Lafayette College Technology Clinic

The Signal and the Noise
- Optimizing Lafayette Communication -

- Final Report Fall 2018 -

LAFAYETTE
◆
COLLEGE

Summary of Recommendations:

Target Audience	Recommendations
Students	- Consolidate & centralize Calendar of Events - Reevaluate Lafsync and provide educational workshops - Use range of communication platforms tailored to certain groups - Installments & Stall Talk
Alumni	- Content update for the Lafayette Magazine - Send online version of the magazine directly to alumni - Allow alumni to use Lafayette email post-graduation - Include response card w/in magazine for Alumni to choose their preferred delivery method - Make the online Magazine interactive and user friendly - Promote subscription to *The Lafayette* student newspaper - Continue to experiment with different social media platforms to engage with alumni
Perspective Students	Make use of multiple online platforms to communicate with students throughout the application process

Universal Recommendations

- **Develop a policy** which would set restrictions and/or guidelines on what campus groups can send out announcements and events, through what channels this information is sent out, and how frequently
    - Create student and faculty advisory committee under the VP of Communications to create and implement the policy
- **Educate** Lafayette Community on the proper procedure for utilizing current platform
    - Inform and expose students to policy e.g. targeting first-year students

Contents

OUR TEAM

Meet the
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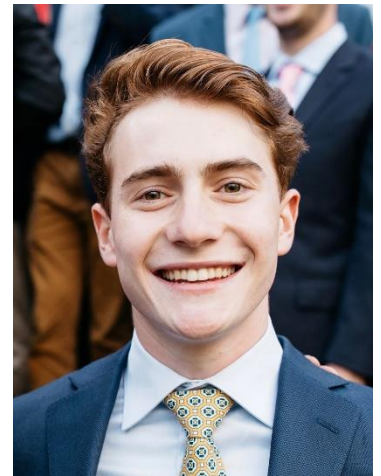
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Charge

The Lafayette College Communications Technology Clinic was originally tasked with analyzing and assessing the College's current system of communications, and identifying areas for growth. This project works to identify the College's various target audiences, meaningful forms of content, and effective content distribution methods. The main challenges consisted of evaluating the effectiveness of the various communication methods, and how the Communications Division can adapt its operations to fit the needs and desires of generationally distinct constituents. This project has required combining the fields of psychology, economics, and sociology, with an eye towards entrepreneurship and computer technology.

Clients

Our three clients for this project are the Lafayette College Communications Division, the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, and the Office of Admissions. The various offices and divisions work closely with one another to understand their audiences' preferences and the effectiveness of communications.

Communications

Office of Development

Office of Admissions
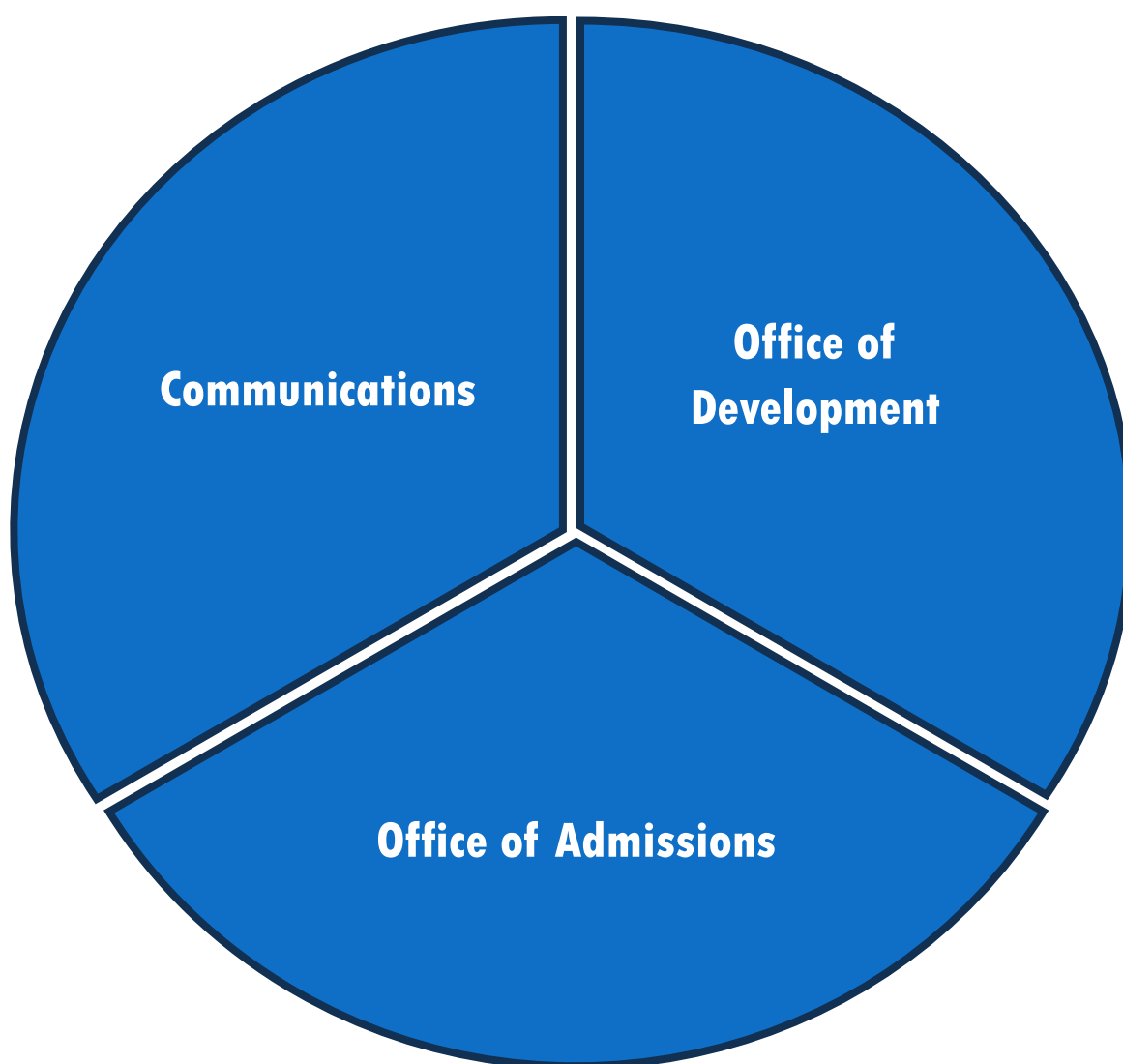
✓Lafayette College Communications Division:

Lafayette's Communications Division is responsible for creating and sharing relevant, captivating, and digestible content through various channels, across numerous departments. The Division is represented by Stephen Wilson, the Executive Director of Editorial Services. Wilson is highly invested in the future of Lafayette's communications and has demonstrated strong interest in our proposals and ideas.

✓Lafayette College Office of Development:

The primary focus of the Office of Development is to support the current and future success of the College. Within the Office of Development is Alumni Relations, a department that heavily relies on effective communications to connect alumni and organize events. As the Executive Director, Rachel Moeller '88 represents Alumni Relations. Moeller has provided our team with helpful insight into the department's current affairs and challenges.

✓Lafayette College Office of Admissions:

The Office of Admissions, which closely intersects with the Communications Division, is represented by Carol Rowlands, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management. As Admissions strives to attract and recruit exceptional students, keeping current with their communications is crucial to achieve their goals.

Each client provided our team with a nuanced understanding of current communications across departments for different personas, such as alumni and prospective students. With the information provided to us by our clients and the freedom we have had to problem-solve, the Team has successfully assessed the College's communications mechanisms and devised a diverse set of suggestions for improved communications.

Project Significance

Each client provided our team with a nuanced understanding of current communications across departments for different personas, such as alumni and prospective students. With the information provided to us by our clients and the freedom we have had to problem-solve, the Team has successfully assessed the College's communications mechanisms and devised a diverse set of suggestions for improved communications.

Why Does This Matter?

For Students:

- The student body constitutes the heart of Lafayette through their varied involvement with campus activities, academics, and innovative projects. It is, therefore, important to highlight student involvement and campus events to maximize participation and cultivate an engaged student body.

For Alumni:

- Effectively communication with alumni across generations is necessary for advancing institutional leadership, maintaining campus programs and infrastructure, and improving the strength and longevity of the College. Understanding how alumni stay connected and engaged following graduation will help to tailor communication strategy with alumni cross-generationally.

For Prospective Students:

- Prospective students can be a challenging demographic to communicate with because they are they are not yet affiliated with the College. This may result from the absence of a direct form of communication existing between the College and prospective students. That said, communicating effectively with prospective students is crucial for recruiting exceptional students and maintaining continued and active parental support.

Focus

(Goals / What We Are Thinking About)

In the beginning of this project, the team identified three main questions to provide direction for future problem-solving. The first question, "what do readers want," addresses the type of content most relevant and desired by different audiences. In simpler terms, what do consumers want to hear about and/or know more about? The second question asks, is the content reaching its audience through the current modes of distribution and is the audience satisfied with how it receives information? The final question serves as a response to the first two questions, leaving room for improvements.

What Do Readers Want?

