

**Imperial Valley College
Public Relations/Marketing Plan
2014-2017**

Introduction

The purpose of the Imperial Valley College Public Relations Plan is to increase the overall visibility and enhance the reputation of the college. The hallmarks of the college are academic excellence, responsive student services, advanced technology, community and industry partnerships, and workforce and economic development. IVC's Public Relations efforts are meant to develop two way communication with stakeholders, highlight the excellent education and dynamic services it provides to the community, and ensure the college's growth, prosperity and future.

Public relations should be recognized as a central, core operating principle of the college. The Public Relations Society of America defines Public Relations as "a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics." That is the working definition being incorporated into this plan.

PRSA notes as a management function, public relations also encompasses the following:

- *Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes and issues that might impact, for good or ill, the operations and plans of the organization.*
- *Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action and communication, taking into account their public ramifications and the organization's social or citizenship responsibilities.*
- *Researching, conducting and evaluating, on a continuing basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the informed public understanding necessary to the success of an organization's aims. These may include marketing; financial; fund raising; employee, community or government relations; and other programs.*
- *Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy. Setting objectives, planning, budgeting, recruiting and training staff, developing facilities — in short, managing the resources needed to perform all of the above.*

<http://www.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/PublicRelationsDefined>

Justification of Organized Public Relations Efforts at IVC

The College's Mission Statement specifically addresses the need for development of "Mutually Beneficial Relationships" as defined above by PRSA: "The mission of Imperial Valley College is to foster excellence in education that challenges students of every background to develop their intellect, character and abilities; to assist students in achieving their education and career goals and **to be responsive to the greater community.**"

Additionally, Goal 1 of the 2012-2015 Educational Master Plan states "The College will maintain programs and services that focus on the mission of the college supported by data-driven

assessment to measure student learning and student success.” Objectives 1.3 (Develop systems and procedures to ensure that the college maintains a collegial and self-reflective dialogue that improves effectiveness) and 1.4 (Develop systems that are inclusive, cyclical, and understood by all stakeholders) speak to IVC’s Public Relations programs.

Finally, the IVC Board of Trustees approved goals for IVC at its Feb. 25, 2012 Board Retreat as follows:

1. Development of plan for a balanced and sustainable budget.
2. Pursue associations with other organizations to insure our students have opportunities to succeed (IVUP, P-16, IVROP)
3. Maintain Facilities appropriate to the needs of the college.
- 4. Increase visibility, advocacy, and two-way dialogue with the community at large through all stakeholders.**
5. Maintain knowledge and participation with the campus as assessed through accreditation benchmark reports.

Goals and Strategies

The purpose of this Imperial Valley College Public Relations Plan is to implement elements of the college’s Mission Statement, Educational Master Plan and Board Goals noted above through coordinated efforts and consistent two-way communications. The result will be enhanced community support and understanding of issues that face the college as well as enrollment growth.

IVC’s 2014-2017 Public Relations goals and strategies are to:

1. Establish a fully functioning comprehensive Public Relations capability with appropriate fiscal resources and dedicated personnel. **Key Strategy:** Benchmark the Public Relations functions at IVC against other colleges of similar size and budget and develop a three year staffing and resource plan commensurate with those colleges.
2. Increase knowledge among IVC Stakeholders regarding programs and issues at IVC through consistent two-way communication that promotes and fosters student and community relations as well as institutional value. **Key Strategy:** Reach all Valley communities to reinforce personal connections with the college.
3. Continue marketing efforts to seek continued budgeted growth in enrollment. **Key Strategy:** Maximize use of advertising, social media and other marketing vehicles to cost effectively reach potential students on their own turf.
4. Foster better internal communications. **Key Strategy:** Reorganize the internal communication structure by establishing an active Public Relations/Marketing organization that can help develop and articulate messages both internally and externally.
5. Support public relations and marketing decisions and initiatives with data-driven evidence of success. **Key Strategy:** Conduct on-going research to develop data that support Public Relations and Marketing efforts.

Primary and Target Audiences

Communication is most effective when messages are tailored to the audience the college wants to reach and in the medium that is most appropriate. Determining these targeted audiences, what motivates them and the message that is needed to create desired behavior (i.e. registering for classes) is especially critical when a college has limited resources.

General audiences to be reached through this plan are:

1. Current IVC students
2. Secondary school students
3. Elementary and middle school students and their parents
4. Parents and family decision makers
5. Leaders in education
6. Foundation supporters
7. Registered voters
8. IVC faculty
9. Classified staff
10. IVC administrators
11. Community leaders/opinion makers
12. County and city elected representatives
13. State and national elected representatives
14. School boards members
15. Business community
16. Ag community
17. Media
18. Board of Trustees
19. Bond Oversight Committee
20. Campus advisory committees

Specific 2014-17 PR Initiatives

1. Rebrand IVC through development of consistent appearance of all college publications, adjustment or redesign of IVC logo and mascot
2. Establish solid personal connection with the communities IVC serves through a visioning process and follow up with presentations and on-campus tours of both new construction and areas needed for improvement.
3. Using data, identify targeted audiences and specific outreach programs to reach those audiences.
4. Showcase the upcoming opening of IVC's new CTE building through tours and other outreach as it nears completion and then opens for classes.

5. Leverage resources by maximizing outreach impact of existing IVC activities, such as athletic events and other activities held on campus.
6. Establish and maintain solid IVC leadership in major community organizations such as all Valley chambers of commerce, Workforce Development Board, P-16 Council, Imperial Valley Economic Development Commission, Brawley Economic Development Commission, Imperial County Partnership for Higher Education and others.
7. Interact with stakeholders through use of social media.
8. Tell the story of Imperial Valley College through the words, actions and examples of successful IVC students and graduates.