

# **Survey on Planning Programs' Strategic Communications Activities**

**February/March 1999**

**Analysis and Report of Results**

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**Prepared by the**

**ACSP Committee on Strategic Communications for Planning Programs**

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## Overview

The ACSP Committee on Strategic Communications for Planning Programs conducted a survey of member schools to determine: the extent to which programs engage in strategic communications activities; what kinds of activities they engage in; what needs for strategic communications they have; and whether programs have formal strategic communications plans and/or see the value in having them. The survey was administered during the months of February and March in 1999. A total of 93 programs, contacted via email, the postal service, and/or telephone, were asked to complete the survey. Fifty-three, or, 57% of the programs answered the survey. The response rate was lowest among the Northeastern planning programs (35%), and highest among the Southern programs (80%). (See Table 1.) A list of the programs responding in each region is found in the Appendix.

As could be expected, many schools engage in communication activities. For the most part, however, these are fairly ad-hoc: schools use different means to contact people but few, if any, schools have organized their actions according to a coherent plan. In fact, when asked whether a strategic communications plan would be useful to them, they answered positively. However, they often added that there could be no standard plan for all schools (given wide program variation in size and budget), and that what they most needed was help with specific items (in particular, creation of material to distribute in high-schools and colleges).

Schools use print and electronic media to reach their target audiences, but many seem to agree that nothing is more effective than actual meetings between people (e.g., conferences, information sessions, exhibits). Having a presence in the university and in the community was also mentioned as being valuable. Here, special events were deemed important, as were op-ed pieces in local papers and project work on neighborhood issues.

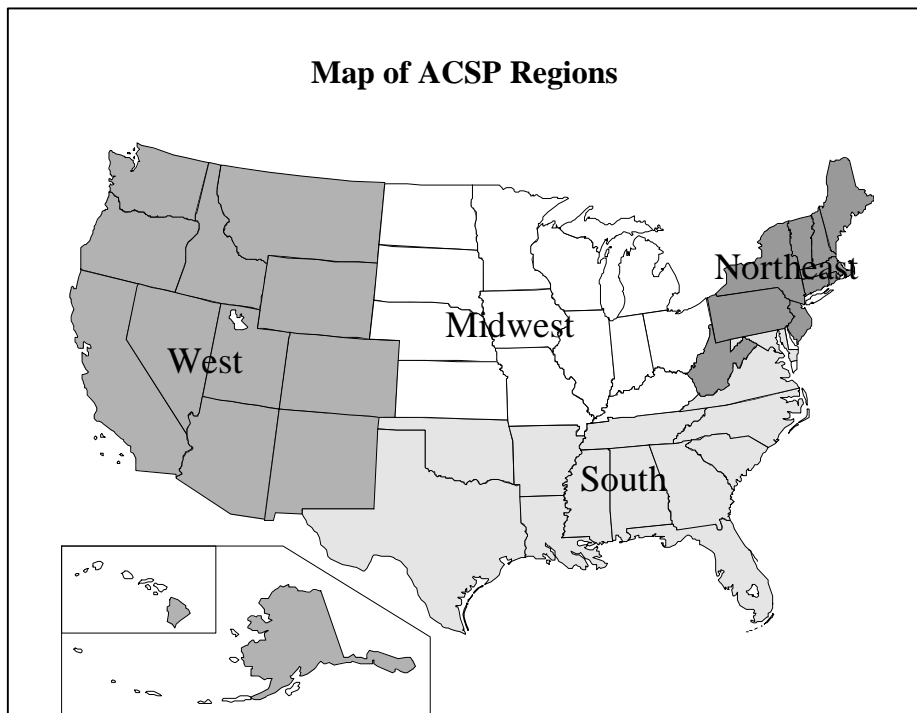
The audiences that schools of planning want to reach are varied: from prospective donors to university authorities to professional associations and federal agencies. However, it appears that schools' greatest needs are for effective communication is that with prospective students and the general public, rather than with specific organizations and institutions. Indeed, it seems that most efforts are currently targeted at those whose actions may have an *immediate* impact on schools (e.g., university administration, professional associations), but that the greatest need for help concerns outreach to those who can affect the schools' *long-term future*. In this type of strategic communication, what needs to be sold is not any particular planning program, but the *field of planning* as a whole.

The responses to the survey suggest there is a role for ACSP to play in developing material that would help planning schools achieve greater visibility in the university and in the community. Further, to maximize the effectiveness of its efforts, ACSP should work in conjunction with the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners, as well as with federal agencies and other organizations concerned with city and regional planning issues. Therefore, two immediate activities are suggested for ACSP to undertake. First, ACSP should develop and distribute to all schools a

**Table 1**

**Response to Survey on Planning Programs' Strategic Communications Activities**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Number of ACSP Programs</b>	<b>Number Responding</b>	<b>Percent of Region Responding</b>
<b>Northeast</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>Midwest</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>59%</b>
<b>South</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>West</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>67%</b>
<b>Non-U.S.</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57%</b>



synthesis of "best practice" in strategic communication (e.g., a list of valuable activities, a sample press-release or op-ed piece). Second, ACSP should seek opportunities to work with the organizations mentioned above to develop and distribute material on planning as a profession, and on planning education in general, to raise overall awareness of what is considered to be an under-recognized and under-valued field.

