Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
SACS: Self-Study Report

4.6 Recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent the institution's practices and policies. (Recruitment materials)

Compliance Status: Compliance

Narrative

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi accurately represents its practices and policies in its recruitment materials and presentations. With a new strategic plan [1] [2], a revised mission statement [3] and its recent 60th anniversary [4], Texas A&M-Corpus Christi continues to focus on students and student engagement as central to its mission. Momentum 2015, the ten-year strategic plan launched by the university president and crafted by the faculty, staff, students, and community, provides direction to A&M-Corpus Christi from 2005-2015. The Momentum 2015 Steering Committee [5] is charged by the president to ensure that the strategic planning process adheres to the university goal of attracting and graduating students of high potential, who are representative of the demographics of the State of Texas and the institutional principle of recruiting, retaining and supporting a diverse highly qualified student body, faculty and staff. The revised mission statement for A&M-Corpus Christi, approved in July 2009 by the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents [3], and the mission statement approved in 2003 [6] reflect the Texas Education Code requirements [7], are specific to the institution and affirm the University's dedication "to teaching, research, creative activity and service." Combined with the related 2003 vision statement [8], the 2009 mission is an update but not a substantive change from the 2003 version. Recruitment materials reflect the University's mission through its student life, the Ward Island campus environment, academic programs, scholarly accomplishments of faculty and students, and the vision for continued excellence, engagement, expansion, and effectiveness.

The launching of the new university web site [9], and a new logo and branding marks [10] [11] in fall 2008, provides A&M-Corpus Christi with improved accessibility to all users [12] and a more contemporary image. The use of the University's identification, seal, logo, and/or marketing theme are guided by University rules, 09.02.99.C1.01 University Identification Guidelines [13] and 09.02.99.C1 Use of University Name and Indicia [14]. University Procedure 61.99.99.C2.01, Web Procedures [15], outlines the purpose, structure and guidelines for the use of the Internet in support of the University's mission. Included in University Procedure 61.99.99.C2.01 are the guidelines for official university web pages.

The university web site is a powerful recruitment tool that provides accurate information and gives students the ability to access virtually all of the information on A&M-Corpus Christi that is available in print. The University's main web site is under the oversight of the Department of Marketing and Communications, a part of the division of institutional advancement [16]. The Web services manager serves as the University's principal Web master and conducts continual enhancement of the site to ensure that it supports the changing needs of prospective students, current students, the external community, and the faculty and staff. The University Web Council [17], chaired by the web services manager, is composed of individuals appointed by the vice presidents, provost, college deans and department chairs and serves in supporting and maintaining Web content for the University's many units through discussion and practice. The web services manager provides input regarding changes within and adherence to University Web policies; communicates Web publishing guidelines developed to serve in brand development and management; and provides a forum for University Web Council members to
discuss Web technologies and processes [18].

The Integrated Marketing Task Force [19], chaired by the assistant vice president for marketing and communications, is engaged in long-range review of marketing for recruitment, image-enhancement and institutional positioning. The Task Force is called upon for initial briefings regarding projects, products and services that directly affect campus marketing.

Updated data within recruitment publications is contributed by many departments on campus to ensure that information included is correct as of the date of publication. Because the University is engaged in integrated marketing tactics within its print and electronic promotion materials, changes that go into print also go into the Web and other resource material, and vice versa. Details about specific programs are gleaned from informational materials created by the academic and administrative departments. While individual departments contribute academic program information, the office of planning and institutional effectiveness [20] is the resource for student data that is woven within the language found in the recruitment components on the Web and in print. The associate vice president for planning and institutional effectiveness is responsible for compiling and certifying official university statistics and assisting university offices and individuals with institutional data-gathering, opinion research, customized reports, and computer programs that provide further information. The assistant vice president for marketing and communications works closely with the associate vice president for planning and institutional effectiveness, and the associate vice president for enrollment management to collect the most recent data and information for university recruitment publications to brand frame A&M-Corpus Christi to reflect its reputation for award-winning academic programs, focus on students, student engagement, unique location, Gulf of Mexico research and the continuing momentum of expansion.

