rate per follower.)

iii. TikTok metrics to be assessed and baseline established and 8 new marketing ideas.

On Track

iv. Audit of content and reflection of brand on a quarterly basis with 80%+ goal.

On Track

v. Awards

Completed

**6.5 Model new and deeper forms of collaboration and continue to build partnerships that serve as vital catalysts for positive change.**

**Action/Strategy:**

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

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**DIVISION:** Division of the President  
**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs  
**PLAN ID:** 1316

Expand Influencer Strategy:

i. Identify and implement non-traditional organic and paid initiatives to capitalize on new innovations. (e.g. Macleans sponsorship, paid social media micro-influencers, York U student influencers).

i. Measures by initiative

Not On Track

ii. Identify and support key profile/reputation enhancing opportunities of the President’s GRACE committee.

ii. Speaker engagements as thought leaders

Completed

iii.. Collaborate and support Alumni Engagement’s implementation of a phased, reduction of the printed edition of the alumni magazine and move to full e-mail distribution only.

iii. Magazine plan on track, measures and awards  
 10% YOY increase in returning users  
 YOY increase in total subscriptions. (from 285 to 1,500)  
 Increase average session duration from 1.30  
 Reduce/maintain current bounce rate at 21%  
 10% YOY increase in total and unique page views.

On Track

iv. Undertake an editorial and visual refresh of yFile to become AODA compliant, reflect brand visual identity and new content features.

iv. Increase in yFile measures YOY:  
 Bounce rate of home page vs. industry benchmark  
 Average time on page vs. industry benchmark  
 Total Pageviews  
 Total # of Users, % increase

On Track

v. Continue partnership with The Conversation Canada.

v. Metrics from The Conversation with YOY % increases:  
 # published articles (target: maintain)  
 # published articles on new MR site (establish baseline)  
 # reads (total and from articles published on new MR site) (target: 10% YOY increase)  
 Global readership reach (target: 10% increase)

On Track

vi. Leverage new membership with the National News Media Council (NNMC) through engagement, member training, meditation, advocacy, and learning opportunities.

vi. NNMC activities (establish baseline).

Progressing

vii. In collaboration with ICMC, actively identify and cultivate ‘influencers’ who could amplify institutional and act as brand ambassadors.

vii. influencer metrics to be established and baseline set in 2020/2021.

Progressing

**DIVISION:** Division of the President

**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs

**PLAN ID:** 1316

**6.6 Broaden/deepen positive/balanced media coverage of York in support of institutional and academic priorities.**

**Action/Strategy:**

i. Refreshed media relations strategy (2020/21 is year five of a five-year plan). Key actions include:  
 New MR website  
 Improved Experts Guide  
 Photography Plan  
 Short form information on Web i.e. Q&As (multi-audience)  
 Increased focus on supporting international MR opportunities through targeted proactive pitching in key markets (aligned with YI)  
 Develop new protocol with VPRI to guide support for academics/research

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

i. Media relations KPIs:  
 % growth in unique media stories (target: 10% incr. YOY)  
 % of which were positive/neutral in tone (target: maintain)  
 % of total unique media stories as academic and research (target: maintain)  
 Total impressions (reach) of media stories (target: 10% incr. YOY)  
  
 Baseline # of international media stories  
  
 % growth/# of new experts added (target: 10% increase)  
  
 MR website measures: (baseline)  
 - Total Pageviews  
 - unique Pageviews  
 - Time on page

**Evaluation Status:**

 Progressing

**6.7 Foster effective university governance in support of communications strategy.**


**Action/Strategy:**

Review and recommend revisions to relevant Brand stewardship and Brand management policies and guidelines.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

New Brand stewardship policy in place and approved by BOG.  
  
 Consultation and roll out plan to be developed to engage and inform community members as new Brand Stewardship Policy Procedures/ Guidelines are developed.

