

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's Public Relations efforts are 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.

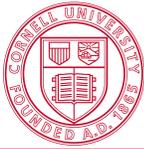
This includes, but is not limited to, resolutions (both passed and currently under debate), elections (Fall & Spring), SA "flagship" events (Cornell Caring Community), other student organizations events (CU Walkshare), initiatives (Student Health & Safety), etc.

II. Approach

In order to devise a strategy to share such a wide array of information with the student body, 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. The timeline set for this goal is 2,500 "Likes" by the end of the Fall 2012 semester and 4,000 "Likes" by the end of March 2013.
- 2) Use Public Relations initiatives to increase engagement between 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:

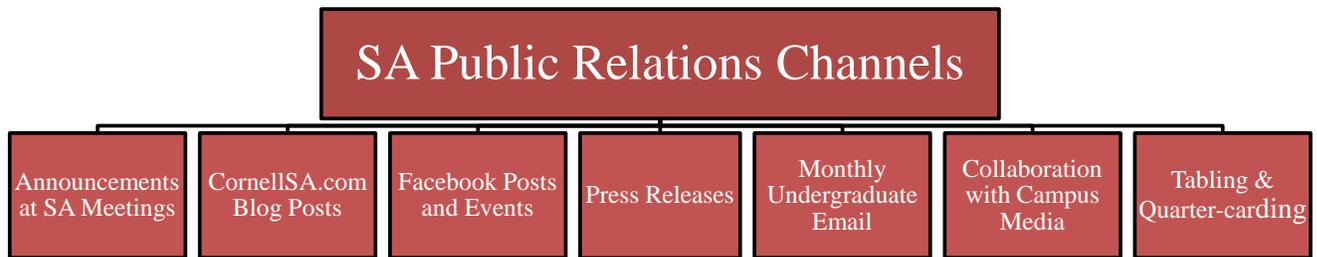


Figure 1 – SA Public Relations Channels

- **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 another's 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 is intended to spread information through the undergraduate student body. Blog posts are simple, easy, and cost-effective (the major cost being time). Contrary to previous practices, SA members will 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 use the website is avoided and blog posting is more streamlined and efficient. If interested, SA members are absolutely encouraged to reach out to 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 spearheading. 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 social media platforms. When "Cornell Student Assembly" posts on Facebook, it is automatically linked to its *Twitter* account. (See Figure 2 - Facebook & Twitter Parity) Facebook will 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

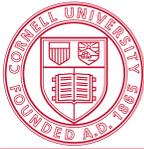


Figure 2 - Facebook & Twitter Parity

- **Press Releases:** This method of communication is more formal, and addressed directly to campus media, administration, the SA-Info listserv and relevant parties. Press releases will always 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). 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:

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.

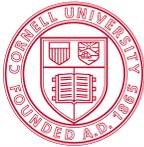


Figure 3 – SA Public Relation Strategic Methodology, on the next page is a visual representation of the different PR strategies that will be employed for different SA events and activities:

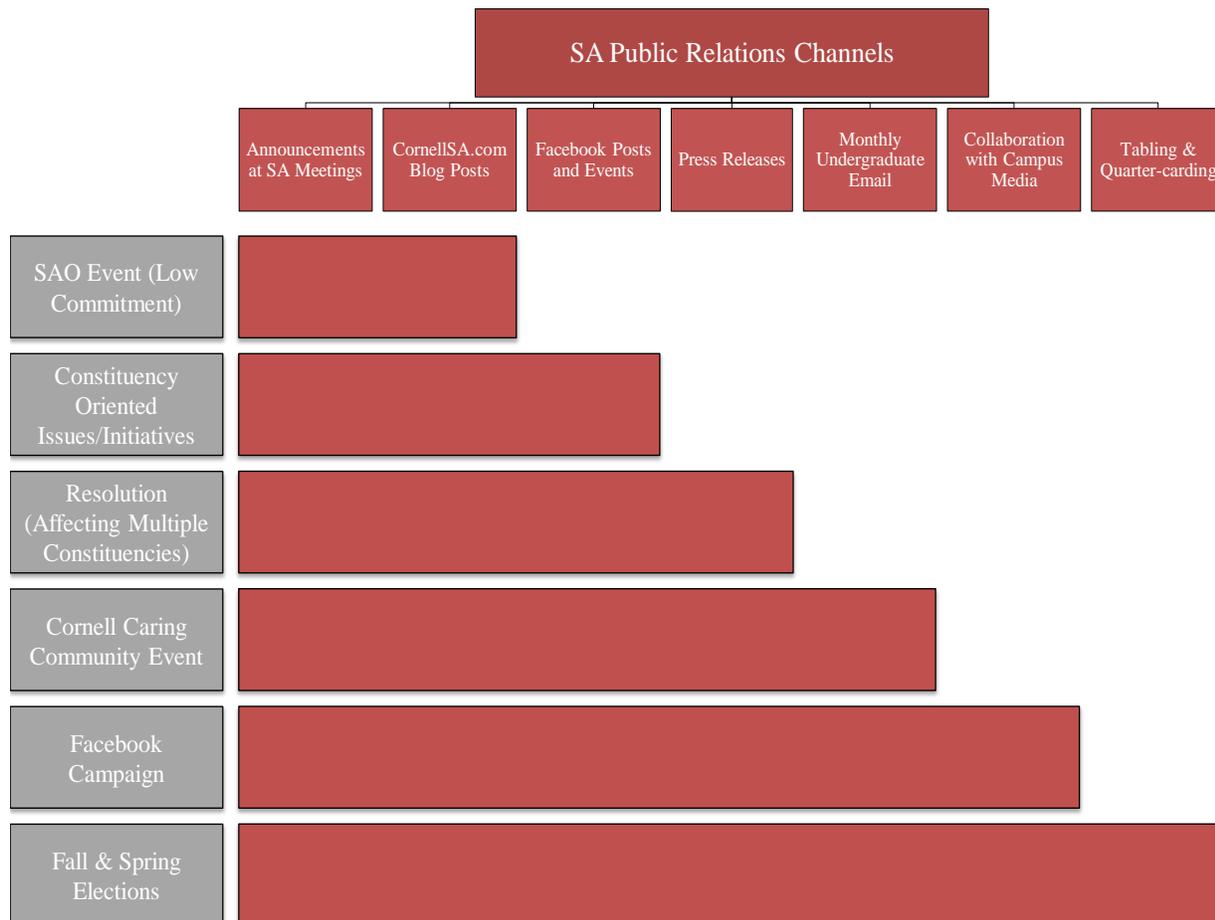
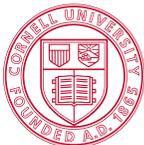


Figure 3 – SA Public Relation Strategic Methodology

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 2012-13 Google document.



Student Engagement Strategy

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 2,500 “Likes” by the end of November 2012, and 4,000 by the end of March 2013. These targets will be accomplished through a number of action steps that seek to engage the student body 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 fill a similar role by targeting undergraduate students through broad channels.

II. Considering Twitter

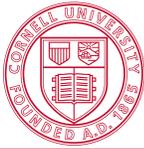
In the beginning of the year, it was speculated that Twitter could provide an effective means of engaging students through social media. In particular, #CornellSA, a Twitter campaign to get students to tweet about pertinent issues and problems was considered a potentially effective strategy. Based on 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, created by the VP of Public Relations, 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)



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 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 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.

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 Nasty’s
Transfer	??

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
- Human Ecology Dean's Undergraduate Advisory Council
- 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>	
Daily	1. Work with assembly members to create Facebook Student-Engagement posts (i.e. "Get Involved, Cornell.") - Goal: 2-3 times a week
Wednesday	<i>Night:</i> 1. Post press release on Facebook and tag sponsoring SA Members
Friday	1. Post an aggregate 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