

ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

January 27, 2022

The Administrative Council met on Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. in the Athens State Ballroom. Present were; Dr. Rick Barth; Ms. Toni Carter; Ms. Pam Clark, Recorder; Mr. Richard Collie; Mr. Jonathan Craft; Dr. Joe Delap; Dr. Andrew Dollar; Dr. Keith Ferguson; Ms. Jackie Gooch; Mr. Jeffrey Guenther; Ms. Beth Jenkins; Dr. Kim LaFevor; Mr. Chris Latham; Mr. Mike McCoy; Mr. Benjamin Shepard; Mr. Derrek Smith; Dr. Stephen Spencer; Mr. Gary Valcana; Dr. Lee Vartanian; Dr. Philip Way; Dr. Catherine Wehlburg; and Dr. Lionel Wright. Ms. Belinda Krigel, Ms. Sarah McAbee, and Ms. Debra Vaughn were absent. Special guest was Ms. Ashley Miller, co-presenter.

Dr. Way convened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and welcomed everyone. There were no corrections to the November minutes and they were unanimously approved on a voice vote.

Dr. Way stated the focus of the meeting is to give an update on marketing and Archer. He turned the meeting over to Mr. Latham and Ms. Miller. Mr. Latham welcomed everyone and gave a presentation on “Function of the Office of Marketing and Communications” (Attachment 1). Ms. Miller gave a presentation on “Archer Education Services Marketing” (Attachment 2). Members were divided into five groups for discussions (Attachment 3).

A. Alumni Group – Barth, Carter, Latham and Way

1. Why is this audience group important to Athens State?
 - Alumni represent Athens State.
 - Alumni are important for word-of-mouth marketing and lobbying.
2. What attracts them to the University? Why are they interested in what we have to say?
 - The good news and success coming from the university.
 - Alumni have invested time and money. Idea to solicit alumni updates for the alumni newsletter (rather than just printing obits). Idea that we need alumni groups throughout north Alabama similar to what you see with UA and AU.
3. What information or content would impress them or make them think more highly of Athens State?
 - How the university is filling a need in the community (for example, the growth of the Huntsville area).
 - How we’re doing this through the creation of new programs and majors.
4. When actively communicating with the University, what information are they typically looking for?
 - Ways to stay engaged and be involved with campus events/networking opportunities.
 - Information from the Career Development Center.
 - Information on new graduate programs for career development.
 - Other professional development opportunities.

5. How do they prefer to receive information?
 - An older group is most involved (grads from 1960s and 1970s) – they prefer email, phone calls, face-to-face visits, letters. They may be most involved because they are probably retired.
6. How engaged do you feel this group currently is? How could we better engage them?
 - We could offer more services through the career center.
7. Are there other marketing – or communications-related opportunities associated with this group that the Office of Marketing & Communications could assist with?
 - Performing a needs assessment with alumni – get data on what alumni feel is beneficial for them, and how they would prefer to receive information.

B. Community and Employers Group – Delap and LaFevor

1. Why is this audience group important to Athens State?
 - We enjoy reciprocal benefits.
 - Direction on relevant, timely education.
 - Allies– internships, scholarships, permanent placement of graduates.
2. What attracts them to the University? Why are they interested in what we have to say?
 - Impact on workforce development.
 - Anchor institution.
 - Access to experts, expertise and employees.
3. What information or content would impress them or make them think more highly of Athens State?
 - Relevance of our programming to fulfill their needs.
 - Quality of our graduates.
 - Student achievement in field.
4. When actively communicating with the University, what information are they typically looking for?
 - Employees
 - Expertise
 - Partnerships
 - Meaningful engagement in community
 - Workforce training
 - Professional organizations
 - Solving problems
 - Being an ally

5. How do they prefer to receive information?
 - Electronically
 - Face-to-face
6. How engaged do you feel this group currently is? How could we better engage them?
 - The level of engagement varies by program/employer need.
 - We can better engage them by connecting community organizations and student organizations.
7. Are there other marketing or communications-related opportunities associated with this group that the Office of Marketing & Communications could assist with?
 - Increased sponsorships of their events.
 - Getting them on campus.
 - Press releases about our partnerships.
 - Highlight faculty and staff creative works, service, and scholarly works.

C. Faculty and Staff Group – Guenther, Valcana, Vartanian, Wehlburg and Wright

1. Why is this audience group important to Athens State?
 - Faculty and staff keep the university functioning.
 - Aside from students and alumni, faculty and staff are the university's best advocates.
2. What attracts them to the University? Why are they interested in what we have to say?
 - Key stakeholders.
 - Faculty want to educate students and conduct research.
 - Staff want to support by serving students and faculty directly.
3. What information or content would impress them or make them think more highly of Athens State?
 - Better dissemination of faculty research, publications, presentations, and service activities.
 - Staff are interested in how they are supported with professional development.
 - Student success – how well our students are doing after they complete our programs.
4. When actively communicating with the University, what information are they typically looking for?
 - Data, policies, procedures, and resources.
 - Contact information.
5. How do they prefer to receive information?
 - Communication - email, SMS alerts, and LinkedIn.
6. How engaged do you feel this group currently is? How could we better engage them?
 - We could better engage program leads in program-specific marketing campaigns.

- Make sure testimonials are current.
7. Are there other marketing – or communications-related opportunities associated with this group that the Office of Marketing & Communications could assist with?
- Ties in with question number 6.