Delivery

- How do we deliver?
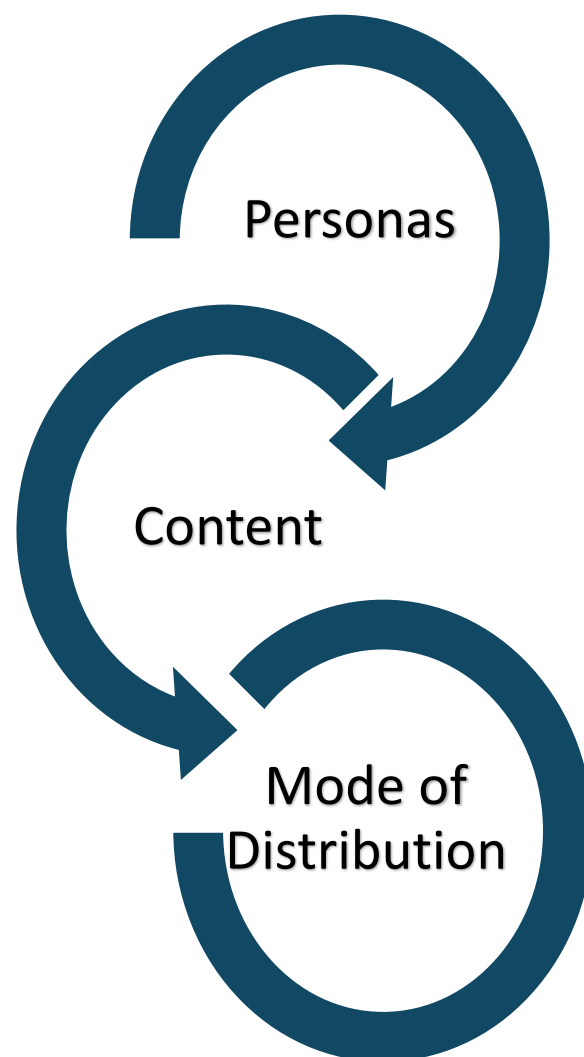- How **well** do we deliver?
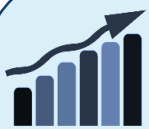
Discussions/Recommendations

These questions led us to identify three key aspects of strategic communications we then used to structure our research. This three-part model assesses Lafayette's current system of communication, its efficacy, and areas where possible improvements might be made

Personas

Content

Mode of
Distribution

Identifying Personas
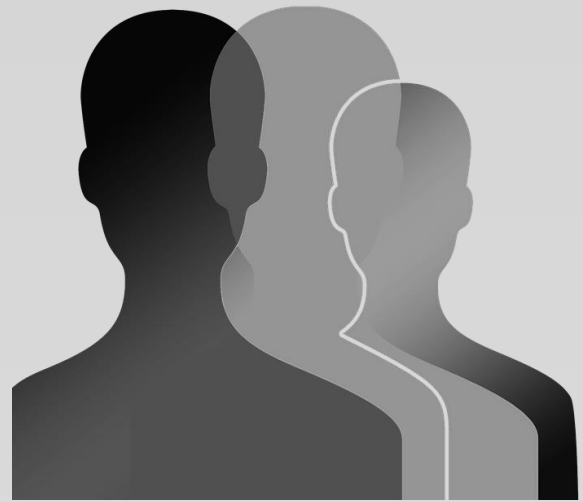
Identifying and assessing Lafayette's target audiences is key to understanding and improving communications. To reiterate, the personas we are focusing on are prospective students, full-time Lafayette students, and alumni. Currently, the Communications Division and other on-campus divisions/offices correspond with current students via multiple platforms and across numerous channels. When distributing information, the Communications Division and other on-campus divisions/offices group students based on class year, campus involvement, and other factors. For alumni, the Office of Development, and Alumni Relations group alumni based graduation year and communicate with each group through the alumni Magazine and networking events. When communicating with prospective students, the College uses multiple tactics and platforms including standardized tests, college fairs, and mailings to reach and then interact with this demographic.
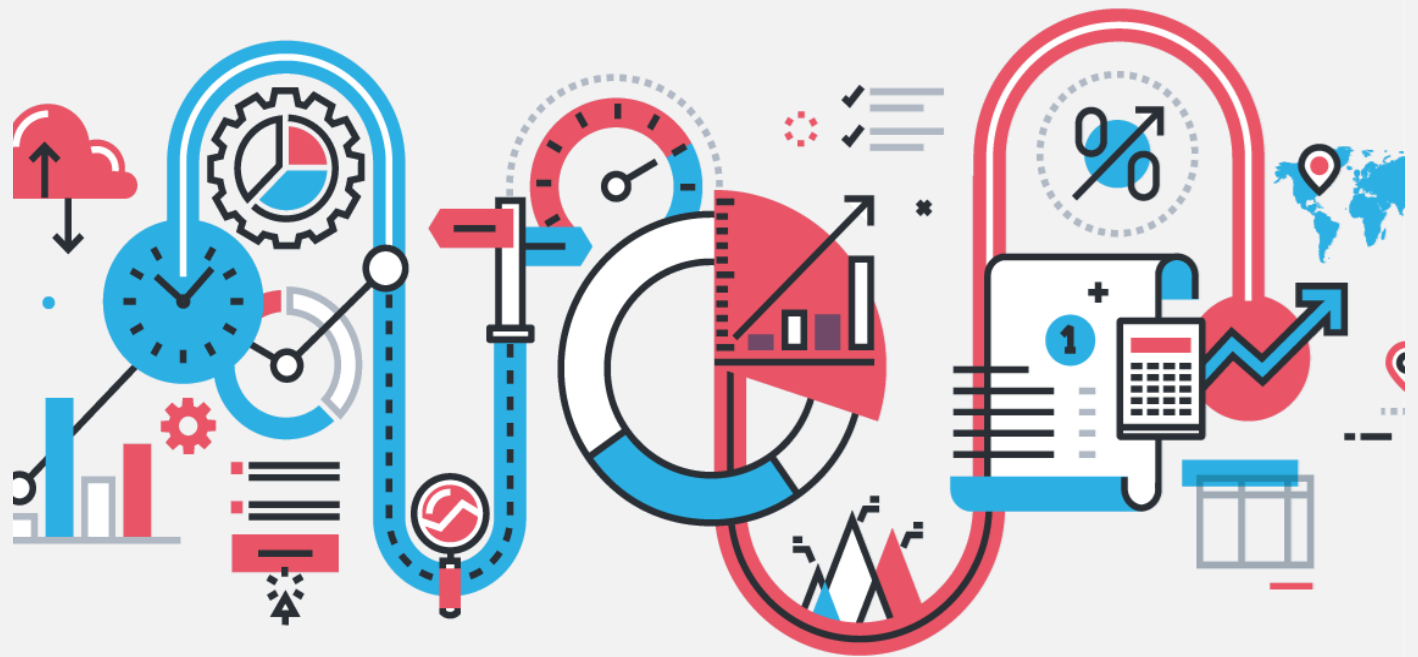
Methodology

Our approach is to identify possible areas for growth through our guiding questions. Through the multiple interviews, surveys and conversations we conducted, we gained insights into the current modes of communication. To reach our ultimate goal of improving and maximizing the efficiency of Lafayette communications, we first had to understand the current communication strategies.

✓ Interviews:

The TC team conducted three interviews with external experts and numerous interviews with on-campus experts (see acknowledgements).

✓ Institutional Review:

A second component of the methodology involved reviewing communication strategies employed by other academic institutions. The team engaged in conversations with peers at Bucknell, Colgate, Columbia, Duke, Emory, Fairfield, Fordham, Harvard, Lehigh, University of Miami, University of Michigan, New York University Saint Andrews, Stanford, Temple and Virginia Tech. The team asked current students about what communication methods their schools use to convey information. Through these conversations the team gained insight about communications practices that was then used to draw comparisons and make recommendations about alternative distribution methods.

✓ Surveys:

Student Survey

The student survey provided information regarding what information students want to receive and how/how well this information is delivered. The survey also identifies areas where the College could implement new communications strategies.

The total number of responses is 447. We did our best to ensure that this was a representative sample of the entire Lafayette population by surveying students from all parts of campus through the resident advisor network. We incentivized the survey by providing the resident group with the highest participation percentage a pizza party and the resident advisor at $20 Wawa gift card. The survey was also sent out to the entire campus via email to sample students who might not have received the survey from their resident advisor.

We believe this survey reflects students' general attitudes towards current college communications.

Alumni Survey

Alumni are a difficult group to effectively communicate with. That is generally due to several factors including their number, geographical and age distribution. Recognizing this challenge, our team sought to gather as much data as possible to enhance our understanding of alumni.

The team did this in two ways. First, the Communications Division developed a survey on behalf of the Tech clinic team that was sent electronically to all the alumni. The survey mainly focused on the Lafayette magazine but also was

comprehensive about most alumni related topics. The survey was sent in late July.

Second, our team took advantage of personal interactions with our alumni to broaden even more the scope of our research. Some of our members were present during 2018 reunions that took place in mid-June. We surveyed different alumni from different class years and walks of life. Our reunion survey mainly focused on the engagement of the alumni, their connectedness to the College/peers, and the magazine. It is important to note that alumni who come back for the reunion are generally more engaged with the College.

