

LOOK NORTH

UNT 2030

DEVELOP | DISCOVER | DRIVE



UNT

DIVISION OF UNIVERSITY
BRAND STRATEGY
& COMMUNICATIONS

WHO WE ARE

University Brand Strategy and Communications (UBSC) supports University of North Texas strategic priorities by strengthening the university's brand, reputation, and visibility with key audiences, as well as driving key decisions from stakeholders related to enrollment, fundraising, and other support for the university.

Our work aligns the university's central marketing and communications efforts with enrollment, fundraising, and brand awareness and perception goals, while reinforcing UNT's identity as an emerging leader among universities that systematically integrate excellence, innovation, and access to transformative learning opportunities.



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Executive Summary

Strategic Direction Through 2030

Over the next five years, UBSC will work as a reliable, strategic partner to university leadership by clearly linking marketing and communications work to institutional outcomes. Success will be measured through alignment with university priorities; UNT's increased visibility and engagement across media and digital channels; stronger and more focused enrollment-related marketing and website performance; and steady improvement in UNT brand awareness and perception, as well as academic reputation and research profile.

UBSC will focus on high-impact priorities and ensure that communications efforts are clearly aligned with university goals, responsive to current higher education challenges, and consistent with an evolving communications landscape. UBSC strategic choices regarding staffing, work priorities, and marketing and advertising investments will focus resources where they will have the greatest institutional impact.

This plan reflects strategic shifts in UBSC's work to include:

- **Investment and increased focus on academic program-level marketing.** UBSC's historical marketing and advertising efforts have been focused solely on the university level. UBSC intends to broaden this scope to include support for program-level marketing with guidance from Academic Affairs and Enrollment.
- **A communications strategy that evolves with a changing communications landscape.** UBSC will continue to shift available resources and seek new opportunities in digital technologies that maximize the effectiveness of marketing and advertising efforts.
- **Expansion of marketing support for the full enrollment funnel.** UBSC's historical marketing and advertising efforts have focused on activities at the top of the enrollment funnel, including driving prospective student applications to the university. UBSC will expand this scope to include new student yield and retention.

Unique Role, Contribution, and Strengths

The UBSC division helps to educate — many students come to know and have an affinity for UNT through UBSC's work — as well as facilitate; UBSC's work connects the community to campus, prospective students to enrollment team members, and alumni and friends to the advancement team.

UBSC's responsibilities include university marketing and advertising, enrollment marketing, and more. The staff professionals possess a combination of passion for the University of North Texas, institutional knowledge, and subject-matter expertise that cannot be replicated by external professionals. UBSC can leverage that passion and expertise in traditional and new ways to support the university's goals.

Navigating External Forces, Trends, and Contexts

The University of North Texas is not immune to broad negative perceptions of higher education and must work to restore trust with segments of stakeholders. Competition across the state and in North Texas also presents a challenge that requires a clear brand identity and position. Working toward that goal, UBSC will build upon the successful launch of the Better Look North marketing campaign in Fall 2025. In addition, the communication landscape changes rapidly, and ongoing professional training is critical to success. While principles of successful communication largely remain the same over time, the media through which we communicate changes.

Strategic Goals (2026-2030)

- **Increase UBSC's contributions to institutional enrollment goals.** UBSC's efforts in enrollment marketing have been focused on driving prospective student interest and applications. Over the next five years, UBSC plans to expand those efforts to assist with yielding enrollment and retention-specific strategies, tactics, and goals. In five years, UBSC will know it is successful when it is a key partner with teams in Enrollment, Student Success, and Academic Affairs to contribute to increased yield and retention rates. Success will be measured by UBSC's contributions to prospective student yield and current student retention and graduation.
- **Improve brand awareness of the University of North Texas.** Success will be measured by the number and reach of media mentions; website traffic, specifically as it relates to key pages that promote academic programs; social media engagement; and survey data that reflects awareness of the university, its offerings, and its impact. UBSC will know it is successful when the university is no longer a "best-kept secret" and stakeholder perception matches the reality of UNT's impact.
- **Enhance brand perception of the University of North Texas.** Success will be measured by increased positive social media engagement; improved poll data that reflects stakeholder willingness to recommend UNT and perceptions of the university as innovative, visionary, and trustworthy; and an increase in the number of positive media mentions in leading higher education publications and rankings.

Key Outcomes & Metrics

As a division that supports all aspects of the university, UBSC indirectly contributes to all core and emergent metrics. It does this internally through increasing awareness of the availability of new and ongoing student support and academic programs, and externally through the promotion of the important teaching and research conducted at UNT that impacts communities across the state. UBSC's goals are to increase the awareness of UNT's many offerings, to solidify UNT's brand identity, and to contribute in a more direct manner to institutional enrollment, retention, and graduation goals.

As UBSC succeeds in increasing UNT's brand awareness and perception, media mentions will increase, social media engagement will increase, and the university's reputation as an academic leader and research powerhouse will be improved. This work enhances the ability of partners in Enrollment, Advancement, and other areas to experience success. As UBSC seeks to contribute to UNT goals in a more direct manner, key outcomes will include the implementation of key academic program marketing plans and strategies; contributions to enrollment goals, including those related to yield; and refined brand marketing/advertising that ensures UNT brand position shifts from "best kept secret" to known for its successes and impact, as measured by survey data and social media and media engagement.