D. Legislative Group – Craft, Dollar, Ferguson, Gooch, and McCoy

1. Why is this audience group important to Athens State?
- State funding
 - Advocacy
 - Local funding
 - Community support (sponsorships)
 - Anchor institution
2. What attracts them to the University? Why are they interested in what we have to say?
- Representation
 - Family connections
3. What information or content would impress them or make them think more highly of Athens State?
- Data – Alabama residents enrolled at ATSU, graduation rates, in-state employed
 - Employer needs
 - Performance funding
4. When actively communicating with the University, what information are they typically looking for?
- Student success stories
 - Workforce development
5. How do they prefer to receive information?
- Delegation meetings
 - Emails (monthly)
 - In-person meetings
 - Phone calls
6. How engaged do you feel this group currently is? How could we better engage them?
- It varies by representative and what they are trying to accomplish in their specific areas.
7. Are there other marketing – or communications-related opportunities associated with this group that the Office of Marketing & Communications could assist with?
- We work closely with our marketing department.

E. Student Group (Current & Prospective) – Collie, Jenkins, Miller, Shepard, Smith and Spencer

1. Why is this audience group important to Athens State?
 - Students are our primary audience and help us meet our enrollment goals.
2. What attracts them to the University? Why are they interested in what we have to say?
 - Affordability, degree options, online programs, student support resources, location and word-of-mouth.
 - Students are investing time and money with us which is why they are interested in what we have to say.
3. What information or content would impress them or make them think more highly of Athens State?
 - Sharing outcomes of our students. Jobs, salary, co-op/internships, etc.
 - Showing the net price of our cost of attendance with scholarships.
 - Time commitment for on-campus students can be attending class in-person once a week.
 - Showing what our current students are doing (student activities, research, etc.).
4. When actively communicating with the University, what information are they typically looking for?
 - Prospective: Cost, academic programs, and outcomes.
 - Current: Updates on campus, registration dates, and events going on at campus.
5. How do they prefer to receive information?
 - Digital
6. How engaged do you feel this group currently is? How could we better engage them?
 - Prospective: Use videos.
 - Current: Share photos, videos, ask faculty to encourage engagement.
7. Are there other marketing – or communications-related opportunities associated with this group that the Office of Marketing & Communications could assist with?
 - Program specific marketing.
 - Share our Hebrew logo more/apparel with the Hebrew logo.

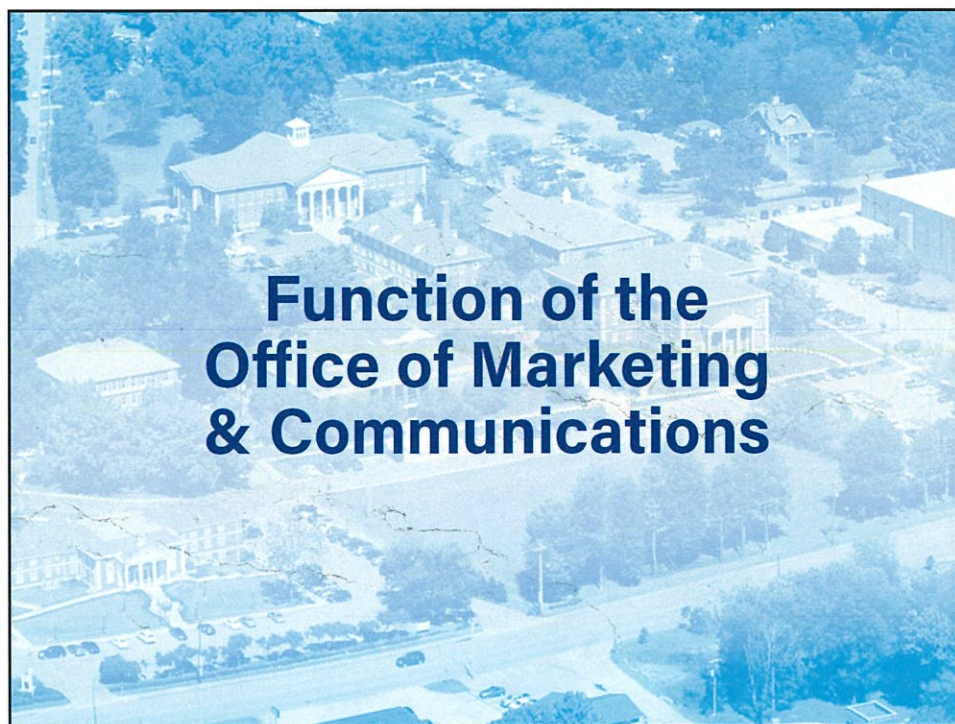
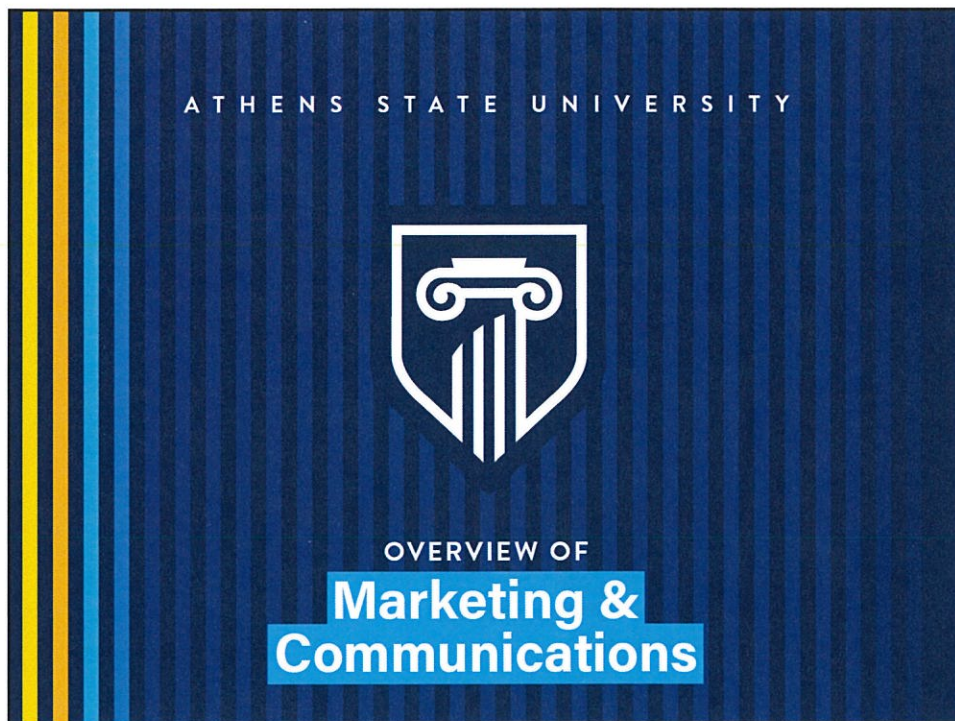
Dr. Way thanked everyone for their input. He stated the comments will be put into changes and practices. The meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Pamela Clark

