

Cornell University Student Assembly

Student Assembly Public Relations Strategy 2012 – 2013

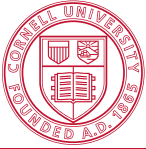
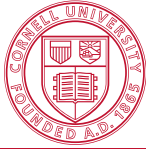


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Public Relations Strategy

I. Vision

This coming year, the SA Public Relations is tasked with 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.

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), etc.

II. Approach

In order to devise a strategy to share such a wide array of information with the student body, it would make more sense to first identify the channels by which the SA can communicate with the student body, and then identify the right channels for each need. The idea behind this is to use our resources efficiently, so as to not overdo publicizing 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 communicate he the job of

III. Long Term Goals

- 1) Double the amount of likes on the Student Assembly Facebook page. The timeline set for this goal is the end of the Fall 2012 semester.
- 2) Use Public Relations initiatives to the increase the engagement of Undergraduate students and Student Assembly members.
- 3) Inject excitement into the current Public Relations structure by providing varied content on Facebook, constituent-specific giveaways, and recognition of individual S.A. members.

IV. Communication Channels:

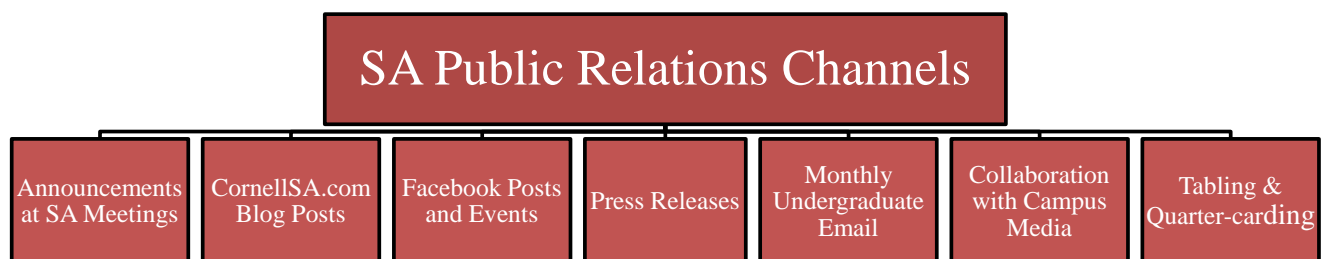


Figure 1 – SA Public Relations Channels

- **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 and others’ initiatives and drives. Additionally, this will be an opportunity to share information with campus media organizations that happen to be present.

- **CornellSA.com Blog Post:** Communication at this level will begin to spread information through the undergraduate student body. These means are simple, easy, and cost-effective (the major cost being time). Contrary to previous practices, SA members should email their blurbs to the VP of Public Relations, or another Executive Board 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.

- **Facebook Posts and Events:** Communication at this level is for events/initiatives’ that the SA is more committed to, for example the Cornell Caring Community Celebration, or the Late Night Shuttle Service. When “Cornell Student Assembly” posts on Facebook, it is automatically linked to its *Twitter* account. (See Figure 2 - Facebook & Twitter Parity) Facebook should be used as the primary social media outlet. Example items that will be posted on the page include:
 - Highlights from Press Releases with resolutions (sponsoring SA members tagged)
 - Support of other events/organizations (i.e. SAFC Recruitment, CU Walkshare)
 - “Engagement Posts” that poll students about certain issues and initiatives



Figure 2 - Facebook & Twitter Parity

- **Press Releases:** This method of communication tends to be more formal, and addressed directly to campus media, administration, 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 considering the current campus climate.
- **Advertisements & Collaboration with Campus Media:** Similar to the Facebook Event, this medium will be used for an event/initiative the Student Assembly is committed to, largely because these often require a significant commitment of resources whether it be the financial resources to run a Daily Sun ad or the time and effort needed to make video with Slope Media.
- **Tabling & Quarter-carding:** This means of communication will be reserved for initiatives the SA is most committed to (e.g. Elections). This is one of the major means by which we can dehumanize the SA. The drawback is that is extremely time-consuming, and may face scheduling conflicts.

V. Utilizing Communication Channels:

As different communications channels each serve different purposes, 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:

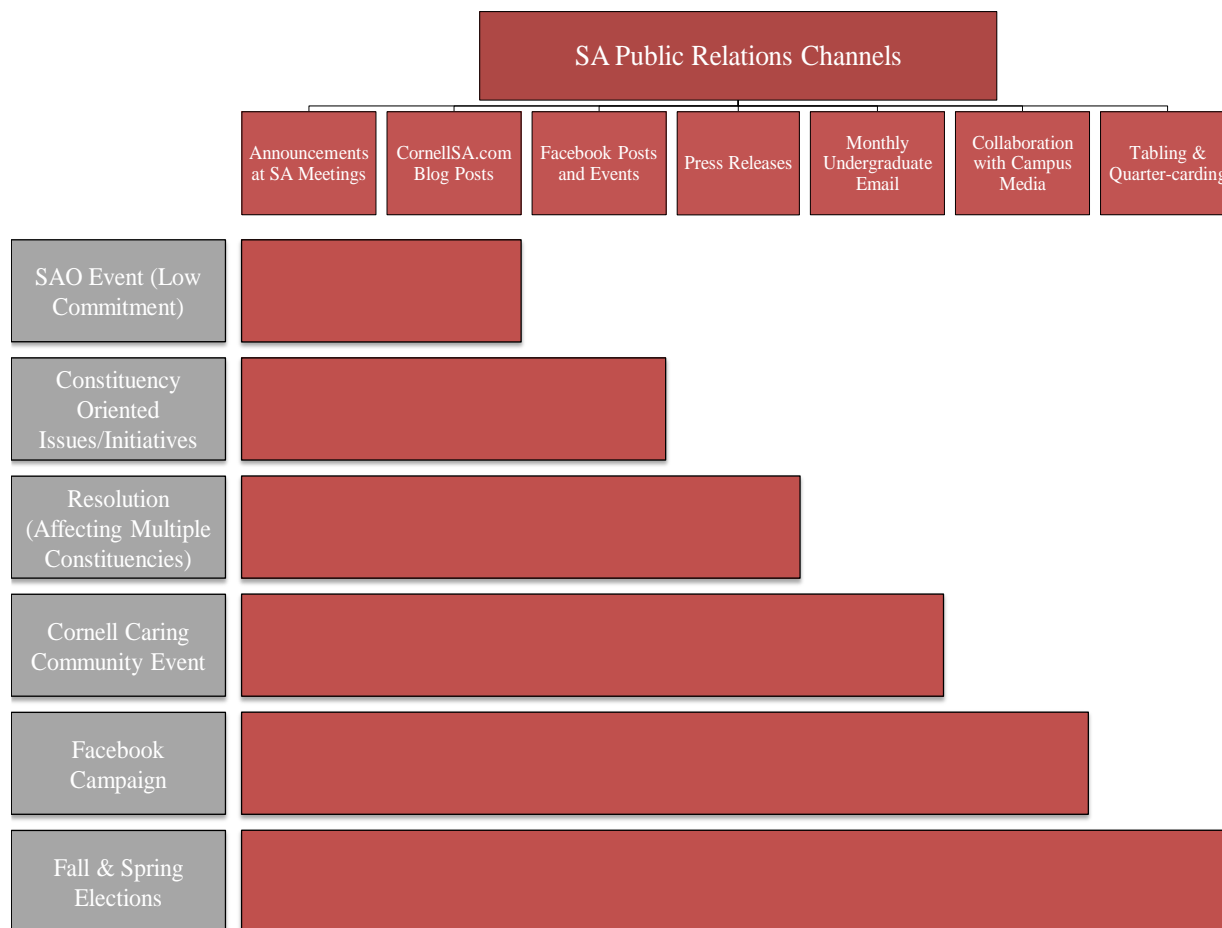


Figure 3 – SA Public Relation Strategic Methodology

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.

Student Engagement Strategy

I. Vision

Goal: The goal of the Student Engagement Strategy is to double the number of “Likes” on the Cornell Student Assembly Facebook page. This will be accomplished through a number of action steps that seek to engage the student in the short term and long term. Moreover, this strategy involves SA members, committee members, and other SA affiliated organizations to publicize SA activity and initiatives.

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 do the same by targeting undergraduate students through broad channels.

II. Considering Twitter

In the beginning of the year, it was speculated that Twitter could provide an effective means of engaging students through social media. In particular, #CornellSA, a Twitter campaign to get students to tweet about pertinent issues and problems was considered a potentially effective strategy. Based on observations of undergraduate behavior in the current semester, we can conclude the following; *Cornell is not a Twitter-heavy campus.*

In terms of social media, the Student Assembly is best positioned to utilize Facebook as a means of creating excitement, publicizing Assembly activity, and actively engaging the student body.

III. 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 Email Campaign:** For the month of November, the Student Assembly will begin a mass email campaign to publicize the Cornell Student Assembly Facebook Page. The email will incentivize students to “Like” our page in exchange for the chance to win a pair of tickets to a Cornell Hockey Game (either Harvard or Dartmouth).
- **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)



Figure 4 – Student Assembly Tagline

- “*Get Involved, Cornell*. What’s your take on the BLUE Light Escort Service? Comment and 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 hear. We’ll take your thoughts to the administration.”

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

➤ **College-Targeted Giveaways:**

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 Katz
Engineering	Gift Card to Mattin’s Café
Hotel Administration	Lunch with the Dean
Human Ecology	Gift Card to Martha’s Café
Industrial Labor Relations	Gift Card to Café Ives

Figure 5 – Example College-Specific Incentives

➤ **Leveraging Student Assembly Committees:**

- Public Relations & Outreach Committee
- Residential and Student Life Committee
- North Campus Freshman Committee

➤ **Forming Partnerships with Related Student Organizations:**

- ILR Student Government
- Dyson Undergraduate Council
- Hotel School Advisory Board

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

IV. Long Term Responsibilities

In order to infuse the current Public Relations strategy with the new Student Engagement strategy the following new weekly responsibilities are proposed:

<i>Proposed VP of Public Relations Responsibilities</i>	
Wednesday	<i>Night:</i> 1. Post press release on Facebook and tag sponsoring SA Members
Friday	1. Post an aggregated summary of all resolutions pertaining to issues external to the Student Assembly on SA Website 2. Link SA Website post to Facebook page
<i>Proposed SA Member Responsibilities</i>	
Thursday	<i>Night:</i> 1. If your resolution involves a specific constituency or affects the at-large student body send the VP of Public Relations a 2-3 sentence summary of your resolution to be included on the SA Website