Staff from both marketing and communications and enrollment management review proofs of materials prior to publishing to ensure all information is accurate. Personnel in enrollment management in the Office of Student Recruitment and new-student programs, work collaboratively with staff from the marketing and communications department to review recruitment publication proofs, ensure accuracy in information content and make suggestions and/or corrections. After pre-publication materials have been checked for accuracy and meet with enrollment management staff approval, the corresponding director authorizes the final copy with their signature and date signed affirming the document to be published is accurate. The document is submitted to the marketing and communications assistant vice president for approval and to be sent to production.

The recruitment materials are consistently checked for accuracy to ensure that information provided represents what people need to know about the University. A standard procedure in the different areas of enrollment management (admissions, new student programs, transition student center, etc) for example, is for directors of the respective areas to ensure that the information in their presentations are accurate and adapted to the particular audience to be addressed.

Recruitment publications are created to focus on both general markets and target-specific markets. In developing the view book [21] and search pieces, anecdotal information and focus group studies are utilized to craft language and images to position the University as a destination site for higher education. While the graphic look of materials changes annually, there continues to be the underlying theme of a "multicultural learning community," reflective of the University’s mission.

In recruiting students from the Rio Grande Valley region and other geographic areas where there is a majority Hispanic population, the University understands that the student is fluent in English. However, because Spanish may be the dominant language in some households, the University has a special Web page crafted in Spanish that outlines for parents the strengths and values of the University [22].
Recruitment materials take many forms because any A&M-Corpus Christi publication, postcard, T-shirt, Web page or business card can serve as a recruitment tool. For example, prospective students and their parents attending Island Days [23] [24], a series of open houses that provide a first-hand look at what the University has to offer, are provided with a packet consisting of a colorful pocket folder [25] with covers that provide important contact information, a campus map and photographs of an aerial view of the University, students engaged in curricular and extra-curricular activities and important university landmarks. The contents of the folder include a view book [26] and various flyers and information items [27] [28] [29] [30] [31] [32] [33] [34] [35] [36] [37] [38]. Students and parents are provided with a presentation [28] and have the opportunity to gather information on scholarships [39], on-campus housing [40], Army ROTC [41], the Honors Program [42], and specific academic programs during the Island Fair. Students have the opportunity to visit with faculty, staff and current students to get a sneak peak at Islander campus life and programs and receive University Island Day T-shirts [43], intended to remind them of their A&M-Corpus Christi visit.

Potential students and parents can register for Island Days on the A&M-Corpus Christi web site, [44] [45] which provides step-by-step instructions on how to apply for admission [46], request additional information [47], schedule a campus tour [48], take a virtual campus tour [49], access multiple publications that previously had only been available in print [50], and access presentations and videos of campus events [51]. While potential transfer students can attend Island Days, they are recruited each semester at local area colleges and are provided with a transition workshop [52] [53] once they have applied to the University and prior to the start of classes.

With the advent of social media (Facebook and Twitter), the University engages the community through its official Facebook [54] site. News and information about the University is posted as updates, sometimes at multiple points within the day. The information is gleaned from news generated from both the marketing and communications operation and the sports information operation. New Student Programs monitors and updates the Facebook site, and ensures prospective and current students are made aware of recruitment activities, registration deadlines and other timely information that supports recruitment and retention efforts. New Student Programs utilizes Twitter [55] as an immediate effect to prospective students when there are recruitment and orientation events under way.

While recruitment materials are directly aimed at all potential students, they are also provided to Coastal Bend-area high school counselors at an annual workshop held on campus each fall semester. Counselors are provided with an update presentation [56] and with materials [28] [57] in addition to the items included in Island Days folders, to take back to their high school students. Representatives from the five colleges have lunch with the counselors and provide updates on degree programs.