Attachment 1: “Function of the Office of Marketing & Communications” PowerPoint Presentation

Attachment 2: “Archer Education Services – Marketing” PowerPoint Presentation

Attachment 3: Brand Messaging Platform Summary and Exploring Audience Groups – Discussion materials



What We Do

As part of the University Marketing & Communications team, we consider ourselves enthusiastic ambassadors of Athens State University and our brand – and the value it represents.

The Office of Marketing & Communications is divided into three general areas:

- Marketing & Public Relations
- Website Services
- Printing Services

Basic pillars of a university marketing department:

- Overall branding and awareness
- Help meet enrollment goals
- Internal and external communication
- Alumni and development



Marketing & Public Relations

- **News Articles & Press Releases**
 - Posted on the website and shared with media partners (including local chambers of commerce, legislators, and city/county officials)
- **Media Relations**
 - Facilitating news interviews and story production for local media, including TV stations, newspapers, etc.
- **Newsletters**
 - Weekly “Athens Insider” to faculty, staff, and students
 - Monthly “e-Newsletter” to alumni and friends
 - Weekly “Athens Forever” newsletter to faculty and staff
 - Monthly events newsletter to legislators and city/county officials

Marketing & Public Relations

- **Social Media**
 - Organic (non-paid) forms of social media
 - Platforms include Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube
- **Email Communications**
 - Email blasts to various audience groups (depending on subject matter and content)
- **External Sponsorships & Partnerships**
 - Local community sponsorships (various events and programs for advertising and brand awareness purposes)
- **Digital Screens**
 - On campus and at the Alabama Center for the Arts

Marketing & Public Relations

- **Public Service Announcements**
 - Free communications offered by local NPR station (primarily for events and community-centered programming)
- **Event Facilitation**
 - Communications about event (before, during, after)
 - Event registration landing pages (Eventbrite) and administration
- **Content Marketing**
 - Subject-specific articles, blog posts, infographics, etc.
- **Print & Campaign Collateral**
 - Various brochures, flyers, posters, banners, etc.
 - Supports campus events, student clubs and organizations, academic programs, etc.

Marketing & Public Relations

- **Promotional Items**
(branded giveaways)
- **Alumni Magazine**
 - “The Column” is published bi-annually.
- **Graphic Design**
 - General efforts to support University programs and events while maintaining brand identity
- **Photography/Videography**
 - General photo and video production efforts to support programs, events, and clubs/organizations



The image shows the cover of a magazine titled 'THE COLUMN'. At the top right, it says 'ATHENS STATE UNIVERSITY' and 'ATHENS.EDU' with 'WINTER 2022' below. The main title 'THE COLUMN' is in large blue letters. Below the title is a photograph of a young woman, Lauren Randalls, smiling and wearing a denim jacket and a headband. A blue banner at the bottom of the photo reads 'STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: LAUREN RANDALLS' and 'PG. 8'.

Website Communications

As the “front door” of the University to online visitors, the website is one of the most critical components to communicating with our audience groups.

The University website is continuously updated to support marketing and public relations efforts:

- News articles
- Event calendar entries
- Landing pages

Various content owners (academic program leads, departmental managers, administrative personnel, etc.) **should keep relevant information updated** at all times by submitting change requests when needed.

Assessment of **web accessibility** (making web content available to those with physical motor skills, visibility impairments, or other disabilities) is ongoing, with issues resolved in a timely manner.

Advertising

- **Digital Marketing**

- Online digital display (web and mobile advertising)
- Geofencing and geotargeting
- Retargeting
- Social media (paid ads and sponsored content/stories)
- Search Pay-per-Click (Google, Bing)
- Pre-roll video
- Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming video ads
- Email blasts (third party)
- Indoor display (screens in restaurants, doctors' offices, gyms, etc. – places with a captive audience)

- **Outdoor (Out-of-Household or OOH Advertising)**

- Static Billboards
- Digital Billboards

Advertising

- **Television**
- **Radio**
- **Direct Mail**
- **Print Advertising**
 - Trade publications
 - Newspapers
 - Magazines
 - Advertisements