Alumni Survey Demographics

Due to the fact that the survey was mistakenly sent out to parents in addition to alumni, the Tech Clinic team filtered the data by only using the 878 of 1200 responses that indicated a graduation year.

- 60% of respondents are males (531) and 39% are females (364)
- The majority of the respondents identify as white (94% of the population identified as white, 1.84% as black, 1.03% as Asian)
- Geographically, 51% of respondents live in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, or New York. 23% of respondents live in Pennsylvania.
- The survey is diverse in respect of the age groups. We divided the alumni into 6 different age groups who graduated:
  o Before 1969, 22%

- o Between 1970 and 1979, 20%
  - o Between 1980 and 1989, 19%
  - o Between 1990 and 1999, 10%
  - o Between 2000 and 2009, 13%
  - o Between 2010 and 2018, 17%
- 53% of respondents make over $175,000 dollars a year (25% preferred not to answer)
- 59% of the alumni have earned a graduate degree and 15% of respondents are retired (or unemployed).
- Extra-curricular activities at Lafayette
  - o 21% Greek Life
  - o 16% Intramural sport
  - o 12% Academic clubs
- 33% of the alumni have or had a close family member attend Lafayette with 44% of them either a parent or a child.

Understanding Personas

A. Current Students:

I. What do readers want?

The current students' survey, which garnered 447 responses, identified topics that students are interested in learning more about. We grouped these responses into announcements from campus organizations versus announcements that are sent out by the Communications Division. Students want to receive more information about major-related activities (59%, 265 of 447), student clubs (39%, 172 of 447), and job opportunities (40%, 177 of 447). For announcements controlled by the Communications Division, 46% of respondents (206 of 447) indicated a desire to learn more about lectures and on-campus happenings, 43% (191 of 447) events in Easton, and 34% (153 of 447) arts events on campus.

II. Delivery

a. How do we deliver?

There are four primary ways that the College and its students communicate.

1- *Calendar of Events and Announcements:*

On calendar.lafayette.edu, groups can list their events. There is also the announcements function which sends emails to the student body throughout the week promoting the various events occurring on campus.

2- *Lafayette.edu email:*

Many students use their Lafayette emails to correspond with professors and fellow students on an individual basis.
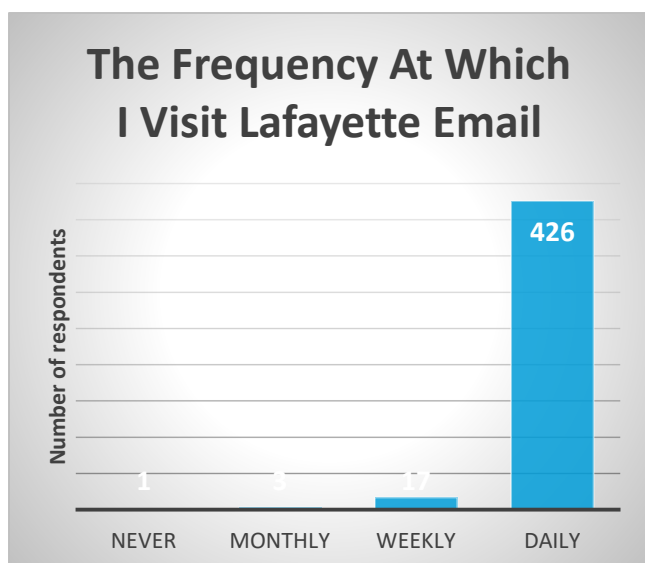
3- *LafSync:*

LafSync is comprised of all clubs and organizations, and stores the various information/materials that pertain to them. On LafSync, for example, one may tracks events and student engagement, in addition to accessing applications and other important documents. Students can enroll in as many of these groups as they wish. Then, depending on the groups to which they are subscribed, students will receive emails about various events.

4- *Flyers:*

Printed posters are commonly placed throughout academic buildings (in the classrooms, elevators, etc.), dining hall tables, residence hall bathroom stalls, and other locations around campus. The posters function to promote the listed material, such as campus events, in a visual and time-efficient manner.

When sharing information with students, it is important to do so through platforms they frequently use. Data from this survey suggests that email is the primary method that students use to send and receive information about campus events, with 85% of respondents (380 of 447) indicating that they predominantly learn about on campus events via email. In addition, respondents indicated that email is used on a daily basis, and therefore more frequently than other methods of communication, with 95% of respondents (426 of 447) indicating that they use email daily (figure 1). This data reveals that email may currently be the most effective way to reach students, which infers that the College does well to share information via email. With that said, it is possible that students prefer email over other methods of communication simply because the College uses it frequently.

The Frequency At Which I Visit Lafayette Email

Number of respondents

NEVER 1   MONTHLY 3   WEEKLY 17   DAILY 426

The Frequency At Which I Visit Lafsync

Number Of respondents

NEVER 167   MONTHLY 194   WEEKLY 75   DAILY 7

Figure 1. Survey results depicting the frequency that respondents access Lafayette email.
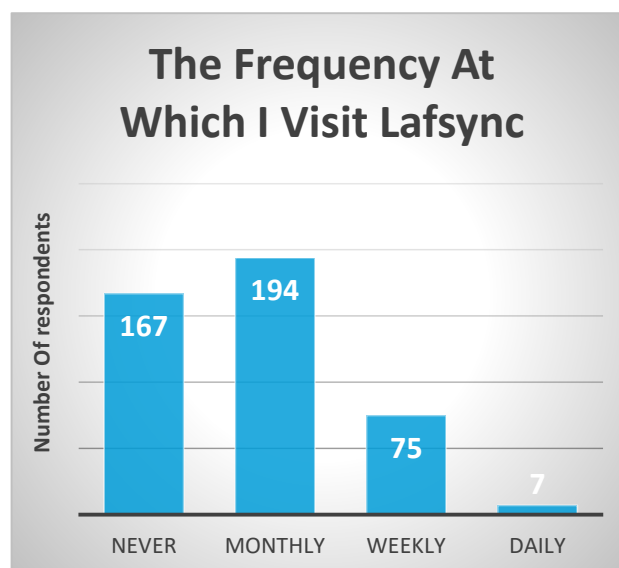
Figure 2. Survey results depicting the frequency that respondents access LafSync.

Interestingly, 67% of respondents (298 of 447) indicated that they predominantly receive information about on-campus events through flyers and posters. This suggests that flyers are effective, to a degree, for reaching students.

Moreover, 42% respondents (189 of 447) stated that they mainly learn about on-campus events through social media. As Brian Ludrof of Lafayette's Athletics Communications Division pointed out, it is important to embrace social media platforms students regularly use. While all of Lafayette does not currently use popular social media platforms like Snapchat, some departments like the Athletics Communications Division have had success with such platforms. This calls for further investigation by the Communications Division into how social media can be better integrated into student communications.
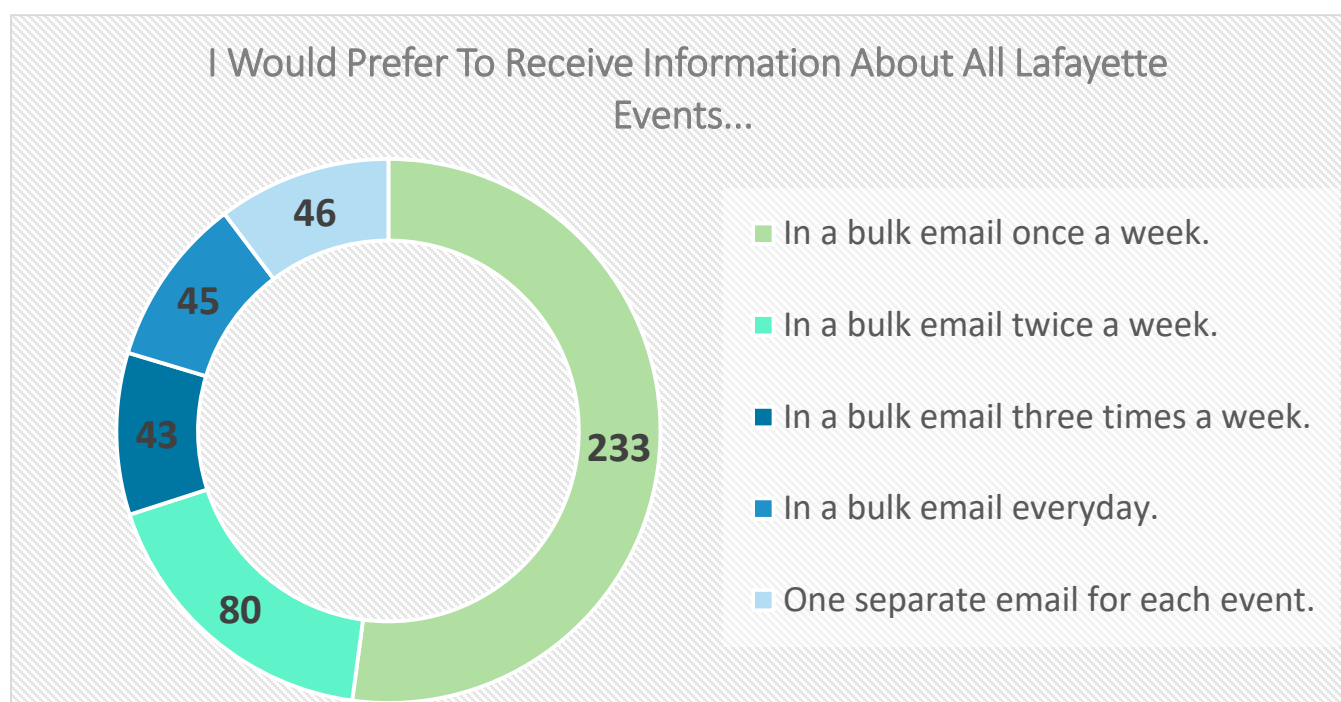
b. How well do we deliver?

