

Cornell University Student Assembly

Student Assembly Public Relations Strategy 2013 – 2014

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VP of Public Relations



Public Relations Strategy

I. Vision

This coming year, the SA's Public Relations efforts are tasked with redesigning and utilizing the CornellSA.com website, promoting a variety of SA events and initiatives, as well as communicating the SA's regulatory and legislative activity to the entire undergraduate community at Cornell. Additionally, the SA plans to garner student opinion through polling in order to create more focused initiatives. This includes, but is not limited to, resolutions (both passed and currently under debate), elections (Fall & Spring), SA "flagship" events (Cornell Caring Community), other student organizations events (CU Walkshare), initiatives (Student Health & Safety – Cayuga's Watchers), etc.

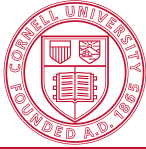
Ideally, the SA will use the communication methods at its disposal to actively engage and seek feedback from the student body and promote the Student Assembly's work and initiatives. Moreover, the broader aim of the SA's Public Relations efforts will be to strengthen present/create new channels of participation and interaction between the student body and the SA. This vision will be achieved through the combined efforts of the Student Assembly and the Communications Committee.

II. Approach

In order to devise a strategy to share such a wide array of information with the student body, we must first identify the channels through which the SA can communicate with the student body, and then identify the appropriate channels for each need. The idea behind this is to use our resources efficiently, so as to not over publicize certain initiatives/events at the expense of others. Additionally, an increased emphasis needs to be placed on student engagement. It is the duty of Public Relations to not only publicize and communicate SA activity but to frame the SA's work using channels that are relevant to students.

III. Long Term Goals

- 1) Obtain 5,000 "Likes" on the Student Assembly Facebook page by the end of the 2013-14 academic year. The timeline set for this goal is to obtain 2,500 "Likes" by the end of December 2013 and 4,000 "Likes" by the end of March 2014.
- 2) Use Public Relations initiatives to increase engagement between undergraduate students and Student Assembly members. Polling will be a regular tool of the SA to gauge the student pulse on campus.
- 3) Inject excitement into the current Public Relations structure by providing varied content on Facebook and Instagram, constituent-specific giveaways, and recognition of individual S.A. members and student organizations.



- 4) Review and solve all aspects of students' concerns with information and technology – specifically related to app development

IV. Communication Channels:

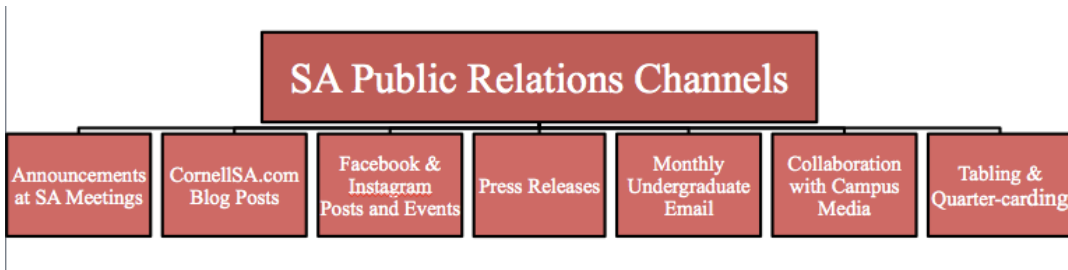
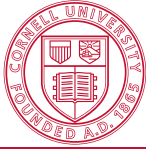