The remainder of this report provides a summary of the survey answers. Verbatim responses by program to the survey questions will be provided as hard copy to ACSP's official archive site at the University of Cincinnati. An electronic copy will be provided to the current ACSP President, Bruce Stiffler of Florida State University, for inclusion in possible future electronic archiving of ACSP material.

The six questions of the survey are listed in Table 2. It can be seen that the questions were largely posed as open-ended. Therefore, this report on survey responses focuses primarily *on the range of answers that programs gave to the questions, rather than on the number of times a specific answer to a particular question was given.*

This report was prepared by the ACSP Committee for Strategic Communications whose members include: Hilda Blanco, Raphael Fischler, Alice Jones, Nancey Green Leigh (Chair), and Wim Wiewel. Questions or comments about this report should be addressed to Nancey Green Leigh.<sup>1</sup>

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**Table 2**

**Survey Questions of Planning Programs' Strategic Communications Activities**

1. Departments or programs can gain visibility in a wide variety of ways, and with a wide variety of audiences (i.e., potential students, community/government agencies, the media, the larger university community, and potential donors).
  - a) Which groups of people or organizations have an interest in the activities of your department or program?
  - b) Which groups have the greatest ability to impact your organization (either positively or negatively)?
  
2. To achieve visibility with these audiences:
  - a) What recurring activities do you engage?
  - b) Who helps implement these activities?
  - c) How are these activities funded?
  
3. What do you consider particularly successful methods for communicating with your audiences?
  
4.
  - a) Do you have audiences from whom it is particularly difficult to gain visibility and support?
  - b) Who are your primary competitors in your search for support?
  
5.
  - a) Do you have a marketing or communications strategy?
  - b) If so, can you either fax it to us, or if not written, briefly outline it for us.
  
6.
  - a) Do you think the development of a prototype marketing and communications strategy tailored to planning programs would be useful ?
  - b) If so, what aspects of marketing and communication in particular would you like this prototype to address?

## Summary of Survey Responses

**Question 1: “Departments or programs can gain visibility in a wide variety of ways, and with a wide variety of audiences (i.e., potential students, community/government agencies, the media, the larger university community, and potential donors).**

- a) Which groups of people or organizations have an interest in the activities of your department or program?**
- b) Which groups have the greatest ability to impact your organization (either positively or negatively)?”**

The first survey question sought to gain insight into planning programs’ visibility with their various audiences. A wide range of groups of people and organizations were identified as having an interest in the activities of planning programs. These can be grouped into two categories: entities within and outside the university.

Within the university, the entities identified included:

- university administrations, campus special area programs (i.e., Latin American Studies, African Development, South East Asian Studies, Near Eastern Studies, Women’s Studies) and institutes (i.e., environment and international development),
- academic programs in public affairs and community development that are seen to complement and compete with planning programs,
- prospective, current and past students (alumni), and
- specially constituted advisory boards to programs.

A broad range of entities outside of the university were identified as having an interest in the activities of planning programs. These included:

- the national planning organizations of APA, AICP, ACSP, and PAB in the U.S.,
- the Royal Town Planning Institute, Higher Education Funding Council, the University Management Group, Planning Institute of British Columbia in Canada,
- national associations such as the Community Development Society, National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials,
- four-year colleges, community colleges, and local K-12 schools,

- state legislatures,
- state chapters of APA,
- local communities,
- city government agencies, state government, federal government,
- certain foundations, nonprofits/community based organizations,
- consulting firms which seek to use programs' reputations to help obtain contracts and which hire program students,
- other employers of student interns and planning graduates,
- donors (actual and potential), and
- the regional professional community.

Those audiences identified as having the greatest ability to impact planning programs (either positively or negatively) included:

- the home institution,
- Board of Regents,
- college and department faculty,
- Advisory Boards,
- the press,
- community groups and planning organizations,
- potential students (by choosing to enroll or not),
- public, nonprofit, and private sector decision makers (by their ability to award contracts and grants),
- members of the state legislature and other state decision makers (by their ability to determine the state appropriations for the university) and
- APA, AICP, ACSP.

One survey respondent felt strongly that the planning programs' biggest threat comes from other university degree programs (i.e., anthropology, public administration, real estate, geography and engineering) that are "poaching onto [planning] territory." Another respondent observed that "Administrators who do not understand what planning

is or what purposes it serves in society (i.e. vice presidents, provosts) can have a particular negative impact on planning programs.”