As previously stated, LafSync is a website and mobile device app used by the College dedicated largely to event and program announcements. Despite its usefulness as a centralized location for organizing information about campus-related events and organizations, our survey found that LafSync is infrequently used by students. Only 4.5% of respondents (20 of 447) indicated that they predominantly learn about on campus events through LafSync. Meanwhile, 43% of respondents (194 of 447) indicated that they use it on a monthly basis, 38% (168 of 447) stated they never use it, and only 1.5% (7 of 447) said they use it daily (figure 2).

Email is currently the platform most frequently used by students to receive announcements from the College. As such, the Communications Division does well to engage with the students via email.

While students most frequently used email for communication, students receive many emails. Thus, in order to gauge the relevance of emails that students received, we asked the participants to what degree do they agree with the statement: "the email announcements I receive are relevant to me." Most respondents answered that they neither agree nor disagree with the previous statement (44% answered neutral). Data from this survey question roughly follows a normal distribution centered on the neutral response, indicating that not all emails students receive are relevant to them. This may be due to the fact that since students are not using the function to filter which categories of emails they receive, all events are announced to every student via email which makes it unlikely that all emails will be relevant to a student. If students were to be aware of and use the email category filtering, thereby selecting which emails they would like to receive, a shift in the data toward increased relevance would likely occur. We also predict a shift towards increased relevance should policy be implemented that restricts or reforms the promotion of events and also decreases the overall number of promotional emails students receive.

I Would Prefer To Receive Information About All Lafayette Events...

- In a bulk email once a week.
- In a bulk email twice a week.
- In a bulk email three times a week.
- In a bulk email everyday.
- One separate email for each event.

46
45
43
80
233

Figure 3. Survey responses about participants' preferences for email announcement format

Evidence from the survey also suggests that the format of event emails could be improved to better please students (Figure 3). 52% of respondents (233 out of 477) indicated that they would prefer to receive all Lafayette announcements in a weekly bulk email. While the weekly digest already exists, students still receive a plethora of emails regarding each event and announcement. This serves to diminish the importance of each email digest, therefore causing it to go unnoticed. 18% of respondents (80 out of 477) indicated that they would like to receive all Lafayette announcements in a bulk email twice a week and only 10% of respondents preferred the current model of separate emails for each event. This suggests that condensing the Calendar of Events emails into fewer bulk emails would be preferable for the majority of students. Synthesizing emails might also block out some of the redundancy currently felt by students.

The survey data also displays the importance of the subject and sender of a given email. 70% of respondents (313 out of 447) indicated that they can determine whether or not an email is relevant to them without opening it. This provides evidence that the sender and subject should be carefully crafted when constructing emails to be sent to students.

I Am Well-informed About Campus Events

- STRONGLY DISAGREE 3
- DISAGREE 17
- NEUTRAL 109
- AGREE 229
- STRONGLY AGREE 89
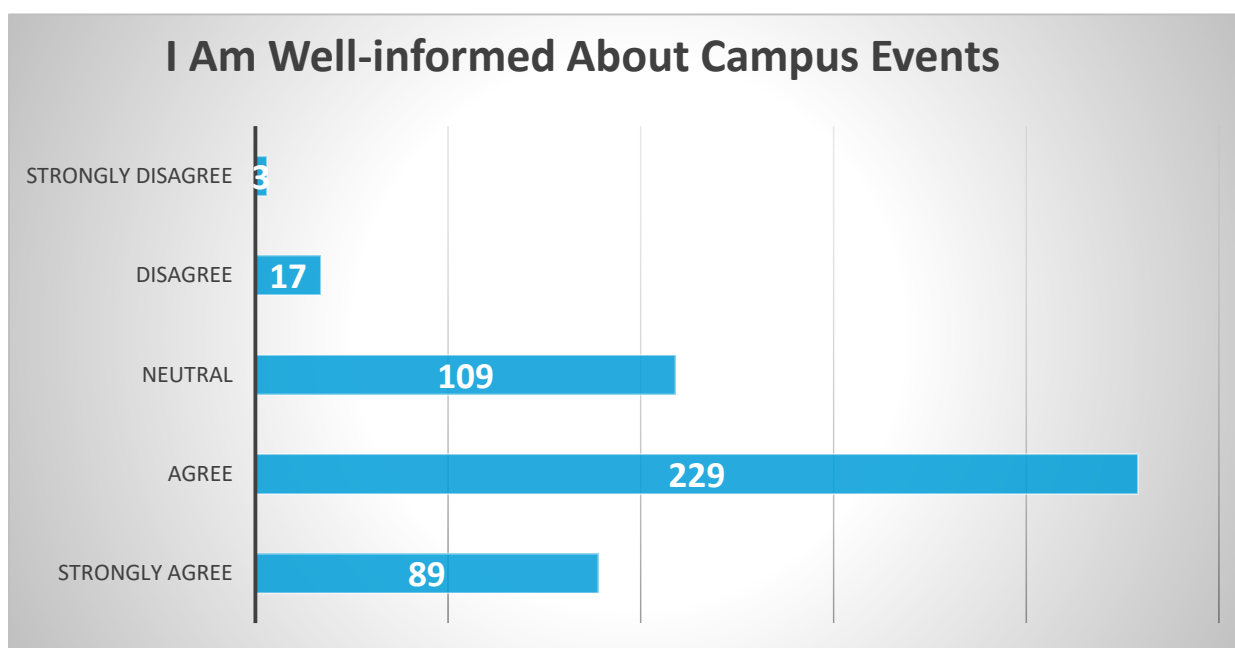
Figure 4. Survey responses regarding how well-informed participants feel they are about

The survey data suggests that students generally feel well-informed about on-campus events, with 71% of respondents (318 of 447) having agreed or strongly agreed that they are well-informed about on campus events. With a median response of "agree" on this question, it is evident that the average student feels that he/she is well-informed about on campus events. This is encouraging, as it suggests that college communications are working well enough to keep students informed about the happening on campus.

III. Discussion/Recommendations

a. Content:

While students report wanting to hear more about Easton, our evidence suggests that students appear to be generally appear to be satisfied with content they receive.

b. Delivery:

✓ Calendar of Events:

One step that can be taken is to change Calendar of Events. As evidenced by the survey (refer to Figure 3), the majority of students prefer to receive information about upcoming events and activities in a bulk email rather than as separate digests. In accordance with the data gathered from the student survey, the Tech Clinic team suggests that Calendar of Events be consolidated and centralized so that students and faculty see and appreciate the information being sent out, rather than just ignore it. This is part of a larger challenge communicating with students that we address later in the report (see section 8).

✓ Installments and Stall Talk:

Adding poster calendars to the back of toilet stalls that would delineate all important on- and off-campus events would increase student knowledgeability about event happenings and enhance participation. Similar to Stall Talk, these Installment posters would be produced on a monthly basis and be hung up by RAs. Despite the incumbent printing costs and upfront organization of events that be necessary for the program to function, calendar posters would grant visibility to campus groups and activities, thereby serving as a new channel of content distribution.

✓ LafSync:

Over the last two years, the College has collaborated with Orientation Leaders to introduce LafSync to first-year students and encourage them to use it throughout their Lafayette careers. We suggest that LafSync (the subsidiary of OrgSync) be reevaluated by the College as OrgSync redesigns their system. Should the College decide to renew their contract with OrgSync, several workshops should be provided to inform students and faculty how to most efficiently use LafSync. This would strengthen students' understanding of the platform and encourage its use for both academic and social purposes.

✓ Google:

The College is currently transitioning from Zimbra to G Suite as an email platform, an idea that our team suggested in our interim report. Thus, we endorse this decision and are eager to see the Google Calendar component being used by students, as it is more user-friendly than Zimbra's calendar.

✓ Choosing Platforms:

After meeting with Dr. James Higa, the team concluded that using a range of communication platforms tailored to certain groups is more effective than a single, multipurpose platform. For example, sending out a campus-wide email would be better suited for reaching the entire campus community while a text message or GroupMe message would be better suited for sharing information with smaller groups or committees. The team therefore proposes that the college using a variety of platforms when disseminating information to different groups.