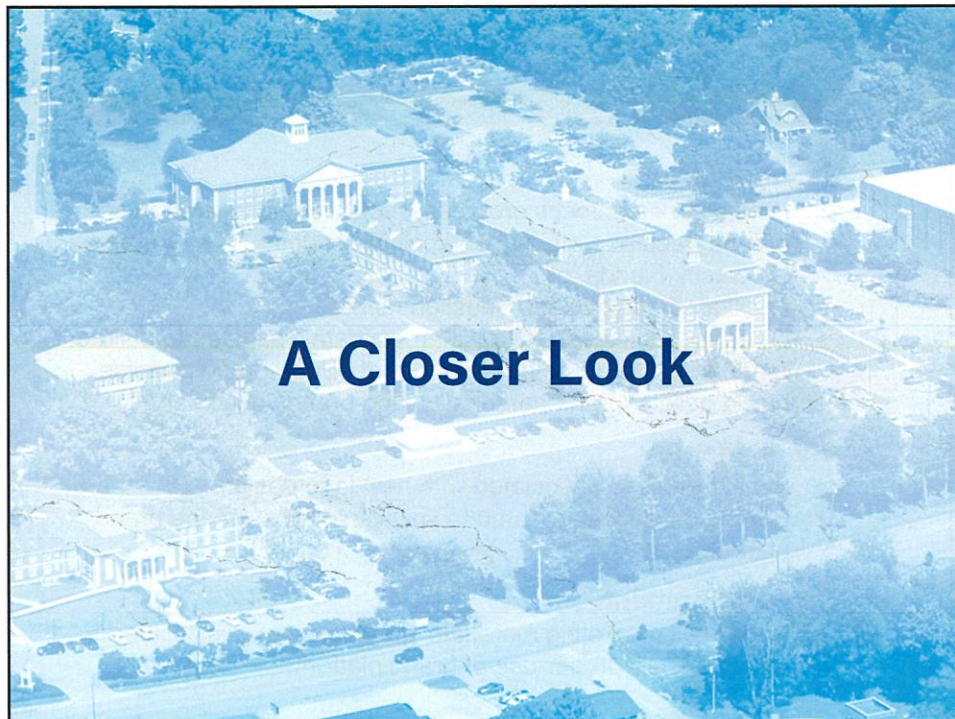


Other Support Functions

- **Fiddlers Convention & Fiddlers Concert Series**
 - TVOTFC.org website
 - Event communications (news articles/press releases and overall media relations), along with event facilitation
 - Fiddlers social media (Facebook)
 - Paid advertising/media plan
 - Brochures, handouts, and mailers
 - Promotional items
- **“Athens Forever” Bicentennial**
 - AthensForever.org website
 - Event communications (news articles, press releases, and overall media relations), along with event facilitation
 - Social media (Facebook)
 - Paid advertising/media plan for events
 - Brochures, handouts, and mailers
 - Promotional items

Other Support Functions

- **New Employee Onboarding**
 - Employee name tag
 - Polo shirt
 - Swag bag
 - Email signature
 - Headshot
 - Website directory listing
 - Business cards
- **Special Projects**
 - COVID-19 communications
 - “Athens Forever” Pictorial History
(Commemorative Coffee Table Book)



Key Goals

- Highlight the high-quality academic programs, vibrant student life, personalized support, commitment to service, and overall achievements of the Athens State community, including faculty, staff, alumni, and others.
- Emphasize the University's mission in changing the face of Alabama by changing the lives of students.
- Share the Athens State story with key audiences by using owned, earned, paid, and social media programs.
- Develop strategic communications, content, marketing plans, and campaigns that support the institution's highest priorities and address market challenges.
- Steward and increase the value of the Athens State brand through a robust brand platform, a coherent visual identity system, and an integrated, multi-channel approach.

Brand Platform & Visual Identity

- **Brand Platform**
 - Held a series of focus group sessions with various audience groups (faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, University friends, etc.).
 - Facilitated surveys and questionnaires.
 - Discovery phase led to key themes; data was used to build out brand story, value proposition, brand pillars, brand promise, brand beliefs, brand personality, and brand vocabulary.
- **Visual Identity**
 - Similar process associated with new logo design.
 - Brand identity was created to visually bring to life the brand platform.
- **Brand Alignment**
 - Update all marketing materials, graphics, campus collateral, etc. to ensure proper use of brand platform

Website Redesign

- **A new website built from scratch, with the user experience at top-of-mind.**
 - Held a series of focus group sessions with various audience groups (faculty, staff, students, alumni, community members, friends, etc.).
 - Facilitated surveys and questionnaires.
 - Content strategy developed, separating what information is primarily used for which audience group.
 - Information architecture revamped to allow each audience segment to find key information.
- **The new website is:**
 - **Accessible** – the redesign resolved many inherent issues with the basic web structure of the old site.
 - **Still a work in progress** – we ask that content owners keep information current and help us continuously improve the web navigation experience.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

- **SEO is key in achieving online visibility.**
 - It's a continual process that ensures the University is competitive.
 - 59.2% of the world's digital traffic (all movement on the web) comes from Google organic search.
- **SEO Circular Roadmap**
 - Technical site assessment
 - Keyword research and strategy
 - On-page optimizations
 - Content creation and optimizations
 - Monitor, measure, and modify
- **Results So Far (since May 2021)**
 - 18% increase in non-branded impressions
 - #1 ranking for upper division university, degree completion program, and adult degree programs in Alabama

