

Communications and Marketing Committee Proposal Overview—September 2019

The Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC) was established to assist the Land-Grant University (LGU) System communicate the national value and impacts of its research and extension/outreach activities. Along with representatives from ECOP, ESCOP, and AHS, the CMC now includes representatives of the LGU academic mission, university government affairs, LGU communications experts, and CARET delegates, who provide additional insights as to how to accomplish the CMC's goals. In April 2019 the CMC became an ad hoc committee of the BAA and its Policy Board of Directors, which provides organizational structure. The CMC's mission, though, remains the same.

kglobal Corporation had been contracted to assist the CMC and the LGU system communicate to stakeholders and Congress. Due to LGU system dissatisfaction regarding perceived lack of results and concerns about blurring advocacy and marketing, the contract with kglobal was ended in April 2019 by the BAA Policy Board of Directors at the recommendation of the CMC, after discussion with APLU's new Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, Dr. Doug Steele.

The CMC has discussed the lack of LGU system consensus regarding how best to convey its successes and its needs to decision makers and influential stakeholders. Individual institutions have been successful communicating their state-focused stories, but a coordinated effort has been lacking on behalf of the whole system. The CMC has developed a three-part proposal to address system-wide communication and marketing. With the Sections' approval, the CMC proposes that monies left over from the terminated kglobal contract be used to develop a strategic plan for effectively communicating the impacts of the national LGU system.

The first part of the proposed process is to agree that a strategic plan is desirable. The attached draft statement of work for a Communications and Marketing strategic plan describes a proposed effort to prepare, in consultation and collaboration with the various parts of the LGU system, and in coordination with the CMC, a plan outlining options for the LGU system to consider regarding what the LGU system wants regarding outcomes, audience, evaluation metrics, and other indicators of communication/marketing success that will result in increased resources for the LGU system.

The second part of the process, if approved, is that the proposed strategic planning effort be conducted by a temporary employee ("Strategist"), with a fixed contract term and specified deliverable dates. A draft position description for this Strategist is attached, along with a budget. As the strategic planning effort will be on behalf of the national LGU system, the position is envisioned being administratively employed by the APLU Division of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources, though the duty location might be anywhere.

After delivery of the strategic plan, as the third part of the process, the CMC will send the strategic plan to the LGU system for review. Based on LGU system-wide review and recommendations, the CMC will proceed to implement whatever is approved of the strategic plan.

The CMC asks for your review and consideration in advance of discussion and a possible vote at the National ESS/CES-NEDA Meeting in Nashville, TN.

Title: APLU BAA Marketing and Communication Strategist

Reports to: Office of the Vice President for Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources

Primary Function: Create a strategic marketing and communication plan that promotes the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University System.

Responsibilities:

- Engage a broad spectrum of the members of the Board on Agricultural Assembly (BAA) to create a strategic marketing and communications plan designed to convey priorities and impacts of the LGUs to constituents (both internal and external), elected officials, affiliated agricultural groups, and community stakeholders;
- Propose a process whereby communication, marketing, and branding strategies that ensure consistency in messaging and promotion of brand value are presented to the BAA;
- Serve as liaison to LGU communications units, APLU's Office of Public Affairs, and Council on Government Relations to foster collaboration and consistent external messaging.
- Review current efforts in social media (website content and social media presence) and make recommendations on development of a social media campaign within the strategic plan.
- Identify opportunities for improved messaging that will engage agricultural allies, strengthen relationships and expand partnerships.

Minimum Requirements:

Education – Bachelor's degree in communications or marketing or an equivalent combination of educational experience. Master's degree preferred.

Experience – Minimum of five years of public affairs, public relations, marketing and/or communication experience with commensurate portfolio of accomplishments. Experience in higher education or agriculture/natural resources preferred.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities – Excellent verbal and written communication skills. Ability to use word processing, spreadsheet and database programs. Ability to manage multiple projects and work cooperatively with others.

Salary Range: \$115,00 - \$130,000 with benefits. Salary commensurate with skill and experience.

Location: Washington, DC at APLU (1307 New York Ave NW #400, Washington, DC 20005.) Employer would consider a hybrid location arrangement.

Initial contract term: November 1, 2019 – October 31, 2020.

Principal outputs – dates: first draft strategic plan due – April 1, 2020; second draft strategic plan due - June 15, 2020; final strategic plan due – September 1, 2020.

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MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN: SCOPE OF WORK

I. Create and develop a strategic plan that promotes the impact, importance, and brand value of the Land-grant University System.

A Marketing and Communications Strategist, hired for a fixed term, will identify and assess existing messaging materials (for example, from individual institutions, the National Impacts Database, Multistate Research Fund Impact Statements, and NIMSS) that highlight the unique services, value, and impact provided by the Land-Grant System. The Strategist will engage with representatives from 1862, 1890, and 1994 institutions to generate consensus regarding the mission, vision, and strategic directions of the organizations to create a framework for developing a strategic plan. Likewise, the Strategist shall discuss with the Administrative Heads Section, the Cooperative Extension Section, the Experiment Station Section, the Academic Programs Section, and the Council on Government Affairs to identify their priorities and needs. From these, the Strategist will create a plan that promotes the brand-value (the positive impacts and return on investment) of a unified Land-Grant University (LGU) System in order to more effectively market overall system impact. The developed plan will then be submitted to the LGU System for review and approval, in whole or in part, before any implementation.

II. Essential Activities.

The strategic plan will identify and prioritize essential activities and collateral materials that will support plan implementation, if the plan is adopted (in whole or in part). Essential activities will be used in educational efforts with members of target audiences, which include the general public, key stakeholders and advocates, decision makers, and national and state-level media. The strategic plan must include a blueprint for analyzing activities associated with building, enhancing, and improving messages that can be utilized with target audiences. These analyses should include data and a clear plan for using industry standards for assessing efficacy and success of essential activities.

Essential activities include:

- Working in collaboration with LGU communicators and other resources (e.g., the National Impacts Database and NIMSS) to identify compelling stories from individual Land-grant institutions to be highlighted in messaging materials.
- Developing such materials as infographics that further the ability of the LGUs to connect and engage with target audiences.
- Creating a digital outreach strategy for identified audiences.
- Maintaining and improving digital assets including website and social media platforms.

- Development of a clear strategy for assessment of the strategic plan.

The strategic plan will be delivered to the Communication and Marketing Committee (CMC), which will share the plan with LGU System. After receiving comments from the LGU System, the CMC will work with the LGU System and BAA to implement approved recommendations.

III. Meetings and Conference Calls

The Strategist will work closely with the Communications and Marketing Committee (CMC), and will include

- CMC conference calls
- BAA conference calls and face-to-face meetings
- CARET-AHS Meeting
- Joint COPS Annual Meeting
- ECOP/ESS/ARD Annual Meetings
- APLU Annual Meeting November
- Attend relevant meetings as requested by the CMC leadership.

IV. Accountability and Coordination

The Strategist will participate in quarterly teleconference calls with the Communications and Marketing Committee to report progress, on-going and planned activities and to seek counsel, suggestions, and for purposes of coordination, and report on progress against the scope of work. In addition to the development of the strategic plan, the Strategist will prepare quarterly written reports to the CMC and the APLU Vice President for Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources for use as part of an evaluation. Throughout the performance of the activities described herein, the Strategist will ensure that institutions and appropriate personnel are engaged as partners, based on guidance from the Communications and Marketing Committee.

APLU BAA Marketing and Communications Director Budget

Salary	\$130,000
Fringe	\$45,500
APLU O/H	\$15,000
Operating	\$50,000
Total	\$240,500

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