One survey respondent noted that:

All [of the identified entities having an interest in the planning program] can impact our organization both positively and negatively. Agencies can impact us through their hiring practices, both for internships and regular employment. Generally, I think there's no such thing as bad press, and media reports that include faculty perspectives enhance the visibility of the department. However, reports of differences among the faculty may give potential employers, students, and donors pause. The larger university community can impact us through the imposition of rules and regulations that apply to all graduate programs, for example, as well as through its public relations efforts. Potential donors can impact our curriculum as well as our scholarship funds.

The director of a program that has a less traditional planning emphasis commented:

There have been some sectors of the professional planning community (those who take a more mainstream, conventional land use approach to planning) who have expressed public concern about our paradigm and approach. Our response has been to A) Work through our “allies” in the profession to disseminate a clearer idea of what we do, B) Do more direct dissemination of our student and faculty work to the [state] legislature, improved newsletters and brochures, increased numbers of planning lectures to the local CBO and professional planner community, broad-based discussions and symposia on issues such as growth management, participatory planning, etc.

The final quotation we include in this section from individual respondents comments upon the temporality of both positive and negative influences on planning programs:

This changes rather constantly depending on a variety of circumstances in the external environment, and to some extent, the internal environment of the University. To cite a couple of examples: in the early 1990's, the state passed the Growth Management Act and that rather quickly led to a reorientation of teaching and research and a whole new set of alliances with state and local agencies and other units on campus. The city, in its response to growth management, adopted a policy focused on neighborhoods and an urban village concept for sustainable growth, which provided orientation for many of our teaching and research activities.

Internally, the restructuring of our Ph.D. program as an interdisciplinary program under the Graduate School also led to new alliances on campus, as did the University Initiative Fund program which internally funds new interdisciplinary programs in teaching and research.

Shifts in policy at the national level that led to shifts in federal research funding would be another case. Whereas HUD was once a major federal "partner" of the

Department, in later years NSF, USGS, FEMA, NASA, USAID, NEA, DOT, EPA and others became important.

A planning department is particularly sensitive to such changes because of the planning field's inherent responsiveness to shifts in the public policy agenda, but this has both positive and negative aspects. Staying current and relevant is essential, but often our attention gets shifted to new problems and alliances before we have had the opportunity to thoroughly develop a body of knowledge and practice on existing subjects.

**Question 2: “To achieve visibility with these audiences:**

- a) What recurring activities do you engage?**
- b) Who helps implement these activities?**
- c) How are these activities funded?”**

The second survey question sought insight into planning programs' efforts to achieve visibility with the audiences they identified. It asked program directors to identify the recurring activities their programs engage in for this purpose, to identify the individuals who carry out these activities, and to identify the sources of funding for these activities.

In the wide range of responses that were given to the query on “What recurring activities do you engage in?” it is evident that the level of program efforts to achieve visibility varies widely. It can also be seen from the range of responses that there are many avenues available to programs to foster their visibility.

The answers from programs that identified relatively few recurring activities included:

- We are active in the state APA Chapter and participate in the annual conference.
- Workshops, conferences.
- Host a job fair which brings employers and alumni into the unit; college social events for alumni.
- Faculty participate on student and university committees; planning faculty have been directors of many of these campus-wide programs (i.e., Latin American Studies, Institute for African Development, Women's Studies).
- Regular meetings with student planning chapter.
- We attend several career days or fairs at small colleges in our recruiting area.

- Continuing education programs are offered for practitioners; Op-ed pieces are distributed to newspapers on important urban issues; An annual report is prepared each year.
- Email to college counselors and career development centers.
- [We] publish a semesterly “course book” listing the courses we teach, and providing bios of regular and adjunct faculty teaching those courses. We keep in touch with alumni and "occasional students" through a CRP list-serve.

The answers from programs which appear to have more extensive recurring activities for achieving visibility are as follows:

- Annual banquet, annual symposium; school wide activity week; high school seniors day.
- A biannual journal is sent to all university department heads, [we] compete for and win institute-wide awards for faculty and students, use the campus newspaper to publish stories on major events organized by the department, [and] invite outstanding speakers (i.e., presidents of other countries, Nobel Prize winners) to campus and sponsor their talk with attractive posters all over the campus. Every year we run a faculty colloquium which is published as a book which is sent to the top administrations. We invite faculty from other departments to our special events and ask them to comment on the talks (every semester we arrange for a talk on the registration with a dinner for all faculty and students).
- Student recruitment activities, including visiting campuses, sending out materials, contacting people, etc. Alumni magazine. Magazine with short articles on policy issues. Board of Visitors meeting annually. Annual statehouse reception for legislators and others. Regular press releases on school and faculty activities.
- We send administrators our newly launched newsletter, informal communications (e-mail, campus mailings), and, our annual report. Whenever faculty or students achieve recognition, I send administrators the news clipping or announcement. [We] also place squibs in the University newsletter about faculty achievements and activities.
- On campus we make sure that our faculty are: 1) Consistently and effectively involved in politics and activities at the university level (Senate, faculty personnel, president’s advisory committee, etc.; 2) Available and useful to the president, provost, etc. for a variety of ad hoc analytical and advisory functions; 3) Available and useful as an interface between the campus and the “real world” of [our state’s] communities, their taxpayers, and their leaders. We accomplish point three and, at the same time, achieve visibility around the state, by carrying on an active

program of community service and outreach by faculty and students. Our “clients” are state agencies, local governments, NGOs, etc. This program is built into our curriculum in that it is our main form of field based learning.