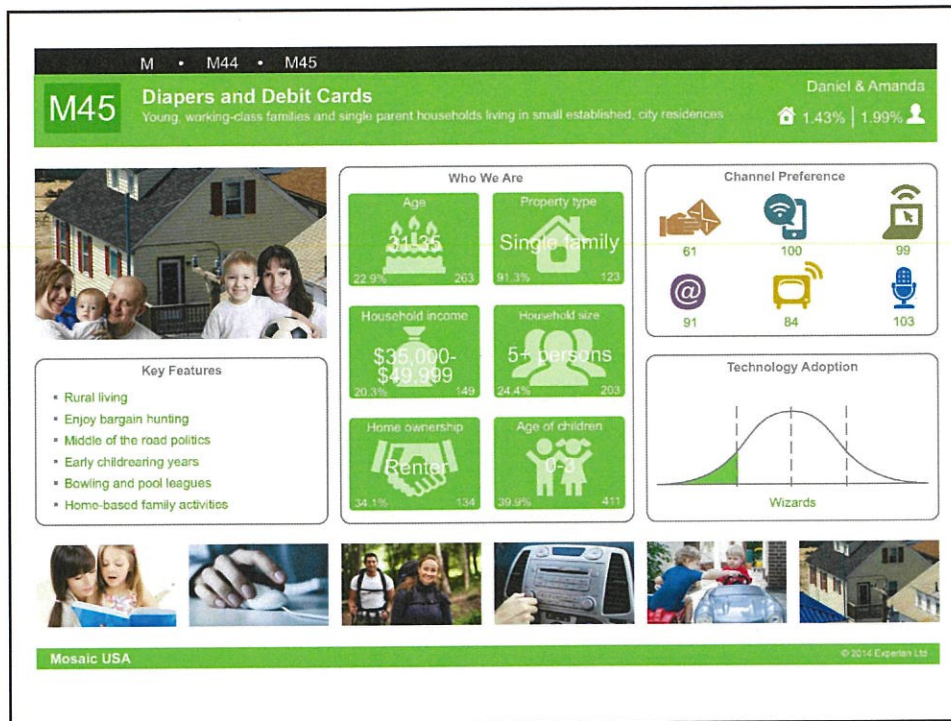
Integrated Marketing Plan

- **Strategic Communications**
 - Integrated communication ensures that, regardless of the channel, messages are consistent and cohesive with branding
 - Consistency goes a long way in creating brand awareness and making overall efforts more efficient
- **Understanding Our Target Audience**
 - Using students and alumni, a propensity model was developed to create a “lookalike” list of students and alumni.
 - This allows us to segment our target audience and understand them a bit better.
 - “Mosaic,” (a household-based consumer lifestyle segmentation system) classifies all U.S. households for consistent cross-channel marketing.
 - With this information, we can anticipate the behaviors, attitudes, and preferences of our audience groups.

Top 12 Student Profiles

1. **Diapers & Debit Cards**
2. **Babies & Bliss**
3. **Blue Collar Comfort**
4. **Sports Utility Families**
5. **Stockcars & State Parks**
6. **Boomers & Boomerangs**
7. **Settled in Suburbia**
8. **Booming and Consuming**
9. **Aging of Aquarius**
10. **Touch of Tradition**
11. **Picture Perfect Families**
12. **Striving Single Scene**

(Based on current students enrolled Fall 2019 and alumni who graduated within the past five years.)




I30 • I31 • I32 • I33

I31 Blue Collar Comfort

Middle-class families in smaller cities and towns with solid blue-collar jobs

Edward & Laura

1.16% | 2.00%



Key Features

- Multi-generational households
- Middle class comfort
- Union workers
- Older homes
- Bargain hunters
- Patriotic

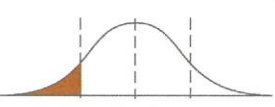
Who We Are

Age 36-45 35.3% 193	Property type Single family 96.0% 129
Household income \$50,000-\$74,999 40.3% 195	Household size 5+ persons 39.6% 329
Home ownership Homeowner 91.7% 141	Age of children 13-18 38.2% 291

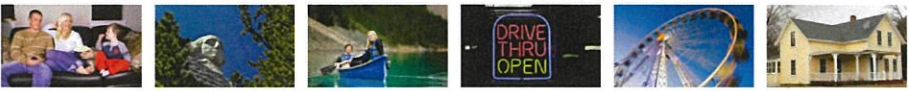
Channel Preference

76	148	68
65	111	141

Technology Adoption



Wizards



Mosaic USA

© 2014 Experian Ltd


D15 • D16 • D17 • D18

D15 Sports Utility Families

Upscale, multi-generational households of middle-aged couples with school-aged children living active family life

Kevin & Wendy

1.39% | 2.80%



Key Features

- Suburb living
- Comfortable spending
- Athletic activities
- Outdoor leisure
- Saving for college
- Soccer moms and dads

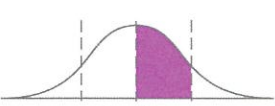
Who We Are

Age 36-45 55.7% 306	Property type Single family 96.6% 130
Household income \$75,000-\$99,999 38.2% 287	Household size 5+ persons 40.9% 340
Home ownership Homeowner 92.9% 143	Age of children 13-18 48.7% 370


Channel Preference

91	37	78
66	106	133

Technology Adoption



Apprentices



Mosaic USA

© 2014 Experian Ltd

I30 • I31 • I32 • I33

I30 Stockcars and State Parks

Middle-class couples and families living in more remote rural communities

Jeff & Brenda
1.40% | 2.18%



Who We Are

Age 46-50 21.9% 219	Property type Single family 96.1% 129
Household income \$50,000-\$74,999 34.1% 165	Household size 5+ persons 30.2% 251
Home ownership Homeowner 91.4% 140	Age of children 13-18 30.9% 235

Channel Preference

115	144	69
154	100	188

Key Features

- Country living
- Outdoor activities
- Blue-collar jobs
- Family-centric activities
- Conservative views
- Motor sports fans