Figure 1 –

SA Public Relations Channels

- **Announcements at SA Meetings:** This is the most basic level at which information is communicated to SA members and to the public that happens to be in attendance. These will serve primarily to inform SA members about one another's' initiatives and drives. Additionally, this will be an opportunity to share information with campus media organizations that happen to be present. Every rep who makes an announcement should type up a short blurb (around 50 words) and send it to the VP of PR.
- **CornellSA.com**
 - **“In the News” Blog Post:** Communication at this level is intended to spread information through the undergraduate student body. Blog posts are simple, easy, and cost-effective (the major cost being time). Additionally, this section will be utilized to recognize reps featured in news articles. SA members will email their blurbs to the designated Communication Committee member to post on the website. This way, the task of training each member to the use the website is avoided and blog posting is more streamlined and efficient. If interested, SA members are absolutely encouraged to reach out the VP of Public Relations to learn how to manage the SA Website.
 - **“Organizational Spotlight”:** The Student Assembly would like to recognize outstanding Cornell Student Organizations whose members work hard to make significant contributors to our campus community as builders, connectors and leaders. Each week, 1 club's members will be invited to Willard Straight hall at 4:30pm for Coffee Hour and then attend the SA meeting where they will be recognized. Also, their club will be listed on our site as an exceptional group on campus. Example: ALANA for great implementation of USB DIP.



- **Promote Free NYTimes and Washington Post Access:** 1 member of Communications Committee will be charged with promoting this service to the undergraduate community.
- **30 Second Update:** Slope Media will come to Communication Committee meetings to film a short, catchy 30-second video update of the SA. Each week, a different group of 2-3 SA members will be highlighted in this clip.
- **SA Instagram:** The SA attends many student organization events on campus through outreach events. The SA Instagram feed on our webpage effectively communicates our efforts to the undergraduate community.
- **Facebook & Instagram Posts and Events:** Communication through Facebook is mainly for events/initiatives' that the SA is spearheading. Communication through Instagram is mainly for events that the SA attends. For example the Cornell Caring Community Celebration and the BLUE Late Night Shuttle Service were initiatives spearheaded by the Student Assembly that created significant online engagement over Facebook. Facebook will be used as the primary social media outlet. Example items that will be posted on the Facebook page include:
 - Highlights from Press Releases with resolutions (sponsoring SA members tagged)
 - Shows which outreach events we have attend as an organization
 - Support of other events/organizations (i.e. SAFC Recruitment, CU Walkshare)
 - Shares the 30 second video update with all undergraduates
 - “Engagement Posts” that poll students about certain issues and initiatives

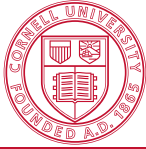


Figure 2 - Facebook

- **Press Releases:** This method of communication is more formal, and addressed directly to campus media (Daily Sun, Review), administration (Denice Cassaro), the SA-Info listserv and relevant parties. Press releases will be accompanied by posts to the SA Website and Facebook page.
- **Monthly Undergraduate Email:** This newly acquired tool allows the Student Assembly to reach all undergraduate students on campus. Care must be taken to include content that is both value-adding and relevant to currents on campus.
- **Advertisements & Collaboration with Campus Media:** Similar to the Facebook Event, this medium will be used for events and initiatives the Student Assembly is spearheading, largely because these often require a significant commitment of resources whether it is the financial resources to run a Daily Sun ad or the time and effort needed to make a video with Slope Media.
- **Tabling & Quarter Carding:** In person interaction with fellow undergraduates will be used for the most important SA engagement objectives (e.g. Elections, Gaining Likes on Facebook). This is one of the major means by which we can dehumanize the SA.

V. Utilizing Communication Channels:

Because each communication channel serves a distinct purpose, and different elements of SA activity are of different relative importance to the SA, it would make sense to prioritize our PR initiatives accordingly.



Figure 3 – SA Public Relation Strategic Methodology, on the next page is a visual representation of the different PR strategies that will be employed for different SA events and activities:

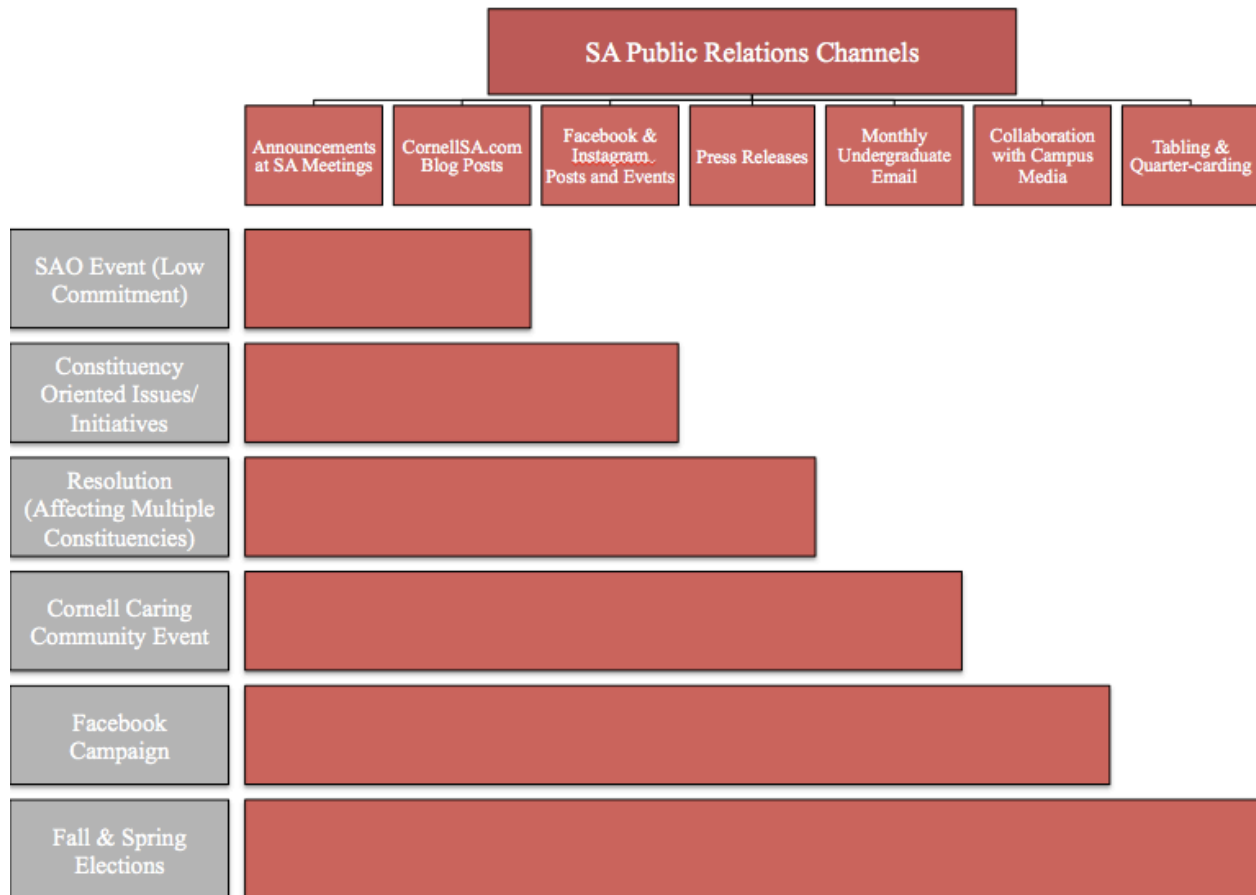


Figure 3 – SA Public Relation Strategic Methodology

Note: The above figure does denote a hard and fast rule, but something that is demonstrative of the type of methodology that could be effective at promoting the Student Assembly’s activity and engagement of students. Record of the use and application of communication channels will be kept in the PR tab of the Student Assembly Initiative Tracker 2013-14 Google document.

A step by step plan of the above overlay is detailed in the “Implementation Strategy” section.



Student Engagement

I. Vision

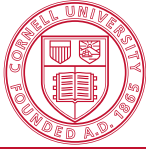
Goal: The goal of the Student Engagement Strategy is to improve student engagement by leveraging the number of “Likes” on the Cornell Student Assembly Facebook page. The two major targets that have been set are to reach 5,000 “Likes” by the end of the 2013-14 academic year; including 2,500 “Likes” by the end of December and 4,000 “Likes” by the end of March. This target will be accomplished through a number of action steps that seek to engage the student body in the short term and long term. It will be important to leverage the time of the year, as Spring Elections and incoming students visiting for Cornell Days and joining the “Class of 2017” Facebook page will be big events and provide ample opportunity for engagement and publicity. It will also be important to collaborate with the appropriate members of the Student Assembly including those on the Executive Board. In particular, the VP of Outreach and VP of Diversity & Inclusion will be instrumental in connecting the SA with community student leaders and tying in organizational activities and events.