- One formal vehicle for this we have established is our Professionals Council, a group of some forty practicing planners in the region representing agencies, firms, and non-profit organizations that provide an on-going link to the profession and which advise and assist the department in various ways. We regularly attend and present at all the regional and national planning conferences and are co-sponsor of an annual international symposium on environmental planning. Costs of attending conferences are partially borne by budgeted university funds. We also frequently sponsor and conduct local conferences, symposia and workshop on special topics and participate in a continuing education extension certificate program in planning and a public lecture series in our College.
- In the past year the School and our “Centre for Human Settlements” (a research arm of the School) have both made formal “get acquainted” presentations to the (new) University President and Vice-Presidents and to the Dean and Associate Deans of Graduate Studies to keep them fully abreast of our teaching and research activities. Faculty, staff and student participated in the preparation and delivery of the presentations. The limited resources required came from our operating budget. I would hope that we can make this at least a biennial event. The School hosts annually (usually January) one meeting of the PIBC Council. The School is generally given a forty-five minute slot in the agenda to update the Institute on current activities and areas of mutual interest. The Planning Students’ Association hosts an evening reception on the same night for the Council to which all member of local PIBC Chapters are invited. Skits, displays, award presentations are regular features of this event.

Finally, one program questioned the assumption that planning programs should seek visibility for themselves:

This presumes that the most appropriate response is to "achieve visibility." - in fact, we have been somewhat effective in minimizing visibility - especially during times of retrenchment and budget-cutting.

From the wide range of responses to the query of who helps to implement programs’ visibility-promoting efforts was relatively narrow as can be seen below.

- School (GSFA) staff, departmental staff, students and staff.
- Office of University Affairs for media relations.
- Intern Director, Office of Research.

The responses to the query of how visibility-promoting efforts funded suggests that ad hoc funding, as opposed to line item budgeting, is the norm:

- General funds, plus we try to get funds from various other sources, including foundations, alumni, university's funds for special activities ( i.e. race relations).
- Development officer of the college, regular budget.
- Grant overhead.
- Enterprise account, ticket sales, donations.
- Most are funded from our "gifts account."
- The [program] budget has a small (and precarious from year to year) budget for outreach and recruitment. We also have a small events budget that subsidizes some of the "dual purpose" activities mentioned above.

**Question Three: "What do you consider particularly successful methods for communicating with your audiences?"**

Question three of the survey sought programs' views on what were particularly successful methods for communicating with their audiences yielded a wide array of responses. Each of the responses listed below reflects the entirety of a program's response. The importance of personal communication was emphasized in a variety of ways as can be seen in the first six responses below.

- Personal contact is by far the best approach.
- Personal communication. Written ones don't really work.
- Personal contact; a previous MUPDD newsletter has been discontinued.
- Phone calls. Letters don't work.
- One on one conversations, face-to-face.
- I never let a phone call from a parent or a perspective student go unanswered for more than 2 days. Making sure the Director of the Architecture Department refers students to us who first go to them.

The common theme in the next set of responses is the emphasis on providing activities through which programs interact with their constituencies:

- Open houses.

- Annual chili cook-off celebration
- Planning Career Night for community professionals, open house for prospective students, work with external relations department in school-wide community events.
- We hold about five lunches across the state, and basically share our news and ask for advice and help.
- Small group meetings, planning program newsletter, conference presentations, studio projects in the case of communities.
- The most successful methods are probably those that are most direct and interactive, such as our actual work with and for communities on research or class projects, or situations where we bring certain audiences to the University for meetings, workshops or symposia (often then leading to project relationships).
- Our 'show-and-tell' sessions with the senior administration (particularly the President's Office) seems to have worked well in raising our profile on a large multi-university campus (27,000 students) where anonymity can be hazardous.
- Letters to editors are good. Participation on boards, commissions, etc. is also good. Generally speaking, opportunities where audiences will be able to interact with members of the faculty and students on an ongoing basis work well.

The next set of responses primarily reflects a narrower emphasis on communication media.

- Web-site.
- Congratulatory notes or announcements at meetings lauding other departments when they achieve a worthy goal (e.g. grant, award, etc..)
- Capital Campaign brochures.
- Graphic presentation of current student projects, participation in poster board, and research paper presentations.
- Accreditation provides a focus for communicating with all constituencies.