B. Alumni:

I. What do readers want?

Certain questions in the survey were aimed at gleaning information about the content alumni currently receive and what they want to receive. Specifically, these questions ask:

1. What do Lafayette alumni want to know more about?
2. How engaged are alumni with the content they currently receive?
3. What are alumni interested in?

Examining these types of questions help us tailor content towards Lafayette Alumni.

There are six questions in the alumni survey that satisfy the "what readers want" category. Each question proves important to our understanding of the College's current modus operandi for communications and how the College might best engage with alumni. As expected, alumni indicated the highest interest in material that pertains to them as alumni and their continued involvement in the College. For instance, alumni reported being interested and/or very interested in class notes, alumni programming events, alumni stories and campus news (74%, 56%, 65%, 40%, respectively). By contrast, alumni were less interested in intercultural events, arts and cultural events, and athletic news.

When examining the Lafayette Magazine, alumni reported spending the most of their time reading the class notes, cover stories & features, alumni profiles and campus news sections of the publication. While these stats are conditional on alumni reading the entire magazine, they tell us that in general, alumni are most interested in learning more about:

1. What fellow alumni are doing
2. What is currently happening on campus

These questions run parallel to those from our student survey which aimed at understanding what content is most relevant and/or interesting to students. The survey found that students wanted to hear more about major related events, lectures/presentations, events in Easton and job

opportunities (59%, 46%, 43%, and 40%, respectively). Like alumni, students were less inclined to learn more about intercultural events and religious life on campus (15%, .01%, respectively). Those who left open-ended comments on the survey also express disinterest in intercultural events.

In examining the open-ended comments, several themes emerged: interest in class notes and campus events (not campus news but rather student profiles, student research, etc.), length of articles, alternative online options, and timeliness of publication. In accordance with what readers want, the content-related comments confirm alumni desire to receive information that enhances their connection with fellow alumni and the school (specifically class notes, alumni stories, alumni profiles, etc., for maintaining connection with alumni). Alumni also made requests about shortening the length of articles and providing more timely publications. Alumni also expressed wanting more concise articles in a timelier (and less intermittent) manner, such as the publication style of NYU's Alumni News/Publications. Further, alumni who commented on the delivery of the magazine advocated for an opt-in online (and thus more eco-friendly) option.

II. Delivery

The second essential question gets at method of delivery. This question can be divided into three sections: what is currently being delivering to alumni, how effective are the current delivery methods, and how do alumni prefer to be communicated with.

a. What are we delivering?

Currently, the College uses many different methods to communicate with alumni including the Lafayette Magazine, smaller publications from academic departments such as the McDonough report, as well as online methods such as email, the Lafayette website, and social media.

In meeting with Alumni Relations, we learned that the department's current communication strategy is based on class year. Generally:

- 1960's and earlier
    - Alumni receive personalized letters and the Lafayette Magazine in print.
- 1970's to the 1980's
    - Alumni are most responsive to email and text messages
- 1990's to the early 2000's
    - Alumni do not have class representatives like other class years do. The College therefore uses all forms to communicate with this group, most notably print and email.
- Late 2000's and onward
    - Alumni from these class years tend to be less responsive to college communications despite the fact that multiple channels and platforms are used to communicate with this group.

During our face-to-face survey conducted at Lafayette Reunion 2018, the team found that currently, alumni are receiving the most information from Alumni relations (29/35 respondents say they receive information from Alumni Communications at least once a month), the President's Office (18/35 respondents), and the Office of Communications (20/35 respondents said they received a release from Communications at least once a month). From the survey of Alumni conducted at Reunion, our sample also showed that communication from Lafayette Athletics, Career Services, and the Office of Development is reaching Alumni.

b. How well do we deliver?

The Lafayette Magazine, From the Hill publications, and Marquis Mailer/Pard Pride press releases are the most effective. The Lafayette News website and Go Leopards website were also found to be effective methods of delivering information to alumni however less so than aforementioned methods.

c. What are the preferred delivery methods?

To measure the effectiveness of the current system of communications, we compared how Alumni are currently being communicated with and how Alumni would prefer to be communicated with. Approximately 43% of the larger Alumni survey respondents prefer to receive the Lafayette Magazine in print form (as it currently is), 30% prefer the magazine to be delivered both in print and online, and 25% prefer to receive the Lafayette magazine online. Our Reunion survey results mimic these preferences with 67% (23/34 respondents) of respondents preferring a printed version of the Lafayette Magazine and 29 % (10/34) preferring to receive the Lafayette Magazine online. Although most alumni prefer that the magazine remain in printed form, it is also worthwhile for Lafayette to publish the magazine online to increase the publication's visibility and lower printing costs.

In addition to the magazine, Alumni at Reunion were also asked how they would like to receive class notes. 61% (20/33) of Alumni would prefer that they remain in the Lafayette Magazine, 46 % (15/33) would prefer to receive class notes via online publications separate from the magazine, and 3% (1/33) would prefer that class notes be printed in separate publications from the Lafayette Magazine. When we asked alumni at Reunion how they would like to receive general information the College (separate from the magazine). 69% of respondents (24/35) indicated that they would like to receive information online while 31% (11/35) indicated that they would prefer to receive information both online and in print.

III. Discussion/Recommendations

a. Content:

For the Lafayette Magazine, we recommend that in addition to maintaining the class notes section, the Office of Communications continue to feature alumni, student, and faculty profiles which consist of

student projects and research. The team also recommends that the Office of Communications shorten articles, making them concise and readable.

b. Delivery:

✓ Lafayette Magazine:

    ℘ The team recommends that an online version of the magazine be sent directly to Alumni via email rather in addition to publishing it on Lafayette website. That said, further study is needed in order to determine appropriate distribution (ie online, print, both) In addition, Communications should include a response card within the magazine for Alumni to choose their preferred delivery method.

    ℘ Another recommendation is that more timely college updates in the form of 'real time' class notes be published and made available for alumni.

    ℘ Lastly for the magazine, we suggest that the online version of the Lafayette magazine be made digitally interactive and user friendly as opposed to current version.

✓ Separate from the magazine, the team suggests that alumni be allowed to keep their Lafayette email address after graduation. This will allow for greater connectivity among alumni.

✓ In addition to the Lafayette Magazine, the Tech Clinic team suggests that Alumni are able to subscribe to an online version of The Lafayette student newspaper. The needed information regarding the students' newspaper could be provided via online link or QR code in the class notes section of the Lafayette Magazine

✓ The TC team recommends that Alumni Relations considers finding a way to encourage alumni with private Facebook groups to engage with the social media platforms created by the College.

C. Prospective Students:

I. What do readers want?

Generally, students expressed interest in receiving additional information about campus happenings (27% or 161 respondents), academic events (27% or 159 respondents), and events happening in Easton (18% or 108 respondents). That said, we cannot deduce which topic the students would most like to receive more information about.

II. Delivery

The second essential question to pertain the delivery of information/content. This question can be divided into two sections: what is currently being delivering to prospective students and how effective are the current delivery methods.

a. How do we deliver?

Reflecting on our personal experiences as prospective students and through meeting with head of admissions, Carol Rowlands, the Tech Clinic team learned about the varied channels used by the College to communicate with prospective students. After taking standardized tests, high school students will start receiving emails from Lafayette through Whiteboard, a company that connects colleges and prospective students by selling student data. Whiteboard then measures the level of prospective students' interest using clicks and whether or not students open emails. If a prospective student is marked as engaged, he/she will receive a pamphlet from Lafayette known as the Marquis Missive, which provides information about the College and highlights on the first year experience. Lafayette also sends out an admissions specific magazine to approximately 20,000 engaged prospective students in July and August. Admissions also uses Social media and the Lafayette website to reach their audience and are thus updated frequently. Lastly, Admissions visits

over a thousand schools, distributing information at college fairs and high school visits.

From our first year students' survey, we discovered that 49% of respondents learn of the College through friends and family. 18% percent of respondents first learn about Lafayette through their high school guidance counselor/college counselor, 9.5% through high school visits and college fairs, and 7.4% through the Lafayette website. The most common resources prospective students use to learn more about Lafayette during the application process are the Lafayette website (74%), campus tours (75%), on campus information sessions (54%), and social media (41%). 56% of respondents would have preferred to receive more information about Lafayette via email whereas 25% would have liked to receive more information through social media, and 13% through print materials.

b. How well do we deliver?

In order to gauge the effectiveness of the current delivery methods for our prospective students, we used the three questions:
1. How informed were you about Lafayette prior to applying?
2. To what degree did Lafayette's communication with you as a prospective student influence your decision to attend the College?
3. How easily were you able to find the information you wanted about Lafayette as a prospective student?

The mean rating for the first question on a scale from 1 to 5 is 3.97. This indicates that prospective students are informed about Lafayette before applying than on average. Connecting this to the question regarding how students learned more about the College before deciding to attend, we can deduce that the Lafayette website, campus tours and information sessions are effective methods for prospective students to learn about Lafayette College.

For the question aimed at figuring out to what degree Lafayette's communication influenced prospective students' decision to attend the

institution, we learned that the mean is 3.61. This value signifies that on average, the College's communication with prospective students contributed to their decision to attend Lafayette.

