Communications Synergy Group Final Status Letter
Submitted by Joel Malina, Chair

April 20, 2016

Overview of the Committee Charge and Process
The Communications Synergy Group is comprised of 14 communications and administrative representatives from CALS/Dyson, Johnson, SHA, Alumni Affairs & Development and University Relations. The Communications Committee has fulfilled its charge to define and oversee communications strategies to engage key internal and external stakeholder groups, ensure consistency of message across all communications and identify potential risks.

The committee anticipates that it will continue to support university and college leadership with ongoing communications efforts to advance the goals of internal and external stakeholders through multiple channels, including web, news media, social media and coverage of relevant events.

Communications Activities
College of Business Website
As outlined in the committee’s March 30 Progress Report, following the Jan. Board of Trustees vote, business.cornell.edu was converted to house CCB information and provide an avenue for engagement. The site has evolved to include updated FAQs, committee reports and other communications. On average, the site consistently receives about 1,200 visits each week – nearly half of which is generated by new visitors, many finding their way to the site through the Cornell Chronicle, external media sources and social media.

Chronicle, EZRA, CAM Coverage
To date, the Cornell Chronicle has published eight articles with a focus on the CCB. In early May, the Chronicle will publish a Q&A with Dean Dutta; an abbreviated version of the Q&A also will publish in the Cornell Alumni Magazine May/June edition. The January, February, and March editions of the EZRA Update (an email to all alumni) have included links to Chronicle stories; additional coverage is planned for the next EZRA Update (April 29).

Media Relations & Social Media
Media engagements starting Jan. 30 after the Board vote to create the CCB resulted on 324 verified media hits including NPR Marketplace, Bloomberg, Economic Times. Rounding out that initial effort into late February, we added another 260 media hits, led by a New York Times feature, the South Asian Times and trade leader Hotel Business. Since that initial push, Media Relations, working with our New Media and Marketing partners in University Relations as well as our communications colleagues at Johnson, Dyson and SHA, focused its efforts on creating the “Why a College of Business” short video series.

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University’s heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.
Fourteen videos featuring CCB leaders, faculty and students were created in March, for use in media outreach and across our social media platforms. To date, 10 videos have been pushed out on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). On average, each video reaches about 30,000 followers with 5,000 to 7,000 unique views, which is excellent for this style of campaign. Videos on Facebook will continue to generate positive impressions with no new negative followers.

Looking forward, the upcoming Steering Committee report developed through the engagement committee process presents the next significant opportunity to tell the story of the creation of the College of Business on a national scale. Cornell Media Relations will work in coordination with the three constituent schools to harness this opportunity. In addition, Media Relations will lead our outreach efforts by amplifying stories about collaborative research and student efforts highlighted by our communications partners in Johnson, SHA and Dyson.

Ongoing Committee Efforts
The committee has made considerable strides toward strengthening the collaborative relationships between the communications specialists at the three schools, AA&D and University Relations, which has allowed the committee to support unique communications needs for internal and external audiences.

The committee anticipates that the schools will take increasing ownership in driving the communications efforts with their audiences – prospective and current students, faculty, staff and alumni – as the CCB begins to take shape.

Ongoing committee actions include:

• Working with the CCB leadership to begin to lay out branding and market position ideas to support college admissions, corporate recruiters and other external audiences.
• Proposing enhancements to the design of the business.cornell.edu website that supports a clear interim identity for the CCB for external audiences.
• Engaging with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and school admissions officers to adapt online common application selection to accommodate CCB applications.
• Continuing coverage of CCB formation, developments; media opportunities.