The final set of statements on the most effective ways to reach one's audience reflects not so much on particular activities or communications media, as on outlooks or approaches to guide communications efforts.

- We find that targeted activities, with a specific purpose and with strong intellectual content help us reach (and build) appropriate audiences.
- “Communication” in the form of newsletters and the like is not nearly so effective as being seen as a helpful resource.
- Providing examples of successes, having faculty prominent in the community.
- The bottom line is that you have to convey that the department is a very interesting place with very high standards; [this] is key to image building.

- Question Four:**
- a) **“Do you have audiences from whom it is particularly difficult to gain visibility and support?”**
  - b) **Who are your primary competitors in your search for support?”**

The first part of question four asked programs to identify audiences from whom they find it is particularly difficult to gain visibility and support. Those identified in the first set of responses listed below have the potential to provide (or withhold) monetary and political support for planning programs.

- State legislature.
- Local politicians.
- Media. Foundations.
- Alumni and university administration.
- It has been difficult historically to catch the eye of senior administration at the university. Administration never seemed to know who we were or what we were doing - were we a professional school or academic research institute? (Both of course!).

- Prospective donors. We have targeted a group of wealthy individuals who we invite to all events, plus send them copies of books by our faculty, invite them to have lunch/dinner with big name speakers and so on. But, the returns are slow, although when they come they can be very big.
- Non-planning alumni with interests in cities and urban and regional development. As alumni of other colleges at the university, we cannot reach them easily.

Minority organizations that planning typically seeks to serve are identified in the next section's two responses, and a third minority population group was also identified in the subsequent set of responses that focuses on reaching student audiences.

- Native Organizations.
- Inner city CDCs.

The final set of responses suggests that planning programs find gaining visibility with potential students to be their biggest challenge.

- High school students, because they don't really know what planning is.
- The Cuban population in south Florida--attracting students.
- The group that we would like to access more easily and efficiently are juniors and seniors in four-year colleges (or undergraduate programs at major universities) who are beginning to think of pursuing graduate studies and might like to know about the MUP. Also achieving diversity in our student body is an on-going challenge.
- Our biggest challenge is to attract students. Many students who actually want to be planners don't know that, and they go to social work, public policy, or another program. We need to catch them before that happens. Public officials not engaged in planning.
- Prospective students are a challenge to reach, as many do not even know about the possibility of planning as a career.
- My own sense is that the profession is not terribly visible in general. Planning suffers from a competitive disadvantage to places like law schools and business schools in part because it's not a recognized career path.
- Everybody! The biggest problems are:1. [lack of knowledge about] the nature of planning-- [as a profession, we're] very small time, and most students don't even know it exists. 2. There's no obvious web site that a student can go to such that it's easy to get to every planning program in the country. The pages may be out there, but if a prospective student types in



describe ad hoc strategies. The last seven response listed below are included, because although the programs did not affirm that they had a strategy, their answers suggest they do have minimal ad hoc strategies or intentions to develop strategies.

- Yes, an ad-hoc strategy supplementing regular mailings to related departments and organizations, university faculty who might recommend students, friends of the department, alumni, and so on. The college publishes a semesterly newsletter; the department chair sends periodic (infrequent) updates to alumni, an ad-hoc strategy supplementing regular mailings to related and organizations, university faculty who might recommend students, friends of the department, alumni, and so on. The college publishes a semesterly newsletter; the department chair sends periodic (infrequent) updates to alumni
- Frequent communication with alumni, web site.
- We are currently in the process of developing one. The school has hired a professional with expertise in this area to oversee the development of the strategy and all of the school's communications efforts.
- We are starting one in terms of attracting both undergraduate and graduate students. We established articulation agreements with community colleges around the state, and are re-working a poster and brochures as well as our web site.
- Yes -- Marketing for students = nothing very exotic. Annual mailings to alumni (inviting donations, support and referral of students), annual mailings to undergraduate institutions inviting them to refer grad students to us, annual mailings to local planning departments inviting the same.
- Yes, we communicate with the undergraduate program coordinators in our college and other departments on campus; we communicate with and recommend our students to research centers on campus; we participate in Texas APA Chapter activities and committees, we assist our student planning organization with their annual spring job fair which attracts local and state planning agencies, and private consulting firms. Our web page has proven to be extremely helpful to potential graduate student applicants' search for information about our graduate program.
- Only informally-- newsletter and press release distributions, poster mailing, web-site.
- Yes - - In process. We are developing a departmental strategic plan, a major piece of which deals with this subject.
- Yes. Put the Department name into as much mass media, conferences and professional settings as possible. We now do mailers to all the social science department of the state system (222 campuses), and direct mailers

to the community college counselors. Also I keep contact with UC-Berkeley and UCLA in order for them to direct more applicants this way for the program we offer. The most important is to keep TELLING YOUR STORY to others in as many ways as possible. This means on and off campus.