Question three measures the ease of finding information. From the 223 responses, we can gather that on average students found information about Lafayette as a prospective student relatively easily. The mean (4.02) is closer to the maximum value (5) which can be interpreted as a greater accessibility to information. Furthermore, connecting this question and the one regarding the resources that prospective students used before deciding to come to Lafayette, it can be seen that the Lafayette College website on average is both easy for prospective students to use and that it is a common method used to learn more about the College.

III. Discussion/Recommendations:

Currently, the Office of Admissions uses many tools to communicate with prospective students. Based on our Prospective Students survey and our conversations with Carol Rowlands, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Management, the team has concluded that Admissions is effectively reaching and communicating with prospective students across numerous platforms including email, pamphlets and smaller publications, and the Lafayette website. That said, the team also suggests that the Office of Admissions continue to employ other technological platforms such as text messaging and Snapchat to communicate with students throughout their application process.
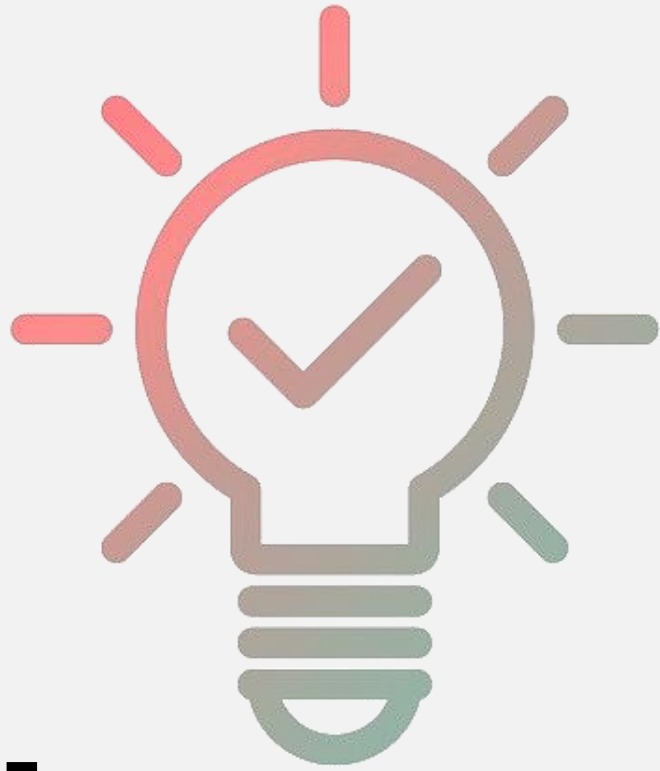
Universal

Recommendations

➢ Identifying the Problem:

It is important to note that consumers are generally satisfied with the content they currently receive. The main challenge exists in content delivery, which arises from uncoordinated information sources and a lack of awareness of mechanisms and appropriate use of them. Currently, there is overlap and confusion regarding how different groups and divisions communicate with each other and their various other constituents. This confusion, in part, stems from an apparent campus-wide unawareness of the existing platforms to share information and how to use them. This confusion also results from the absence of policy that requires people to use these communication mechanisms in their intended manner.

 To streamline information distribution on campus, Calendar of Events (COE) and its Announcements were implemented in 2013. This allowed students and faculty to advertise their respective programs and make important announcements regarding happenings on campus. An example of a COE is the Taming of the Shrew play and an example of an Announcement would be announcing a speaker coming to campus. The problem with how this system is currently being used is that users do not understand this difference and use both platforms. Further, many ignore this system altogether and go straight to a specific division in order to get their message out, e.g. a faculty member asks the Office of the Provost to send out a email announcements on the faculty member's behalf. This is problematic because the campus body then receives multiple email notifications from multiple campus divisions regarding the same events and programs. With such a high volume of notifications being sent out from multiple groups, the importance of each notification is diminished.

 This collision of communications leads to what is often referred to as "white noise," a combination of all different frequencies of sound together at once. The effect is that the consumers, in this case members of the Lafayette community, of the information do not actually hear the sounds, or do not absorb the information. Rather they are overwhelmed by the different frequencies, or information.

➢ Identifying the Solution:

While the team recognizes this challenge with decentralized communications, the team also sees significant potential in working with existing mechanisms to better align and streamline communications across numerous campus groups. To create a more centralized system, we suggest that the Communications Division implement a policy that would simplify and regulate the systems already in place, and maximize their use potential through providing education on how these systems work most effectively.

Firstly, the creation of a policy would establish restrictions and guidelines for what campus groups and divisions can send out, through what channels they send this information out and how frequently they are allowed to do so. This policy would be created and implemented most effectively and equitably through a student and faculty advisory committee which would serve under the Vice President for Communications. Such a committee would be tasked with establishing, implementing, and enforcing a policy that would then be shared with students and faculty through education seminars. These seminars would take place during Freshman Year Seminars, and would educate students and faculty on the proper protocol for college communications and promotions.

The team views the creation of such a policy as a critical step for the advancement of Lafayette's communications. We believe that such a policy would allow for enhanced communications between the College and each identified constituent: students, alumni and prospective students.

The Challenge:
- Decentralized platforms (COE & Announcements) = white noise
- White noise effect diminishes the impact of content/information
- There are mechanisms in place but they are not being utilized to their fullest potential

General recommendations:
- Creation of a policy
  - Policy would set restrictions and/or guidelines on what campus groups can send out announcements and events, through what channels this information is sent out, and how frequently
- This policy would be implemented by a student and faculty advisory committee under the Vice President for Communications
- Education
  - First Year Seminars

➤ Changing The System: Narrowing Down the Weekly Digest

An alternative to the policy solution would be a reimagining of the Calendar of Events weekly digest. Separate from COE Announcements, the COE weekly digest is currently sent out on a weekly basis for each division on campus. The tech clinic team suggests creating 2 weekly digests, one aimed at students and one aimed at faculty. Each digest would include all weekly events, both academic and non-academic (ie social, sports, intercultural) and would be sent out once a week. Each digest would separate academic and non-academic events by color so that students could easily identify the events that pertain to them most. This strategy would help to reduce some of the white noise currently experienced by students and faculty.

Acknowledgements

Internal Experts:

- Erwin Annulysse
  - Director Digital Communications Communications Division.
- Kristin Cothran
  - Director of Student Involvment
- Amy Gordon
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- Kathleen Parrish
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- Kimberly Spang
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  - Senior Associate Director Alumni Relations.
- Stephen Wilson
  - Executive Director Editorial Services: Communications Division.

External Experts:

- Angel Mendez
  - COO of HERE, Member of the Board of Trustees and Executive Council at Lafayette College.
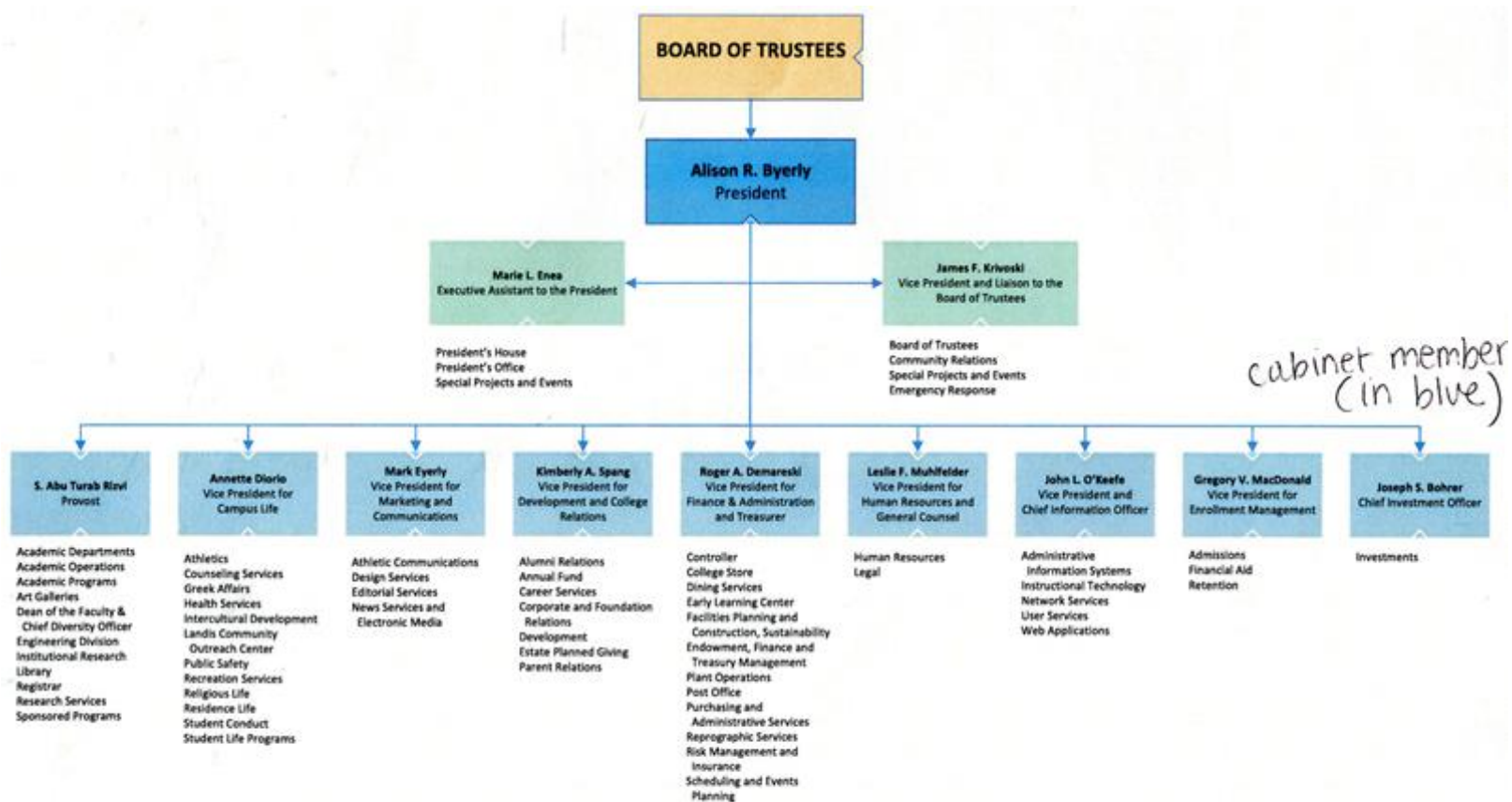- Asela Gunawardana
  - Software Engineer at Google
- James Higa
  - Mentor-In-Residence at Index Ventures and Executive Director of the Philanthropic Ventures Foundation