Technology Adoption



Apprentices



Mosaic USA © 2014 Experian Ltd

C • C11 • C12 • C13 • C14

C14 Boomers and Boomerangs

Baby boomer adults and their teenage/young adult children sharing suburban homes

Kenneth & Debra
1.40% | 2.59%



Who We Are

Age 41-65 83.7% 279	Property type Single family 97.2% 131
Household income \$75,000-\$99,999 36.7% 276	Household size 5+ persons 42.3% 351
Home ownership Homeowner 95.8% 147	Age of children 13-18 27.5% 209

Channel Preference

111	69	57
117	129	95

Key Features

- Suburbanites
- Middle-class families
- Politically conservative
- Charitable
- Big spenders
- Multi-generational households

Technology Adoption




Apprentices



Mosaic USA © 2014 Experian Ltd

D • D15 • **D16** • D17 • D18

D16 **Settled in Suburbia** Frank & Donna
 Upper middle-class diverse family units and empty nesters living in established suburbs
 0.89% | 1.42%



Who We Are

Age
46-50
26.3% | 263

Property type
Single family
94.6% | 127

Household income
\$75,000-\$99,999
28.6% | 215

Household size
5+ persons
31.4% | 261

Home ownership
Homeowner
94.9% | 146

Age of children
13-18
33.6% | 256

Channel Preference

108 | 36 | 84
 110 | 128 | 141

Key Features

- Comfortable lifestyles
- Diverse investments
- Confident consumers
- Active kids
- Movie-goers
- Theme park vacations

Technology Adoption




Apprentices



Mosaic USA © 2014 Experian Ltd

L • L41 • L42 • L43

L41 **Booming and Consuming** Dennis & Jean
 Older empty-nesting couples and singles enjoying relaxed lives in small towns
 0.99% | 0.72%



Who We Are

Age
57-66
57.6% | 192

Property type
Single family
86.6% | 116

Household income
\$50,000-\$74,999
28.3% | 137

Household size
1 person
54.1% | 138

Home ownership
Homeowner
74.3% | 114

Age of children
2-11
2.1% | 16

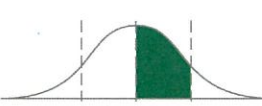
Channel Preference

111 | 57 | 117
 145 | 84 | 58


Key Features

- Busy social lives
- Diversified investments
- Balanced shoppers
- Home and garden enthusiasts
- Disposable income
- Open-minded

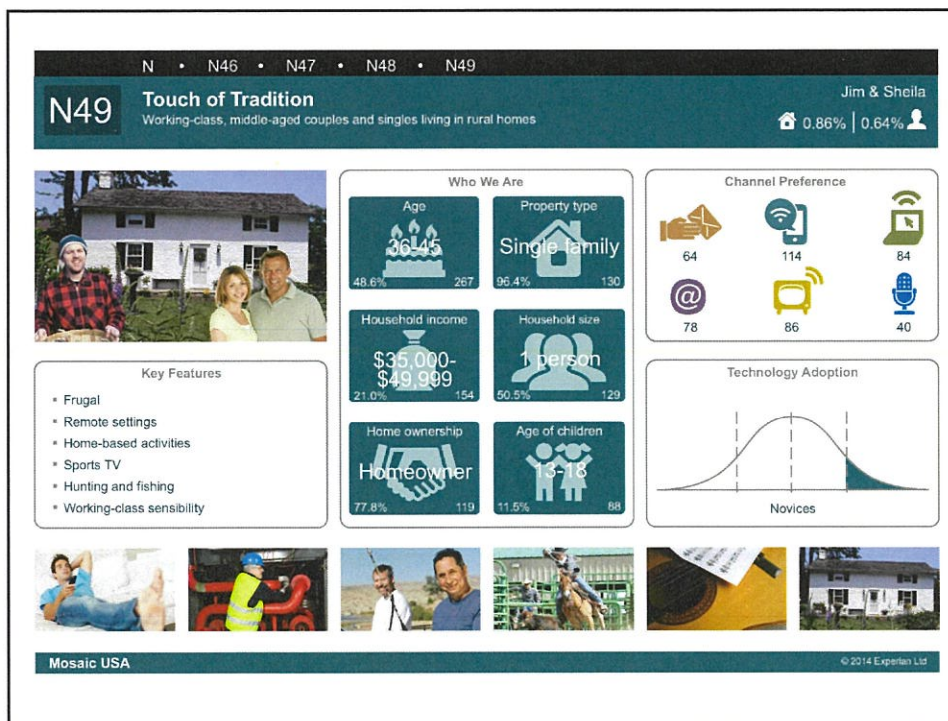
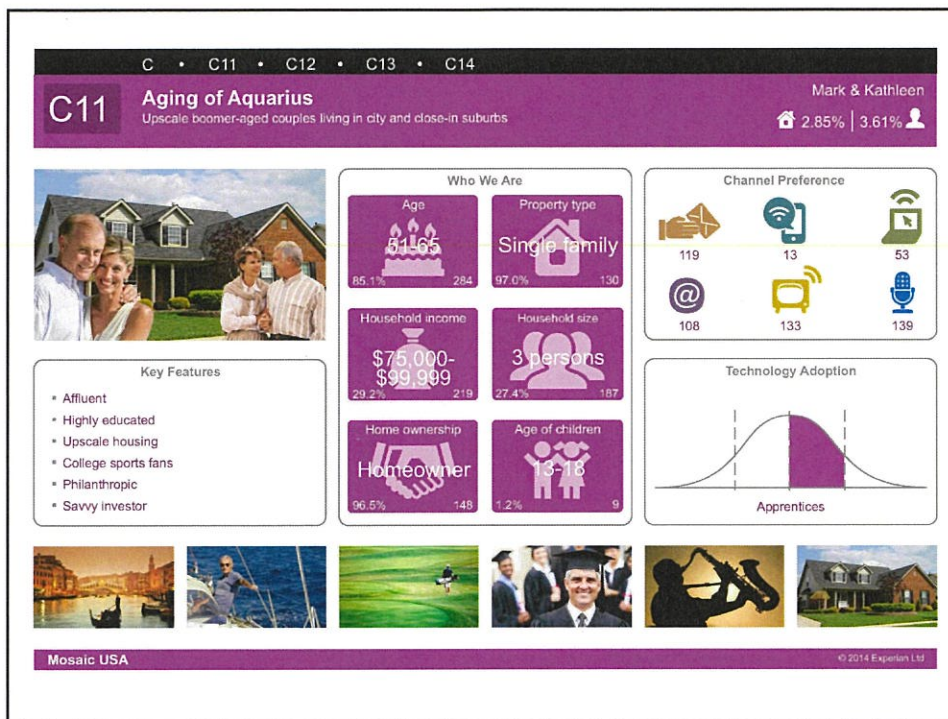
Technology Adoption