- Yes, we have a marketing plan.
- We are refining our curriculum focusing on our strengths locally as well as increasingly on the Asia Pacific Region
- We rely on our web-site, our recently re-designed program brochure: a three-fold pamphlet (which gives only the briefest information about our mission and programs and gives further information numbers) to advertise our program. We have also been working with local organizations to develop a regional recruitment strategy. We contribute to a periodic school-wide newsletter, designed to reach the funds-giving community. We have also used our course-book, plus cross-listed courses with other departments as a recruitment tool. We have grand hopes of acquiring funding to produce a video on community based planning, designed primarily as an analytical/pedagogical document, but organized around projects and programs we, as a program, have been involved in. In that way we hope the video will not only contribute to knowledge [of] community based planning, but also inform a broad national audience about the way we approach planning here. That effort will depend on finding faculty time to write the proposals, and is, at the moment, on hold.
- Not per se. We have a marketing philosophy: 1) We make a conscious effort to be sure that our faculty are strategically placed within the University “shared governance” structure. 2) We have volunteered and demonstrated our effectiveness to the point that we are now called upon for a variety of tasks by the administration. 3) Students, under the supervision of faculty, carry out 6-8 projects per year in state communities – projects identified and paid for by the community. 4) We place approximately 25-30 students per year in state agencies, local communities, etc... - in full time, paid internships.
- [Our program] has no explicit 'marketing' strategy - at least we have never thought of it as such. We do have a well-used web-site, a School brochure sent out to all enquiries (potential applicants) and to universities in Canada and many in the US, our Annual Report (to the university and the profession), and the activities listed above. So far these have been adequate to our needs. On the other hand...
- No, not in writing; the College does marketing generally; Urban Planning was featured in the March/April 1998 College Impact newsletter (attached); the College web-page has up-to-date info; we do direct targeted mail marketing for our planning-related certificate programs and workshops.

- No -- have attended some meetings to look at marketing for department heads. Got some tips, techniques-- letter-writing, follow-up.
- No --but in process of developing one; we do in the sense of marketing in catalog and web but basic advertising media is used.
- We don't have a formal departmental strategy. The dean's office is developing a strategy for the college as a whole, and we are participating in that process.
- Have set up a external communication committee this year, but they haven't accomplished anything yet. They are exploring web page enhancement and developing videos for the university's cable channel.

The second part of question five asked those programs which stated they did have a communications or marketing plan to fax a copy to the survey committee, or to provide a brief outline of the strategy on the survey.

- The strategy is to play a leadership role. One strategy which I did not mention earlier but has really worked is to be mentioned in the city's (not the university's) daily newspaper, by faculty members responding to some local/regional problems.
- We want to keep current employers informed of what we are doing as a Department-research, service, studios, etc. We want to continue to engage the Community Advisory Board for advice on student recruitment and graduate job placement. Conference presentations are a good way to raise visibility with environmental groups and the legislature. Community planning studios will continue to be a way to build connections with the public.
- Communications strategy
  1. Admissions packets up to date, using e-mail responses as well as well as traditional.
  - 2 . Two newsletters each year.
  - 3 . Two journals each year.
  - 4 . Six to eight lectures (advertised widely with colorful posters).
  5. Annual Alumni activities-one at APA, one at graduation, one planned for ACSP.
  6. Web page development.
  7. Use every opportunity to inform university officials of "good news" about the department e.g. special letters to dean, provost, president when

department receives some honor or does some thing unusual. This is opportunistic, not scheduled.

- a) Utilize web-site as a full service look at department, b) Supplement with print publication to reach un-web audience, c) Support high level of faculty involvement in ACSP, APA, and other related planning groups through department resource allocations, d) Increase visibility to practitioners through information dissemination.
- Do everything in your power to communicate with other interested groups, and provide lectures of introductory nature to classes, which cover the community. There is nothing really written, as we typically talk about the things that need to be covered, and who will handle each particular event that is forthcoming.

- Question Six:**
- a) **“Do you think the development of a prototype marketing and communications strategy tailored to planning programs would be useful?”**
  - b) **“If so, what aspects of marketing and communications in particular would you like this prototype to address?”**

The first part of question six (the final survey question) asked programs if they thought development of a prototype strategic communications strategy would be useful. Twenty-six programs responded yes. The “yes” answers that were elaborated upon are included below. Additionally, the rationales that six programs gave for responding negatively are also listed.

- 26 “yes” responses.
- Yes, hugely helpful! The ACSP/APA (?) Brochure on what planning is has been invaluable. We are running out of copies and I understand no more are available. We use it all the time to communicate what planning is clearly and easily. E.g., we obtained a list from Educational Testing Service of all test-takers who had indicated they wanted grad programs in geography, public affairs, public policy, and several other fields. We wrote them letters to say please consider urban planning as a way to achieve their career goals. We couldn’t have done this without the brochure because we would have had to write and illustrate our own explanation of what planning is.
- Yes, especially if it drew from the experiences of other planning departments nationally.

