

Board Meeting
July 23, 2015

ESTABLISH A MASTER OF SCIENCE IN STRATEGIC BRAND
COMMUNICATION, COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, COLLEGE OF MEDIA, AND THE
GRADUATE COLLEGE, URBANA

Action: Establish a Master of Science in Strategic Brand Communication, College of Business, College of Media, and the Graduate College

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Urbana-Champaign Senate recommends approval of a proposal from the Colleges of Business, Media, and the Graduate College to establish a Master of Science in Strategic Brand Communication.

Strategic Brand Communication combines a traditional media education with business concepts that are designed to emphasize the “big-picture view” of any advertising or media campaign. Today, the most successful advertising campaigns rely on multiple and new/emerging contact points, which span many different media, yet still deliver a consistent message. Because of this emphasis on cross-communication, most successful advertising and communications agencies offer services that cross media boundaries, including internet, television, radio, print, mobile, social media, and viral outlets.

The proposed self-supporting program is designed for current working professionals with at least two years of full-time experience in their field. At present, students seeking graduate degree options from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in communications management and strategic brand communication must choose either a Master of Science in Advertising or a Master of Business Administration degree. The Master of Science in Strategic Brand Communication is designed to prepare participants for success in a professional field. This is in contrast with the Department of Advertising's existing research-oriented graduate programs, which are designed to help students develop mastery of a particular field. It is also different than the Master of Business Administration, a professional degree that is not as focused as the proposed degree. Additionally, the proposed program is designed to be offered either in a traditional manner on campus or in an innovating, blended live-online format that allows working professionals to complete it while they continue their careers. The curriculum, a hybrid between a traditional Master's degree in Marketing and Master's degree in Advertising, will prepare students to be strategic leaders in an ever-changing global media environment; be integrative thinkers; be effective brand communicators and managers; respond agilely to new technologies, emerging media, and market trends; be team-oriented in their approach to management and communications; and be prepared to continue to learn as the media environment evolves. The Master of Science in Strategic Brand Communication will be especially attractive to professionals who desire to switch careers in the communications field, lead communications efforts or departments in companies or non-profit organizations, and/or advance to upper management in the

communications field. While an advanced degree is not required for advertising, promotions, and marketing managers, earning such a credential offers candidates for these jobs a competitive advantage over their peers without advanced degrees, and it may accelerate the promotion timeline.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes, The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.