Appendices

Appendix A

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Executive Assistant to the President

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President's Office
Special Projects and Events

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Vice President and Liaison to the
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Health Services
Intercultural Development
Landis Community
  Outreach Center
Public Safety
Recreation Services
Religious Life
Residence Life
Student Conduct
Student Life Programs

Athletic Communications
Design Services
Editorial Services
News Services and
  Electronic Media

Alumni Relations
Annual Fund
Career Services
Corporate and Foundation
  Relations
Development
Estate Planned Giving
Parent Relations

Controller
College Store
Dining Services
Early Learning Center
Facilities Planning and
  Construction, Sustainability
Endowment, Finance and
  Treasury Management
Plant Operations
Post Office
Purchasing and
  Administrative Services
Reprographic Services
Risk Management and
  Insurance
Scheduling and Events
  Planning

Human Resources
Legal

Administrative
  Information Systems
Instructional Technology
Network Services
User Services
Web Applications

Admissions
Financial Aid
Retention

Investments

Updated July 2017

Appendix B

Current Students Survey Questions:

1.) I am well informed about on campus events.
   1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree
2.) I predominantly learn about on campus events through.
   -Lafayette Email
   -Social Media
   -Flyers/Posters
   -Letter/Mail
   -Word of Mouth
   -In Class Announcements
   -Lafayette Online Calendar
   -Lafayette Fan Club App
   -LafSync
   -Other
 3.) The frequency at which I visit the following is. (Never, Monthly, Weekly, or Daily),
       -My.Lafayette.edu
       -Lafayette Email
       -Moodle
       -LafSync
       -Farinon Mailbox
       -Lafayette Fan Club App
       -Online Calendar of Events
4.) The email announcements I receive are relevant to me.
1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree
5.) Of these announcements that are relevant to me, I participate in_% of events.
   0% - 20% - 40% - 60% - 80% - 100%
6.) I can determine whether or not an email is relevant to me without opening it.

1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neutral 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree

7.) I would prefer to receive information about all Lafayette events…

        -In a bulk email once a week.

        -In a bulk email twice a week.

        -In a bulk email three times a week.

        -In a bulk email every day.

        -One separate email for each event.

8.) I would like to receive more information about. Pick your top three.

        -Arts

        -Sports

        -Lectures/Presentations

        -Greek Life Events

        -Community Outreach

        -Major Related

        -Religious Life

        -Intercultural Events

        -Job Opportunities

        -Student Clubs

        -Events in Easton

        -Alumni

        -None

        -Other
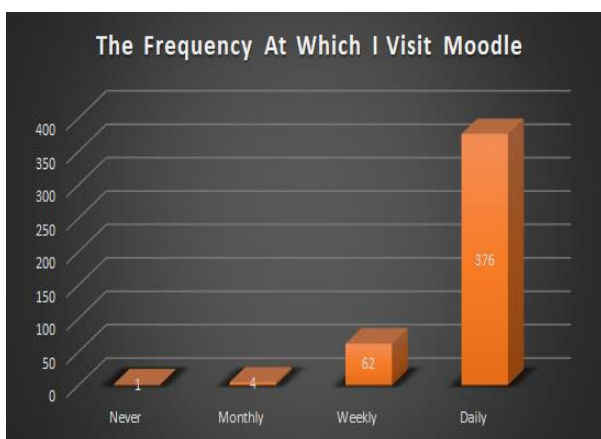
Figure 5. Survey results depicting the frequency with which respondents access Moodle.
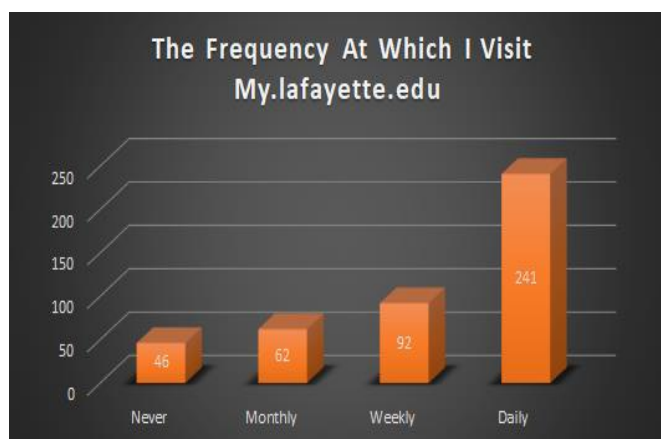
Figure 6. Survey results depicting the frequency with which respondents access My.Lafayette.edu

Moodle and My.Lafayette.edu also have a significant number of daily visitors. According to the survey, 336 of 447 respondents (75%) visit Moodle daily, and 241 of 447 respondents (54%) visit My.Lafayette.edu daily. These communications channels seem to have potential to reach a wide range of students on a daily basis, however they are not primarily used for communication. My.Lafayette.edu has a campus events calendar, that when clicked on, directs the reader to the Lafayette Online Calendar website. However, survey data suggests that students do not fully use this feature, as only 16 of 447 respondents (3.5%) indicated they visit the Lafayette Online Calendar daily, and 63 of 447 respondents (14%) indicated that they visit it weekly. This evidence that students do not regularly use the Lafayette Online Calendar as a source of event information is supported by the fact that only 42 of 447 respondents (9.4%) indicated they predominantly learn about on campus events on this site. It seems like the centralized source of event information that is the Lafayette Online Calendar, is largely neglected by the student body.

Appendix C

<u>Alumni Online Survey Question</u>

1. Listed below are common ways to stay updated on world and cultural events. Please indicate how often you use each source of information.
    a. Podcasts
    b. Print Newspaper
    c. Online Newspaper
    d. Print Magazine
    e. Online Magazine
    f. Facebook
    g. Twitter
    h. Other Social Media Platforms
    i. Word of Mouth
    j. TV News Channels
2. What social media platforms do you use for news other than Facebook and Twitter?
3. Which of the following magazines are you likely to read?
    .   ESPN Magazine
    a. People
    b. WebMD
    c. Time
    d. AARP
    e. Better Homes and Gardens
    f. National Geographic
    g. Cosmopolitan
    h. Sports Illustrated
    i. The Economist
    j. New York Magazine
    k. The Atlantic
    l. US Weekly
    m. The New Yorker
    n. Bloomberg Businessweek
    o. None Of the Above
4. Which of the following newspapers are you likely to read?
    .   USA Today
    a. The Wall Street Journal
    b. The New York Times

    c. Chicago Tribune
    d. New York Post
    e. Los Angeles Times
    f. The Washington post
    g. Newsday
    h. My Local Paper
    i. None of the above

5. How interesting are these news topics to you?

. Issues facing local communities

    a. Issues facing education
    b. Arts and culture
    c. Health and healthcare
    d. Business and industry
    e. Science, technology, and engineering
    f. Environmental issues
    g. Religion/faith-based issues
    h. Person profiles
    i. Global/international issues

6. Please describe how often you do the following.

. Read the Lafayette Magazine

    a. Financially support the college
    b. Get in touch with other alumni
    c. Read college news (From the Hill)
    d. Read the Marquis Mailer (Pard Pride)
    e. Attend class or affinity group reunions
    f. Follow lafayette College on Instagram
    g. Visit the college website
    h. Visit campus
    i. Attend college sporting events
    j. Follow Lafayette College on Twitter
    k. Attend local Alumni Chapter events
    l. Visit Lafayette College Facebook page
    m. Visit Leopard Link
    n. Attend college cultural or social events
    o. Visit Lafayette LinkedIn page