- Yes. However, you should take program size into account.
- Yes, it would trigger consideration of things we may not have thought of and provide a basis assessing our efforts.
- Yes. Especially some good, easy-to-replicate literature.
- At first glance the answer is yes. However, any strategy should be flexible enough to recognize the scarcity of funding available to some schools.
- A well-designed marketing strategy for planning programs might well be useful in familiarizing 'the public' with the nature and utility of planning - certainly we spend a lot of time dealing with confusion on these issues, both on and off campus.
- Yes, extremely. Especially to relatively new units like ourselves (would not have to reinvent the wheel.)
- Given the paucity of information about planning as a career, more marketing and communications tools and materials are bound to be helpful. Several years ago we did distribute information prepared nationally about planning careers - and while the salaries, the perspectives, and the information seemed to be a bit outdated - it was helpful in establishing a sense that planning is potentially interesting and important career choice.
- Given that our strategic communications are carried out at the school level, I would doubt that we could directly adopt and use such a prototype. I would expect that such a document would have useful ideas that we would want to consider. This raises, perhaps, a more general issue. The idea of developing a “prototype” strategy presumes that planning programs are sufficiently similar that such a strategy could be used, with appropriate modifications for individual program situations, by most planning programs. I would really question whether planning programs have this degree of similarity. In particular, the tremendous range of sizes of planning programs would mean that activities that would be entirely reasonable for the larger programs would be unrealistic for the smaller programs. Rather than attempting to develop a prototype, would it make more sense to develop a portfolio that could be used by programs in developing their own plans?
- Not especially. I would much prefer to see the profession promote itself and careers in planning, especially at the high school and junior college/freshman sophomore college level. I think it is less important to tailor marketing to planning programs than it is to planning careers. Somehow it is important to gain a broader awareness among young people regarding planning. Perhaps promotion of some of the materials already developed for high school level on applied planning projects could be used

by APA Chapters and provided at low cost or linked, along with practicing professionals, to those schools. This would have a much greater impact than any program.

- I don't think that a prototype strategy would be useful for us. Again, given the very high level of interest in planning issues in our region, and the well-established nature of our program, a fairly general strategy would not likely add much to what we're already doing.
- No. Because our problems and resources are unique. We could benefit however from learning how other planning schools draw attention to themselves ... vis-à-vis the dominant department within their universities.
- Probably not, given our very focused mission and audience. We would however, definitely benefit from learning about what other schools have found successful.
- Not really. We are so atypical that I doubt that such a model would be of much use. Also I don't feel that such a strategy is easily ported from one state to another. So much impact is legislatively driven that I doubt that any model could capture the complexities of any state.

The second part of question six asked those programs that did think a prototype strategy would be useful, to indicate what aspects of marketing and communication in particular they would like this prototype to address? The answers to this part of the question roughly fell into two categories: programs would like this prototype to help them address their objectives and other substantive issues, and, they would like it to address effective communications media and other technical issues.

#### Objective/Substantive

- Recruiting and placing students!
- Ways to get more community media attention, ways to explain what planning is to the community.
- How to attract students? Planning is not known at the high school level. We need to devise a program to make it so in the state, and I think it will impact positively on our undergraduate program.
- A strategy for obtaining more visibility for the planning profession; articles that can be published in collegiate newspapers, or local newspapers. Videos that can be distributed to high school and college counselors.
- What is urban planning? What jobs do beginning planners give—private, public, nonprofit—in what subject areas—housing, transportation, etc. —at what salaries?

- Nature and usefulness of urban planning.
- Promotion of programs and activities; public awareness and appreciation of planning education and functions; www designed for low budget programs.
- How to gain support in a non-planning environment.
- Basic information about the planning profession, opportunities for planners.
- Student recruitment fund-raising.
- How do I convince the administration that planning is distinctly different from architecture?
- Cost effective approaches in reaching senior undergraduates. Perhaps an Internet-based system might alert students to the availability of careers in planning. I guess I am thinking of an Internet version of the "Guide to Graduate Education in Urban and Regional Planning," plus other more clever graphic ways to attract young people to our field.
- Would like to figure out "limited targets" that a graduate planning program could go after -- traditional degree program, have undergraduates that have faculty who are "feeding" people into program. Planning does not have this "service"--so students come from all sorts of undergraduate disciplines fairly scattered geographically--weakness in alumni, maybe to ask graduates about how they found the department.
- Student recruitment. One thing we have talked about is more clearly defining career paths and opportunities, some of which are in the private sector. One of the problems we suffer from is a sense that this is simply a public-sector operation, and there are a lot of private influences on our cities. I think we work to our own detriment if we don't begin to market towards private-sector interests that draw upon the expertise that planners have. Designing projects in the first place so that they are designed for livable places, and then being able to put the packages together and getting them implemented. Planning school is . . . "high on social motivation and low on expected compensation."
- 1. Recruitment. 2. Increasing internal visibility. 3. Increasing national visibility.
- The professional aspects of planning, jobs, careers and success stories.
- Communicating to campus level administrators and arguing our case for fellowship and other resources advocating for professional education in a PhD University.