Apprentices



Mosaic USA © 2014 Experian Ltd



A • A01 • A02 • A03 • A04 • A05 • A06

A04 **Picture Perfect Families** Thomas & Linda
 Established families of child-rearing households living in wealthy suburbs 🏠 0.79% | 1.46%



Key Features

- Wealthy households
- Educated
- Digitally plugged-in
- PTA members
- Practical priorities
- Travel enthusiasts

Who We Are

Age 46-50 31.5% 316	Property type Single family 97.1% 131
Household income \$125,000-\$149,999 33.5% 741	Household size 5+ persons 45.3% 376
Home ownership Homeowner 96.2% 148	Age of children 13-18 54.1% 411

Channel Preference

👉 107	📶 35	📺 81
@ 110	📺 150	🎤 164

Technology Adoption



Apprentices









Mosaic USA © 2014 Experian Ltd

O • O50 • O51 • O52 • O53 • O54 • O55

O54 **Striving Single Scene** Justin & Tiffany
 Young, singles living in Midwest and Southern city centers 🏠 2.14% | 1.06%



Key Features

- Career-driven
- Urban centric
- Digitally dependent
- Active social lives
- Gym memberships
- Music fan


Who We Are

Age 25-30 56.7% 635	Property type Multi family; 10+ units 32.2% 761
Household income <\$15,000 25.2% 221	Household size 1 person 83.6% 214
Home ownership Renter 82.1% 322	Age of children 0-3 4.3% 44







Channel Preference

👉 64	📶 40	📺 108
@ 167	📺 133	🎤 267

Technology Adoption



Wizards

Mosaic USA © 2014 Experian Ltd

Targeted Campaigns

- **Targeted Advertising Campaigns for Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) and Master's in Career & Technical Education (CTE) Programs**
 - Digital marketing
 - Online display (web and mobile) campaigns
 - Geofenced campaign
 - Retargeting campaign
 - Dedicated search
 - Paid social media
 - Pre-roll video and OTT video
 - Email marketing
 - Outdoor digital billboards
 - Radio
 - Direct mail to prospect lists
 - Trade publications

(Ongoing — currently scheduled to run through Fall 2022.)

Other Projects

- **More Robust Reporting**
 - Digital marketing provides many metrics for performance measurement such as impressions, engagements, clicks, and conversions.
 - However, this information doesn't always provide an accurate picture of true success (student enrollment).
- **Alabama Center for the Arts Marketing Plan**
 - Facilitating a comprehensive advertising campaign in conjunction with Calhoun Community College that incorporates digital, television, and print efforts.
- **"Athens Forever" Coffee Table Book**
- **"Men of Kennis" Advertising Plan (ongoing)**
- **Student, Alumni, and Faculty Testimonials/Spotlights**
- **Video Production**



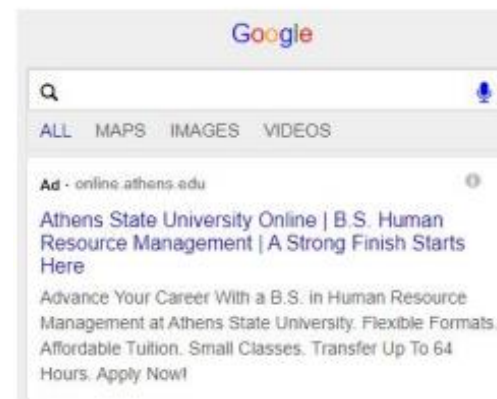
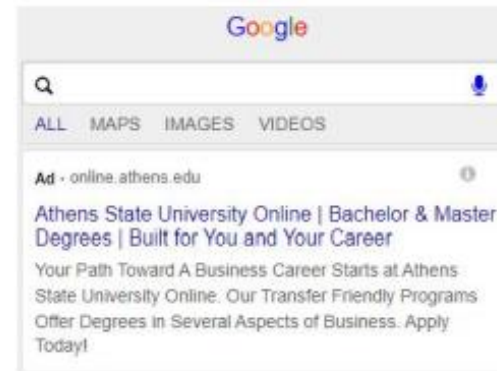
Strategic Alignment

- **Goal 3:**
Athens State University will recruit, retain, and graduate a growing high-quality, diverse, and successful student body.
 - Communications and marketing efforts will support this goal.
- **Goal 5:**
Athens State University will engage with its outside communities as an “anchor institution,” resulting in reciprocal benefits.
 - Public relations efforts will support this goal, with overall communications strategies helping build awareness on various University programs and partnerships.
 - Marketing efforts will support community college pathways and external partnerships, providing additional opportunities to students.