Justification: Recently, SA Public Relations has been very administrative and routine-oriented. Effective student engagement requires a mix of administrative protocol and energy. The latter characteristic has been lacking, and this strategy seeks to address that issue. In the same way that Outreach helps the SA engage students through specific student organizations, Public Relations will fill a similar role by targeting undergraduate students through broad channels.

II. Action Plan

In order to improve the engagement of the student body the SA will take the following action steps through the Public Relations channel:

- **Mass Campaign:** For the month of September, the Student Assembly will begin a mass campaign to publicize the Cornell Student Assembly Facebook Page. The email, created by the VP of Public Relations, will incentivize students to “Like” our page in exchange for the chance to win Chipotle (free chips, buy one/get one burrito, or a free burrito).



- Facebook Like the Page - Chipotle Campaign
 - 250 buy one, get one
 - 25 chips and guacamole
 - 100 free burritos
 - 10 people in the audience at the SA meeting win free burrito (increase attendance)
 - when give it away, have them create a status
 - Like the page to get BOGO (engagement)
 - Work with organizations
 - Guarantee X number if they get members to like page
 - Quarter carding
 - Peoplepower:
 - Send people to Appel, RPCC, etc
 - Work table and give out prizes every half hour
 - Send slide to big intro classes
- **Increasing Facebook Content Value:** The SA can increase its content value and engage students by *developing a tagline*. The examples on the following page have been created based on the current CornellSA.com banner. (See Figure 4 – Student Assembly Tagline)



Cornell University Student Assembly

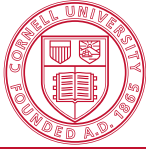
Stay Informed. Get Involved. Make a Difference.

Figure 4 – Student Assembly Tagline

- “*Get Involved, Cornell.* What’s your take on the BLUE Light Escort Service? Comment and have a chance to win a \$25 Gift Card to the Cornell Store.”
- “The SA is talking about lobbying the administration to add an Associate Dean of L.G.B.T.Q. Outreach. *Get involved* and voice your opinion.”
- “How do you feel about Campus Safety? *Get involved* by commenting here. We’ll take your thoughts to the administration.”

This strategy will allow the SA to engage students by asking questions through polls, Facebook, etc. and seeking feedback. Additionally, the SA will be able to form its own opinion based on student input.

- **Constituency Targeted Giveaways:** Constituency targeted giveaways will help the SA approach engagement from the student and internal member perspective. In order to make the incentives more creative and unique, the VP of



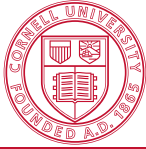
Public Relations will seek out feedback from College representatives to create more specialized and focused incentives. Coordinating with the Dean and administrative heads of each college will need to take place in advance; the timeline set for preliminary contact is the week of January 14, 2013. Care will also be taken to ensure that the incentives are spaced out evenly throughout calendar.

College Name	Example Incentive
Agriculture & Life Sciences	Gift Card to Mandibles
Architecture, Art, and Planning	Gift Card to Green Dragon
Arts & Sciences	Lunch with Dean LePage
Engineering	Gift Card to Mattin's Café
Hotel Administration	Lunch with Dean Johnson
Human Ecology	Lunch with Dean Mathios
Industrial Labor Relations	Gift Card to Dean Katz
Class Name	Example Incentive
Freshman	Gift Card to Bear Necessities
Transfer	Gift Card to Jansen's Market

Figure 5 – Example College-Specific Incentives

- **Leveraging Student Assembly Committees:**
 - Communication Committee
 - Community Life Committee
 - And more...