- Greater emphasis on diversity. This prototype should depict planning as a vital, dynamic, relevant, and progressive career choice. Increasingly planning is too closely associated with bureaucracy, red tape, regulation, and protection of property rights. Planners need to be positioned as agents of change. Above all, planning should be seen as both an intellectual activity - recruiting the best and the brightest into its ranks, as well as action-oriented. Stressing the linkages between knowledge and real action - real people solving real problems are aspects of the profession we need to emphasize. I'm still waiting for the t.v. drama series - "The Planners" to air. In all likelihood it will be a sitcom...
- My personal view is that such a program should focus on reestablishing the validity of the concept of 'the public good' in an era of accelerating global change (social, economic and ecological). This idea, and the legitimate role of government agencies in ensuring that our common pool assets and values are respected, has taken a beating in the recent past with the rise of neoconservative political values. Reassertion of the legitimacy of 'planning in the public domain' with the public interest as its focus is a necessity if we are to succeed in facilitating society's transition to sustainability (this School's mission). In addition, the campaign should demonstrate that, rhetoric to the contrary, EVERYONE PLANS, even the most right-wing elements of the private sector. In fact, sound business planning is a key to corporate success. Why should it not also be valid to plan in the public interest? Finally, I would like to see the campaign emphasize the expanding domain of planning as process, mindset, and a particular set of skills in integrating and synthesizing information. Certainly our graduates are being employed in an ever-widening array of positions in both the public and private sectors and rarely have difficulty in finding employment.

#### Media/Technical

- Brochures. Identifying groups that have forged interests with local university planning programs.
- Ways to get more community media attention, ways to explain what planning is to the community.
- Time, types, and costs of different programs.
- Prototype may be too specific, guidelines/ suggestions on how to do so. Need to have resources to pull off.
- Given that our approach is incremental rather than unified, a prototype might be helpful. Funding agencies especially.
- How to gain support in a non-planning environment.

- Marketing of degree programs, marketing of department planning and technical assistance capabilities (for pro bono and contract public service work), marketing of department accomplishments to external and internal audiences.
- Cost effective approaches in reaching senior undergraduates. Perhaps an Internet-based system might alert students to the availability of careers in planning. I guess I am thinking of an Internet version of the "Guide to Graduate Education in Urban and Regional Planning," plus other more clever graphic ways to attract young people to our field.
- Model press releases might be useful.
- I would like it to help us think about the full range of opportunities-- something like a menu of approaches.
- Identifying and communicating with potential donors.

**Appendix**  
**Responding Schools by ACSP Region**

**Northeast: 6**

Cornell  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (**MIT**)  
Pratt  
SUNY Albany  
SUNY Buffalo  
University of Pennsylvania (**PENN**)

**Midwest: 13**

University of Illinois at Chicago (**UIC**)  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (**UIUC**)  
Indiana University, Indianapolis (**IUI**)  
Iowa State University (**ISU**)  
Kansas State University (**KSU**)  
University of Kansas (**UK**)  
University of Michigan (**UMI**)  
University of Minnesota (**UMN**)  
Cleveland State University (**CSU**)  
University of Akron (**UA**)  
University of Cincinnati (**UC**)  
University of Toledo (**UT**)  
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (**UWM**)

**South: 16**

Alabama A & M (**AAM**)  
Auburn University  
Clemson University  
Florida Atlantic University (**FAU**)  
Florida State (**FSU**)  
Georgia Institute of Technology (**GT**)  
Morgan State University (**MSU**)  
Texas A & M (**TAM**)  
University of New Orleans (**UNO**)  
University of Texas- Arlington  
University of Texas-Austin  
University of Maryland (**UMD**)  
University of Memphis  
University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (**UNC**)  
University of Tennessee (**UTN**)  
Virginia Commonwealth (**VCU**)

**West: 12**

Arizona State (**AS**)  
Cal Poly Pomona (**CPP**)  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo (**CPS**)  
Eastern Washington (**EW**)  
Portland State (**PS**)  
San Diego State (**SDS**)  
University of California - Irvine (**UCI**)  
University of Hawaii (**UH**)  
University of New Mexico (**UNM**)  
University of Oregon (**UO**)  
University of Washington (**UW**)  
Washington State (**WS**)

**Non U.S.: 6**

McGill University (**MU**)  
Queen's University (**QU**)  
Ryerson Polytechnic (**RP**)  
The University of Nottingham –UK (**Nott**)  
University of British Columbia, SCARP (**UBC**)  
University of Manitoba (**UMan**)  
University of Montreal (**UMont**)  
University of Saskatchewan (**USask**)