ARCHER EDUCATION SERVICES MARKETING

- Paid Search Ads
- Social Media Ads
- Non-Branded Search



ARCHER EDUCATION SERVICES MARKETING

■ Website

- Athens State Online <https://online.athens.edu/>
- All Programs Landing Page <https://online.athens.edu/lp/all-programs/>
- Program Specific Landing Page B.S.Accounting <https://online.athens.edu/lp/accounting/>

■ Email Experience

- Post Inquiry Form (dynamic for each student) <https://dxp-story-player.stage.viewdo.run/?xid=Y4NAGesoRUGMav0du32ymA#/toc>

ARCHER EDUCATION SERVICES GOALS

- Short Term
 - Expanding B.S. Management Technology keywords
 - Generate more demand for B.S. Homeland & Corporate Security in the upper funnel
 - Expanding match types in Tennessee
 - Website linking recommendations and updates
 - Continued blog article development to help support online.athens.edu

ARCHER EDUCATION SERVICES GOALS

- Long Term
 - Expanding paid search into Georgia
 - Expanding program content and information with faculty involvement; to enhance front-end user experience
 - Continue program specific landing page builds & testing
 - Expanding Facebook target audiences
 - Develop video testimonials assets (students and faculty)
 - Expand & enhance digital experiences; increasing both intelligence and engagements
 - Creating online social media presence to increase student engagement (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc)
 - Promoting posts on Facebook from the developed blog articles

Brand Story

The oldest continuously operating institution of higher education in Alabama's state educational system, Athens State University is one of a few "upper division" universities in the entire country. Although Athens State is steeped in history, tradition is not a driving force for the students we serve today.

Students come to Athens State from all walks of life. They're more mature than most college students. Some are junior college graduates. Some began their pursuit of a degree and, for whatever reason, paused their education. Some are graduates who are returning to advance their degree. Many are parents. Many more know what it means to work and earn a living.

All understand the meaning of value.

After all, it takes courage, and then some, to balance the pursuit of a degree with work and family life. But it takes more than that. It takes a university that gets it. One built for the current world — that empathizes with who you are, appreciates the obstacles you face, and provides the flexibility and affordability essential for success.

We produce more than graduates. We produce seasoned doers, problem solvers, and difference makers — citizens particularly well-equipped for real-world challenges employers face. We prepare them to leave Athens State filled with hope and anticipation for a new life, not burdened with heavy debt.

While it's true no two students take quite the same path to Athens State, each is seeking a relevant education in order to create a bright and confident future on their terms.

At Athens State, we understand it isn't how you begin your education that matters. It's how you finish. **And a strong finish is only the beginning.**

Core Positioning Statement & Value Proposition

Athens State University provides a high-quality junior- and senior-level education that meets the needs of students who want to balance academics, work, and family by offering workforce-ready, low-cost, and flexible degree-completion and graduate programs, unlike other more expensive colleges and universities.

Brand Pillars	Degree Focused	Tailored Schedule	Workforce Ready	Cost Effective	Transfer Friendly
----------------------	----------------	-------------------	-----------------	----------------	-------------------

Brand Promise

A relevant education for a confident future — Our brand promise is the reason to choose Athens State University. It's our commitment to experience and value. The promise is the balance: "You can have it all — work, academics, and family." Every time we communicate on behalf of Athens State, we convey this essence and the meaning behind this statement.

Key Words	Accommodating	Dedicated	Friendly	Inspiring	Supportive
	Adaptable	Empathetic	Helpful	Motivating	Trustworthy
	Attentive	Experienced	Influential	Reliable	Uplifting

Brand Personality

Encouraging Guide — Our students are in various stages of life, and we're here to guide them on their college path. No matter their circumstances, they have a strong and caring network among peers, faculty, and staff.

For our prospective students, we are welcoming and reinforce that we're ready to support them in everything they do.

For our current students, we are a dependable partner that distills confidence as they build career and life skills during their college experience.

For our alumni, we have an accommodating tone to reassure we remain committed to their success long after they graduate.

We are...
Empathetic, Friendly, and Supportive

We are...
Helpful, Reliable, and Trustworthy

We are...
Adaptable, Dedicated, and Experienced

Brand Beliefs & Proof Points

Affordability – Tuition is 30% less than the state average.

Flexible Education – 91% of students have taken an online class.

Seasons of Life – Schedules for students of all ages and needs.

Career-Focused – 100% declared majors.

Upper Division – We serve a 100% transfer student population for undergraduate programs.

Quality – In-state employment of bachelor's degree completers has remained at or above 73% since 2011.

Friendly Transition – Our admission process is catered to transfer students.

Exploring Audience Groups

Effective communication plays a pivotal role in marketing. It establishes and fosters relationships, builds trust, and creates awareness. However, as a University, we have many different audience groups we communicate with, and each is unique. Understanding these segments can make our efforts more efficient and allow us to better engage – providing the right information at the right time.

Your Audience Segment:

Students Alumni Community & Employers Legislators Faculty & Staff

1. Why is this audience group important to Athens State?
2. What attracts them to the University? Why are they interested in what we have to say?
3. What information or content would impress them or make them think more highly of Athens State?
4. When actively communicating with the University, what information are they typically looking for?
5. How do they prefer to receive information?
6. How engaged do you feel this group currently is? How could we better engage them?
7. Are there other marketing- or communications-related opportunities associated with this group that the Office of Marketing & Communications could assist with?