- **Forming Partnerships with Related Student Organizations:**
 - ILR Student Government
 - Human Ecology Dean's Undergraduate Advisory Council
 - Dyson Undergraduate Council
 - Hotel School Advisory Board
 - And more...



- **Utilizing Facebook Advertising:** Each month the SA will run a Facebook ad and/or promote a wall post. For a small cost, this method can help maximize SA visibility.

Implementation Strategy

I. Overview

Having an implementation strategy is important because it will determine how the SA interacts with and engages the student body, and it will also showcase SA member's work as they put a large amount of time and effort into resolutions and initiatives. The SA Communications Committee will play a crucial role in ensuring student engagement and publicity of SA activity.

This following sections detail the action steps and guidelines for using the **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **CornellSA.com** communications outlets. Both of these mediums involve the most assistance from the Communications Committee.

II. Facebook

The goal of Facebook implementation is to have 1-2 Facebook posts every week that serve a different function and purpose related to student body engagement. 1 Communication Committee member will be tasked with the management and delegation of posting. All SA Reps will be taught how to post to the page with updates to remove any bottleneck of emailing 1 point-person.

Initiative-based

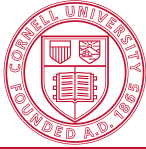
- **Purpose:** To facilitate interaction between undergraduates and the SA about relevant campus issues
- **Example:** The SA is working on a Caring Community Celebration around gorge safety. How do you feel about the fences being taken down?

Recognition-based

- **Purpose:** To demonstrate that the SA recognizes students, student representatives, and student organizations that demonstrate exemplary characteristics.
- **Example:** SA In the News, Organization Spotlights

Outreach-based

- **Purpose:** To broadcast student events and the SA members that attend them



- **Example:** “Big shout out to the Cornell Democrats and College Republicans for the Rock-the-Vote event later on today. Thanks to SA reps X and Y for help setting up.”

Resolution/Agenda-based:

- **Purpose:** To showcase the resolutions, items, and projects the SA undertakes on a weekly basis
- **Example:** “Cornell students, the SA is debating Resolution 26 about student safety at today’s SA meeting. Comment below.” / Press Release linked to sponsoring SA Members

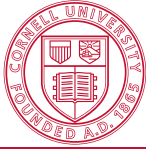
To increase posting activity on the website, the following rules will be put into place:

- For every resolution item, there must be a post on CornellSA.com summarizing the main idea and purpose. 1 Communication Committee member will be tasked with obtaining a summary from the sponsors after the resolution is passed.
- After each meeting, there will be a summary of each Thursday’s meeting on the SA Website. This will be the responsibility of 1 Communication Committee member.
- 1 Communication Committee member must regularly post SA In the News to the site.

III. Organizational Spotlight

To recognize outstanding Cornell Student Organizations whose members work hard to make significant contributors to our campus community as builders, connectors and leaders.

Every other week, a club will be invited to Willard Straight hall at 4:30pm for Coffee Hour and then offered to attend the SA meeting. The organization highlighted will be featured through Student Assembly promotional materials at the discretion of VP PR. Comm Comm will be tasked with getting organization nominations based on representative’s feedback from outreach events. The Student Assembly is looking for organizations that are either exceptional in their purpose, fill an unique gap on campus, or executed a successful event/forum/program.



IV. Mobile App Development

The Information Technology portion of the Communication Committee intends to act as a medium through which the University can partner with student programmers to develop a range of meaningful mobile applications.

Short Term:

- Continue overseeing programming team of Master's of Engineering students to produce prototype Cornell Dining mobile application.
- Communicate with Cornell Dining to ensure needs are met, databases are created, and capabilities are increased to enable different features in the application.
- Solicit student opinion through the Cornell Dining Committee, survey results, and focus groups as needed.
- Present prototype to University administration in November.

Long Term:

- Determine unmet needs on campus that can be addressed through mobile application development. Work with selected organizations to create new projects.
- Partner with PopShop, Information Science Student Association, Association of Computer Science Undergraduates, and relevant groups to continue high-quality technology development.
- Create new programs, through course work, internships, etc., to further organize programming capabilities through the University.