Core Metrics: Established Benchmarks that Define University Performance

1st to 2nd year retention

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **77%** | UNT Target (2030): **90%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- As student services increase and emerge, UBSC will utilize internal communication tools such as *UNT Today* and the campus communicator network to help increase awareness and utilization of resources that contribute to successful retention.

4-year graduation rate

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **42%** | UNT Target (2030): **65%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- UBSC will place additional emphasis on student outcomes in marketing materials; for example, adding employment opportunities to degree program pages on the unt.edu website and sharing additional alumni success stories across various professions to help students visualize their path from UNT to professional careers.

6-year graduation rate

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **61%** | UNT Target (2030): **80%**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- UBSC will place additional emphasis on student outcomes in marketing materials; for example, adding employment opportunities to degree program pages on the unt.edu website and sharing

additional alumni success stories across various professions to help students visualize their path from UNT to professional careers.

Annual R&D expenditures

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **\$124M** | UNT Target (2030): **\$250M**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- UBSC will help shape a narrative that reflects the reality of UNT as an R1 institution that is continuing to emerge as a research powerhouse.
- Focused stories on institutional progress in recent years, as well as targeted stories of tech transfer, will help shape this narrative.

Doctoral degrees awarded

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **286** | UNT Target (2030): **300**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- UBSC will increase its role in marketing graduate programs as identified as priorities of the institution.

Time to value

UNT Baseline (2024/25): **6 years** | UNT Target (2030): **Decrease time for programs over median**

Unit contribution to achieving targets:

- UBSC will take a leading role in marketing key initiatives that help to reduce time to value for students, such as the artificial intelligence certificate program.

Emergent Metrics: Important Dimensions of Our Success that Require New Approaches

Post-graduation placement: Percentage of graduates placed in high-demand occupations or graduate and professional programs

UBSC can contribute to the promotion of high-demand graduate and professional programs. Measures that can inform “high-demand” include organic web traffic to unt.edu through search, as well as user data on the unt.edu website for academic programs.

Career-aligned learning: Percentage of academic programs that integrate internships, industry-sponsored projects, or other work-integrated learning experiences

UBSC is not aware of existing data in its possession that can contribute to this item.

Awards and recognitions: Prestigious awards, exhibitions, and performances achieved by our students, faculty, staff, and alumni

UBSC often issues news releases and celebrates the achievements of students, faculty, staff, and alumni on the website and in social media and could help to compile them with the assistance of the campus communicators network.

Innovation and entrepreneurship: New ventures, startups, and public impact projects launched by students, faculty, and alumni

UBSC often issues news releases and promotes these projects on the website and through social media and could help to compile them with the assistance of the campus communicators network.

Student and alumni engagement: Perceptions of how well UNT prepares graduates to pursue lives of meaning and purpose

UBSC polling data gathers stakeholder feedback that is indirectly related to perceptions of preparation. Surveys currently measure: Brand Equity (to include momentum, consideration, quality, and familiarity); Awareness; Ad Recall; Value; and additional characteristics and emotional attributes. Social media engagement also provides insight into these perceptions.

Unit-Level Metrics: Other Important Priority Metrics Tracked at the Unit Level

- **Website traffic (users, page views, link clicks, time on site):** User data and website use provides insight into not only web performance, but institutional performance. Along with campus partners, UBSC develops and refines the unt.edu website to optimize specific user actions and engagement.
- **Earned media mentions and reach:** The number of media hits and reach of positive media mentions is an indication of institutional momentum.
- **(Positive) social media engagement (likes, shares, comments):** The level of social media engagement is an indication of stakeholder perception of the university.
- **Polling data:** Regular survey data that provides insight into perceptions of the university.
- **Advertising and marketing data:** UBSC tracks conversions and cost per conversion metrics related to new student recruitment that provide insight into the effectiveness and efficiency of UBSC advertising.

Goals in Action

Develop the potential of UNT students, faculty, staff, and community members

- UBSC is expanding the scope of paid marketing/advertising efforts to include promotion of academic programs prioritized by academic leaders and market demand. These efforts include digital advertising, web content enhancements, and program-specific email marketing plans.
- UBSC is expanding media training offerings for key faculty and staff.
- UBSC is facilitating the incorporation of student-led content development for UNT social media channels as part of a more robust social media strategy.

Discover new knowledge and insights that bridge traditional academic disciplines

- UBSC, in conjunction with Research and Innovation, will complete a full evaluation of communication media used to share research news and information, and implement a revised communications plan for this division.
- UBSC will expand its use of artificial intelligence tools to facilitate creative ideation and efficiencies.
- UBSC will work with Enrollment to enhance the use and effectiveness of admissions social media accounts.

Drive creative advances, partnerships, and new models of higher education

- UBSC will enhance relationships with the cities of Denton and Frisco communications and external relations professionals on additional collaborative marketing efforts.
- UBSC will work with local school districts and feeder high schools to explore co-branded marketing/advertising efforts.
- UBSC will identify and work with targeted media outlets and content creators that position the university as innovative/disruptive in the higher education landscape.