**Evaluation Status:**

 Completed

**6.8 Support the delivery of the UAP priorities through enhanced communications service delivery.**

**Action/Strategy:**

With the support of the president, strengthen the C&PA team to bolster capacity, broaden expertise and enable C&PA leadership to increase strategic positive impact of the division.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

i. Continue to analyze effectiveness of service delivery and apply brand filter to enhance our ability to respond to changing needs.

**Evaluation Status:**

 On Track

**DIVISION:** Division of the President  
**UNIT:** Communications & Public Affairs  
**PLAN ID:** 1316

- ii. Continue to onboard new staff and create opportunities for cross-functional teams to interact and work together on projects/assignments.  On Track
- iii. Provide team building opportunities to build stronger group collaboration, enhanced team agility, that fosters a "change" management culture in C&PA.  Completed

**6.9 Valuing People and Strengthening the Workplace: Drive positive change by contributing to developing a high-performance pan-university communications team leading to better alignment, understanding and integration of communication efforts.**

**Action/Strategy:**

- i. Demonstrate/enhance York "as an employer of choice" by identifying and supporting staff development and pride initiatives.
- ii. Optimize divisional operations and service provision by ensuring efficient and effective use of resources. (i.e. RFPs, budgets, resources, processes).
- iii. Supporting and enabling internal auditing practices by managing management action plans for the Social Media audit. (i.e. Pan university repository for communicators established).
- iv. Support the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy by enabling a culture that instills human rights, equity and action in all divisional operations.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

- i. Pride initiatives and staff development opportunities provided to enhance employee engagement, respond to leading trends and enhanced service delivery.
- ii. Planned RFPs completed, Short-term and long-term sustainable priority-based budget plans approved in accordance with institutional financial framework; processes reviewed/enhanced to create efficiencies.
- iii. Completion of Social Media Audit management action plans (i.e. repository).
- iv. Ensure all staff have awareness and understanding of, and availability to participate in REDI workshops, and events provided through The Centre of Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion.

**Evaluation Status:**

- Completed
- Completed
- Progressing
- Completed

**6.10 Maximize efficiencies and effectiveness in the delivery of Communications to all audiences (internal and external).**

**Action/Strategy:**

- i. Support research to improve evidence-based decision making and improve the effectiveness of communication efforts.
- ii. Leverage and review new and existing technology solutions to enable reporting of pan-university communication outcomes and results.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

- i. Continue to conduct and evolve brand advertising research to ensure evidence-based decisions to track success of our brand work and inform the evolution of the brand campaign.
- ii. Enhance ability to measure and report on communication success measures and pan-university communication outcomes.

**Evaluation Status:**

- On Track
- On Track



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**6.11 Foster a great sense of community engagement and pride in York University.**



**Action/Strategy:**

- i. Continue to embed internal communication strategies and tactics into all institutional communication plans.
- ii. Strengthen labour relations and employee engagement by collaborating with Labour relations to develop and implement the university’s labour bargaining strategy.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

- i. Internal communication plans developed and initiated.
- ii. Labour website data total visits and subscribers. Labour relations outcomes.

**Evaluation Status:**

-  On Track
-  On Track

**6.12 Safeguard York’s reputation from detrimental impacts of adverse incidents, issues and events.**

**Action/Strategy:**

Enable a coordinated, planned and proactive approach to issues management by:

- i. Continuing to lead efforts in reviewing, recommending, and implementing improvements to processes, procedures, and distribution of institutional communications.
- ii. Continue to lead COVID-19 Pandemic institutional internal communications (faculty and staff) in support of the University’s emergency response protocol. i.e. EOC protocol, Institutional Comms protocol
- iii. Continuing to assess and use Issue management Framework to track and respond to potential issues.

**Measures/Metrics/Milestones:**

- i. Provide strategic communications advice and counsel to York’s Emergency Operations Centre
- ii. and iii.  
 Chair Communications sub-committees  
 Develop/manage institutional internal communications plan/protocol/process
- Effectively manage:  
 Community Mass e-mail distribution  
 Website updates www.yubettertogether  
 Social media  
 Video(s)  
 Media Relations

**Evaluation Status:**

-  On Track
-  On Track
-  On Track