The Birthplace of Public Higher Education: The University of Georgia Origin Story
By Jan Gleason, Executive Director for Strategic Marketing, University of Georgia
The University of Georgia description as ‘a land-grant/sea-grant university, founded in 1785 by the Georgia General Assembly as the first state-charted university in the country’ proved difficult for audiences to understand and appreciate. Our strategy was to develop memorable and motivating content that created distinction for the University of Georgia as the birthplace of American public higher education and promote those messages with key audiences through an integrated communications and marketing campaign. We created newsworthy content that was pitched and placed in earned media outlets and related social media and digital content for our brand channels. The campaign has reached a direct audience of 2.8 million to date and received regional and national print and online media coverage, as well as strong 52,000 views of the birthplace video on the university’s Facebook page. The initiative launched on January 23, 2017 in advance of Founder’s Day but is evergreen and we continue to develop it.

Onboarding a New University Leader
By Jackie Ostrowicki, Assistant Vice President, University Affairs/Director of Marketing & Strategic Communications, University of Nebraska
Getting a new president is a game changer for a college or university. As you look to ring out the old and ring in the new, creating an effective communications plan is critical for success. Find out how the University of Nebraska built a brand platform and communication strategy for their new president, Dr. Hank Bounds—who was not only new to the university, but new to the state. How did the University of Nebraska leverage the opportunity, what are the many considerations from a marketing leadership perspective, and what was done to develop the president’s brand?

Four Years Free at Portland State University
By Kenny Ma, Director of Media and Public Relations, Portland State University
Last Fall, Portland State University became one of the first major universities to offer four years of free tuition to undergraduate students. The deal is that you have to be an entering freshman from an Oregon high school, have a 3.4 cumulative GPA and be Pell grant eligible. PSU's communications team was tasked to market and promote the program. Our efforts generated...
more buzz, including local and national media coverage, than in the school's recent memory. As a result of the marcom campaign, PSU’s freshman applications from Oregon high schoolers went up 16 percent. And confirmations from those admitted went up 32 percent. Our success came from being at the table early to help name the initiative and determine how to roll it out. Communications doesn't always get a seat at the table. Being able to sway influence across campus with key stakeholders such as admissions will result in more effective communications outcomes and institutional success.

**Uniting a Campus through CoCreation**
*By Dave Dryden, Associate Vice President for Marketing and Brand Strategy, Clemson University*

Cocreate is a new initiative being used to unite the creative community at Clemson University. For campus designers, writers, photographers, videographers, marketers, educators and communication specialists — those who are asked to seek creative solutions every day — the creative process is often stressful, frustrating and lonely. Cocreate was developed to end creative isolation and spark innovation and collaboration! CoCreators share ideas, inspiration and solutions with their peers from across campus through presentations, workshops, meetings and coworking days. Learn how this big, but simple, idea has begun to break down siloes and instill a sense of pride among the creative class at Clemson University.

**Talk less, listen more: Communicating about campus race and equity issues**
*By Meg Matthews, Strategic Communications Manager, University of Washington & Leilani Lewis, Assistant Director of Diversity Communications and Outreach, University of Washington*

In recent years, university and college communities nationwide have called on academic leaders to provide greater care and attention to racial equity issues, both on- and off-campus. This call manifests itself in a variety of ways that are helping to shift the cultural landscape at higher education institutions. Proactive communications planning can be a source of support to students, faculty and staff during difficult times; reactive communications risks inflicting greater harm. Hear how the University of Washington developed a communications guide that provides tools and best practices for campus communicators to center fairness and equity in response to campus issues and actions.

**Professional Development for Higher Education Marketers**
*By Teri Lucie Thompson, Associate Vice Chancellor for Marketing & Communications and Chief Marketing Officer, The University of Texas System and CMO in Residence for McCombs Business School*

While several professional organizations provide conferences and development resources for higher education marketers, there is currently no program or certification specifically tailored to the unique needs of higher education marketing. The University of Texas has developed a comprehensive program and associated certification designed specifically to cater to the needs of higher education marketers. Learn more about UT’s incipient Institute for Higher Education Marketing.
**Interactive Storytelling**

*By Dana Topousis, Executive Director of News and Media Relations, University of California, Davis*

After a tumultuous year for UC Davis, Strategic Communications focused on key areas of strength for the university and created new ways to capture and promote our strengths. With buy-in from leadership at all levels, we built a foundation to weave a stronger UC Davis narrative, including an award winning immersive, mobile-friendly website full of interactive elements like 360-degree videos and audio clips, as well as text. This project serves as a model for other projects we’re creating, including a focus on climate science, which highlights the public communities who are impacted by our research and those working with our researchers.

**Pitching Pitches: When a Home Run is the Goal**

*By John Bolt, Senior Executive Director of Communications, West Virginia University*

WVU's Office of Communications has increased its focus on targeted pitches – both for specific stories and expert placement – and as a result has seen an increase in earned media, often in surprising and unexpected ways. While still doing news releases on select and important subjects, the pitches have taken on a major, near primary, role in communications efforts.