7. Please indicate your interest in the following college-related topics.

. Alumni stories, news, and achievements

    a. Campus news
    b. Students stories, news, and achievements.
    c. Faculty and staff stories, news, and achievements
    d. Class notes and in memoriam notices
    e. Messages from the president on college mission and priorities
    f. Program and events for alumni

g. College events
h. News About my major or concentration
i. Campus projects impacting the community
j. Athletic news
k. Arts and cultural events
l. Intercultural events

8. Please indicate how effective the following Lafayette communication tools are at providing you with information.
   . Lafayette Magazine
   a. From The Hill
   b. Marquis Mailer/Pard Pride
   c. Go Leopards
   d. Lafayette News Site
   e. McDonogh Report

9. How would you prefer to receive class notes?
   . Within the Lafayette Magazine (as it is)
   a. Via printed publications sent separately from the Lafayette Magazine
   b. Via online publications sent separately from the Lafayette Magazine
   c. I would prefer not to receive class notes

10. How would you prefer to receive the Lafayette Magazine?
   . Online
   a. Printed
   b. Both in print and exclusive online content
   c. I would prefer not to receive the magazine

11. How much of the Lafayette Magazine do you read?
   . Generally read all of it
   a. Read some of it
   b. Don't read it at all
   c. I don't have time to read it
   d. I didn't know we had a magazine

12. From the Lafayette Magazine, which portions do you spend the most time reading? (Choose your top three)
   . Campus News (Gazette)
   a. Cover Story/Features
   b. Philanthropy Stories
   c. Departments (History, Explorations, Q&A, In the Marquis' Footsteps)
   d. Profiles on Students/Faculty
   e. Profiles on Alumni
   f. Class Notes
   g. Final Word (Guest Alumni Column)

13. What one improvement would you make to the Lafayette Magazine?
   . How connected do you feel to your college peers?
   a. Not at all connected

    b. Slightly connected

    c. Moderately connected

    d. Very connected

    e. Extremely connected

14. How connected do you feel to Lafayette College?

    . Not at all connected

    a. Slightly connected

    b. Moderately connected

    c. Very connected

    d. Extremely connected

15. What is your gender?

    . Male

    a. Female

16. What is your race/ethnicity? (optional)

    . White

    a. Black or African American

    b. American Indian or Alaska Native

    c. Asian

    d. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

    e. Other

    f. Prefer not to answer

17. What year did you graduate Lafayette?

    . 2010-2018

    a. 2000-2009

    b. 1990-1999

    c. 1980-1989

    d. 1970-1979

    e. 1960-1969

    f. 1950-1059

    g. Before 1950

18. What were your major(s) at Lafayette? (Select up to two)

    . Africana Studies

    a. Anthropology and Sociology

    b. Art

    c. Asian Studies

    d. Biochemistry

    e. Biology

    f. Chemical Engineering

    g. Chemistry

    h. Civil Engineering

    i. Computer Science

    j. Economics

    k. Electrical and Computer Engineering

l. Engineering and International Studies
m. Engineering Studies
n. English
o. Environmental Science
p. Environmental Studies
q. Film and Media Studies
r. French
s. Geology
t. German
u. Government and Law
v. Foreign language
w. History
x. International Affairs
y. Mathematics
z. Mathematics-Economics
aa. Mechanical Engineering
bb. Music
cc. Neuroscience
dd. Philosophy
ee. Physics
ff. Policy Studies
gg. Psychology
hh. Religion and Politics
ii. Religious Studies
jj. Russian and East European Studies
kk. Spanish
ll. Theater
mm.   Women and Gender Studies
nn. Major not Listed

19. What organizations were you involved in as a student at Lafayette?
   . Greek Life
a. Intramural/Club Sports
b. Community Service/Outreach
c. Division I Athletics
d. Arts
e. Residential Community
f. Religious Life
g. College Paper, College Radio
h. Other (please specify)
i. Political/Social Action
j. Cultural Group

20. Where do you currently live?
21. What country do you live in?

22. What is your household annual income? (optional)
23. Please indicate the field that most closely represents your main occupation.
24. Do you have a graduate degree (e.g. MA, MD,
   . do not have a graduate degree
   a. I have a graduate
   b. I am currently enrolled in graduate school
25. Does your close family member attend Lafayette or have a Lafayette degree?
26. Who in your family attends Lafayette or has a Lafayette degree?

Alumni Survey Cross Tabulation(1)

What year did you graduate Lafayette?		White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Other	Prefer not to answer	Total
	2010-2018	137	2	0	3	0	4	4	150
	2000-2009	104	4	0	1	0	1	2	112
	1990-1999	79	2	0	4	0	1	3	89
	1980-1989	156	3	0	1	0	1	1	162
	1970-1979	162	4	0	0	0	0	4	170
	1960-1969	117	1	0	0	0	1	3	122
	1950-1959	60	0	0	0	0	2	2	64
	Before 1950	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Total	817	16	0	9	0	10	19	871

(Header: What is your race/ethnicity? (optional))

What year did you graduate Lafayette?		What is your race/ethnicity? (optional)
	Chi Square	31.25*
	Degrees of Freedom	42
	p-value	0.89

*Note: The Chi-Square approximation may be inaccurate - expected frequency less than 5.

877 respondents who listed their graduation year, 124 respondents who did not list their graduation year.

Alumni Survey Demographics
- Occupations:
  - 9% Finance and Insurance
  - 9% Health Care and Social Assistance
  - 8% College, University, and Adult Education, Scientific or Technical Services

Alumni Survey Open-ended Comments
   Consolidated open-ended comments:
   - Class notes, and magazine (what professors and students are doing—student spotlights)

- People complained that articles are too long; modern day consumption is surrounded by fast, easily digestible media
- Eco-friendly option; online version (also reduces cost)
- Give more room to class notes
- Publish more timely, too intermittent (see NYU alumni news)
- Didn't want to hear about intercultural events

Alumni Reunion Survey Questions
1. Class Year
2. Degree/Major
3. On-campus involvement in Lafayette
4. From Which Group do you receive information and how often

	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1. Communication			
2. Alumni Relation			
3. Development			
4. Athletic			
5. Maroon Club			
6. Academic Department			
7. Greek Life			
8. President's Office			
9. Career Services			

5. Which Groups Would Like to Hear From? How Often?

	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly
1. Communication			
2. Alumni Relation			
3. Development			
4. Athletic			
5. Maroon Club			
6. Academic Department			
7. Greek Life			
8. President's Office			
9. Career Services			

6. How would you like to receive information from Lafayette?
   A. Online
   B. Printed
   C. Both
   D. None
7. What content would you like to hear more about?
   A. Faculty research/projects
   B. Student accomplishments

      C. Athletic news

      D. Intercultural Events

      E. The Arts

      F. Campus development

      G. On-campus Events

      H. Alumni achievements

8. From the Lafayette Magazine, which portions do you spend the most time reading?

      A. Class Notes

      B. Articles About Alumni

      C. Giving

      D. Profiles on Students

      E. Profiles on Faculty

      F. Articles about the City of Easton

9. How would you prefer to receive class notes?

      A. Via printed publications sent separately from the magazine

      B. Via online publications (separately from the magazine)

      C. Within the Lafayette Magazine (as it is sent currently)

      D. I would prefer not to receive class notes

10. How would you prefer to receive the Lafayette Magazine?

      A. Online

      B. Printed

      C. I would prefer not to receive the magazine

11. Would you have prefered to hold onto your Lafayette.edu email after graduation?

12. Why?

13. How connected do you feel to your college peers?

    1: Not at all

    2: Very connected

14. How connected do you feel to the College?

    1: Not at all

    2: Very connected

15. What do you want to get out of Reunion?

    A. Meeting with classmates and friends

    B. Meeting with professors

    C. Networking

    D. Visiting the Campus

16. Is there anything else we should know?

Appendix D

Prospective Students Survey Questions

1. Country
2. State (if applicable)
3. How did you first learn about Lafayette
   a. Friends/Family
   b. Lafayette Website
   c. Book on colleges such as "Princeton Review: The Best 384 Colleges"
   d. High School Guidance/College counselor
   e. High School visits or College Fairs
   f. Other
4. Before applying to Lafayette, what resources did you use to learn more about the college before deciding to come to Lafayette? (select top 3)
   . Lafayette College website
   a. On campus information session(s)
   b. On campus tour(s)
   c. Social Media
   d. Leopard for a Day/Lunch on campus
   e. Accepted Students Day (XLC Day)
   f. Other (please specify)
5. On a scale from 1 to 5, how informed were you about Lafayette before applying?
6. To what degree did Lafayette's communication with you as a prospective student influence your decision to attend the college?
7. On a scale of 1 to 5, how easily were you able to find the information you wanted about Lafayette as a prospective student?
8. Prior to attending Lafayette, I would have liked to receive more information about: (pick your top three)
   . Athletics
   a. Academic (Research, Professors, Specific Programs and opportunities)
   b. Greek Life
   c. Campus Happenings (Events)
   d. Events happening in Easton
   e. Arts on campus
9. I would have preferred to have received more information about Lafayette via:
   . Email
   a. Social Media (Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram,...)
   b. Print
   c. Text Messages
   d. Other (please specify

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