Recruitment through magazine ads [58] [59] while focusing on the Island University theme, inform readers that A&M-Corpus Christi has a solid reputation where students are challenged to succeed in the classroom and to become lifelong learners. The institution's recruitment and recruitment-related materials use photographs of students from diverse ethnicities as one way of connecting with target populations. Promotional materials for university recruitment events through admissions and new-student programs provide a quick overview of key points for potential students.

Recruitment is also carried out through letters and e-mails to specific audiences. The Fall 2008 "A Quick Look" mailer [60] is a first-contact item and shows a diverse group of students. The university web site and e-mails are the main recruitment tools to provide information to potential international students. In most instances, potential international students are first contacted through English as a Second Language International. This private agency on the A&M-Corpus Christi campus uses its web site [61]
and other materials [62] [63] to recruit students. The English as a Second Language International web site uses a direct link to the university web site to inform potential international students about the A&M-Corpus Christi campus, ensuring that the University is being accurately represented. The initial contacts with potential international students are through the A&M-Corpus Christi admissions office by e-mail [64]. The dean of graduate studies and the director of admissions are involved in admitting the students and communicate with them from the beginning. Once prospective international students' mailing addresses are confirmed and they have applied for conditional admission to the University for English as a Second Language International classes, or English as a Second Language International classes and one of A&M-Corpus Christi's degree programs, the director of admissions or the dean of graduate studies sends them a conditional admission letter [65] [66] that informs them their admission is contingent on fulfilling the necessary requirements. A pre-arrival packet [67] of information is then sent from the English as a Second Language International office on campus to help students prepare for their stay on campus.

Aside from the primary recruitment materials for the overall university community, the larger academic units (the five colleges) have developed recruitment materials for specific degree programs to highlight these course offerings to more targeted populations. These recruitment materials, available both in print and electronically, are generated in-house by the colleges, following the parameters outlined by the marketing and communications department and are checked for accuracy by either program or department chairs, by committees or by the college dean [68]. Much of the college's recruitment materials can be found on the colleges' Web pages on the university web site [69] [70] [71] [72] [73]. Recruitment materials generated by the colleges are taken to recruitment fairs, mailed out upon request or as in the case of the College of Education, distributed to all the region's school districts through the Region Two Education Service Center.

Individual colleges, especially the Colleges of Business and Education, are very active at on-campus graduate recruiting. For example, recruitment materials for the College of Education include newsletters such as SAGE [74], which highlight graduate faculty and their recent research, and students in doctoral and graduate programs; and specific program brochures [75] [76] that accurately reflect the college's programs. The College of Education holds one reception for master's and one reception for doctoral program recruitment each semester with students and faculty present to discuss their particular degree programs. The recruitment receptions are advertised through campus announcements, the Web and with flyers [77] [78] delivered to all area school district personnel through the Education Service Center.

Recruiting materials and recruitment of potential graduate students is mostly provided through the graduate studies office and the individual colleges. In-person recruiting on campus and at regional universities and the graduate studies web site [79] are the methods of recruitment used for potential graduate students. At present, most of the graduate students enrolled at the University also received their undergraduate degrees from A&M-Corpus Christi. The graduate studies open house on campus each semester provides door prizes as incentives for those who are in attendance. The event is promoted through radio announcements, flyers [80], letters [81], ads [82] and electronic media. Recruitment materials on all graduate programs are available at the event and faculty who teach in the programs are also available to answer questions for prospective graduate students. The application fee to apply for a graduate program is waived or reduced for students who apply during the graduate studies open house. Graduating university undergraduates are sent congratulatory letters [83] to invite them to consider a master's degree. The "How to Apply for Graduate School Workshop" is another on-campus recruitment event sponsored by the graduate studies office. The graduate studies office also provides prospective students with information on scholarships and assistantships [84], a new graduate student navigation quick guide [85], and orientations for new students [86] [87] [88] [89].
On a more public scale, with the introduction of a new strategic plan, "Momentum 2015," targeted materials were developed by the marketing and communications department that focus on an overview of the University. The university web site provides an "About Us" [90] Web page and a "Fast Facts" site [91] that includes enrollment numbers, student characteristics, prominent research programs, and academic offerings, all of which have been published or verified through other official reports or documents from the Office of Planning and Institutional Effectiveness. The strategic plan itself was summarized in a publication [11] that highlights the primary goals and priorities of the new plan, which was developed by the faculty, staff, students, and community to provide direction to A&M-Corpus Christi as it fulfills its mission in a culture of excellence and engagement while simultaneously experiencing dramatic growth in its student population.

