

Marketing and Communications

This group develops and aligns strategic messaging, branding, and outreach efforts to support NDSU's institutional transformation goals, with a focus on student recruitment and retention. This group collaborates across all units, offices and departments to enhance the university's visibility, communicate its value proposition, and create compelling, student-centered narratives to attract prospective students, engage current students, and reinforce NDSU's identity as a forward-thinking, accessible, and research-driven land-grant university.

Goals, Timelines, and Resources

Goal 1: Clarify what it means to be a Bison.

- Timeline for action: April 2024-July 2024
- Resources for implementation:
 - Coordination for campus-wide discovery.
 - Creativity in rethinking what it means to be a Bison.

Goal 2: Develop brand promise, platform, and pillars.

- Timeline for action: August 2024-October 2024
- Resources for implementation:
 - Express perceptions and meaning of NDSU community members into a brand promise that captures the transformation and forward thinking culture of NDSU.
 - Identify institutional strengths.
 - Articulate the impact of the institution.

Goal 3: Gain feedback to finalize a refreshed set of brand standards.

- Timeline for action: November 2024– April 2025
- Resources for implementation:
 - Engagement with institutional leadership for feedback.
 - Engage students, faculty, and staff for feedback.

Goal 4: Rebuild the NDSU website.

- Timeline for action: April 2024- June 2025
- Resources for implementation:

- o Clean existing content and pages.
- o Build relevant pages for recruitment.
- o Adjust navigation for recruiting students, retaining students, and assisting staff in daily work and student success initiatives.

Work Group Members

The Transform Marketing and Communications Working Group conducts its work through a collaborative network of colleagues across campus, drawing on diverse perspectives to ensure the university's messaging is cohesive, authentic, and impactful. By engaging partners from multiple units and disciplines, the group works to reflect NDSU's institutional voice, imagery, and values with consistency and creativity—amplifying the university's efforts to recruit and retain students through unified and compelling storytelling.

Point of Contact for Questions, Concerns, and Suggestions

Kathryn Kloby, VP Marketing and Communications

Metrics (for Internal Reference)

Goal 1: Clarify what it means to be a Bison.

- Timeline for action: April 2024-July 2024
 - Metrics:
 - Conduct focused discovery interviews of members of cabinet and other university leaders to begin to shape how students, faculty, staff, and alumni perceive the NDSU experience and its impact.
 - Hold focus groups across students, faculty, staff.
 - Collect qualitative information and continue the engagement and review process across stakeholders for a draft NDSU Brand Guidelines.

Goal 2: Develop brand promise, platform, and pillars.

- Timeline for action: August 2024-October 2024
- Metrics:
 - Prepare and review draft versions of the brand promise, platforms, and pillars.
 - Gain feedback from key stakeholder groups.
 - Prepare finalized language to introduce to the campus community.

Goal 3: Gain feedback to finalize a refreshed set of brand standards.

- Timeline for action: November 2024– April 2025
 - Reengage discovery participants and broaden input to additional members of the NDSU community to review and provide feedback of draft guidelines.
 - Present guidelines to key communicators and campus leadership for early enforcement and adoption.

Goal 4: Rebuild the NDSU website.

- Timeline for action: April 2024- June 2025
 - Build a web team in UR to lead and support in the web environment.
 - Collaborate with IT to support the NDSU website.

- o Build infrastructure of a Web Team – a group led by UR and IT to support web principals who work in the web environment across campus and support units such as divisions, colleges, offices and departments.
- o Integrate design elements of the new NDSU Brand Guidelines into the university homepage and web pages.
- o Cut content.
- o Develop new navigation for ease, as well as new pages to build storytelling platforms for institutional context and impact.
- o Modernize web hosting and bring all units onto one CMS.

Summary Report

Outcomes 2054-2025

The Transform Marketing and Communications Working Group has played a central role in advancing NDSU's institutional priorities around student recruitment and retention. Through a highly collaborative, cross-campus network, the group has developed and implemented unified messaging and visual strategies that align with the Transform initiative. Their work has strengthened brand consistency, amplified NDSU's value proposition, and elevated the university's presence across multiple platforms. By harnessing the collective expertise of campus partners, the group has ensured that communications authentically reflect the institution's voice, mission, and impact—helping to attract prospective students, engage current ones, and support long-term enrollment goals.

Looking ahead, the group will continue its work by ensuring the university's brand guidelines are fully brought to life across all channels. This includes the consistent application of voice and visual identity in outdoor and digital advertising, admissions materials, recruitment collateral, and marketing assets across the institution. We will provide more opportunities for training and consultation. The group will also focus on increasing the strategic sophistication of NDSU's web presence, recognizing its vital role in the student journey. In addition, we will prioritize transparency and shared learning by presenting data on advertising performance and providing regular updates to the campus community. These efforts are designed not only to deepen our collective understanding of the brand and its measurable outcomes, but also to embed the brand more fully into our institutional culture—including how we communicate in one-to-one interactions with students in support of their success.