General advertising for the University highlights specific aspects of the institution, its mission and its programs. A&M-Corpus Christi focuses on its academic programs, doctoral-granting status, the research and creative accomplishments of its faculty and students, its role in important Gulf of Mexico studies, and its dedication to excellence in teaching, research, creative activity and service, reflecting fulfillment of the institution's mission. Important landmarks, including the Momentum sculpture at the entrance to the University, the Harte Research Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies and the new Performing Arts Center, as well as the aerial view of the University on Ward Island, are often featured on recruitment materials. More recent promotional materials include a Corpus Christi community profile [92] consistent with other recruiting publications.

Conclusion

All recruitment materials are compared against the information from the planning and institutional effectiveness office, which is the official source of data at A&M-Corpus Christi. Information in recruitment materials is consistently and thoroughly checked by departmental officials, the assistant vice president for marketing and communications and the associate vice president for enrollment management. Through these measures the University ensures that all recruitment materials and presentations accurately represent its practices and policies.

Evidence

- UD 025 Strategic Plan-Momentum 2015
- UD 274 Momentum 2015 Timeline
- UD 042 TAMUCC New Mission Statement
- UD 275 Brief History
- UD 276 Momentum 2015 Steering Committee
- UD 277 TAMUCC Old Mission Statement
- SD 054 TEC 61.0511, Role and Mission Statement
- UD 278 Institutional Principles
- UD 279 University Home page
- UD 280 Island Image Gallery Home Page
- UD 281 New Logo News Release
- UD 282 Accessibility
- UD 283 09.02.99.C1.01 University Identification Guidelines
- UD 284 09.02.99.C1 Use of University Name and Indicia

https://tamucc.xitracs.net/accredit/reports/1566E97912C002D55C725D...
UD 286 Institutional Advancement Web Page
UD 287 Web Council
UD 288 Web Council Email
UD 289 Integrated Marketing Task Force
UD 290 PIE Assessment Guide Website
UD 291 Viewbook
UD 292 Padres (Parents Page in Spanish)
UD 293 What Is Island Day Web page
UD 294 Island Day Schedule
UD 295 Island Day-Campus Tour Folder
UD 296 Guide to the University View Book
UD 297 Becoming an Islander.Inside
UD 298 Beginning the College Process
UD 299 Flyer on Financial Aid
UD 300 TLC Flyer
UD 302 Handout- Your Education Records
UD 303 Core Curriculum Flyer
UD 304 Campus Directory
UD 305 Career Services Flyer
UD 306 Frequently Used Terms
UD 307 Colleges, Academic Advisors, Major Areas of Study
UD 308 Urgent Notice--6 Course Drop Rule
UD 309 Texas Success Initiative TSI
UD 310 Getting Started
UD 311 Scholarships Brochure
UD 312 On-Campus Housing
UD 313 Army ROTC Brochure
UD 314 Honors Program Brochure
UD 315 Island Day tshirt logo
UD 316 Island Day Web Site
UD 317 Island Day Registration Web Site
UD 318 Admissions Office
UD 319 Request Information- Prospective Student
UD 321 Campus Tour Web Site
UD 322 Virtual Campus Tour
UD 323 Online Publications About Us
UD 324 University Videos
UD 325 Transfer General Info Agenda
UD 326 Undergraduate Transfer Information
UD 327 University Facebook