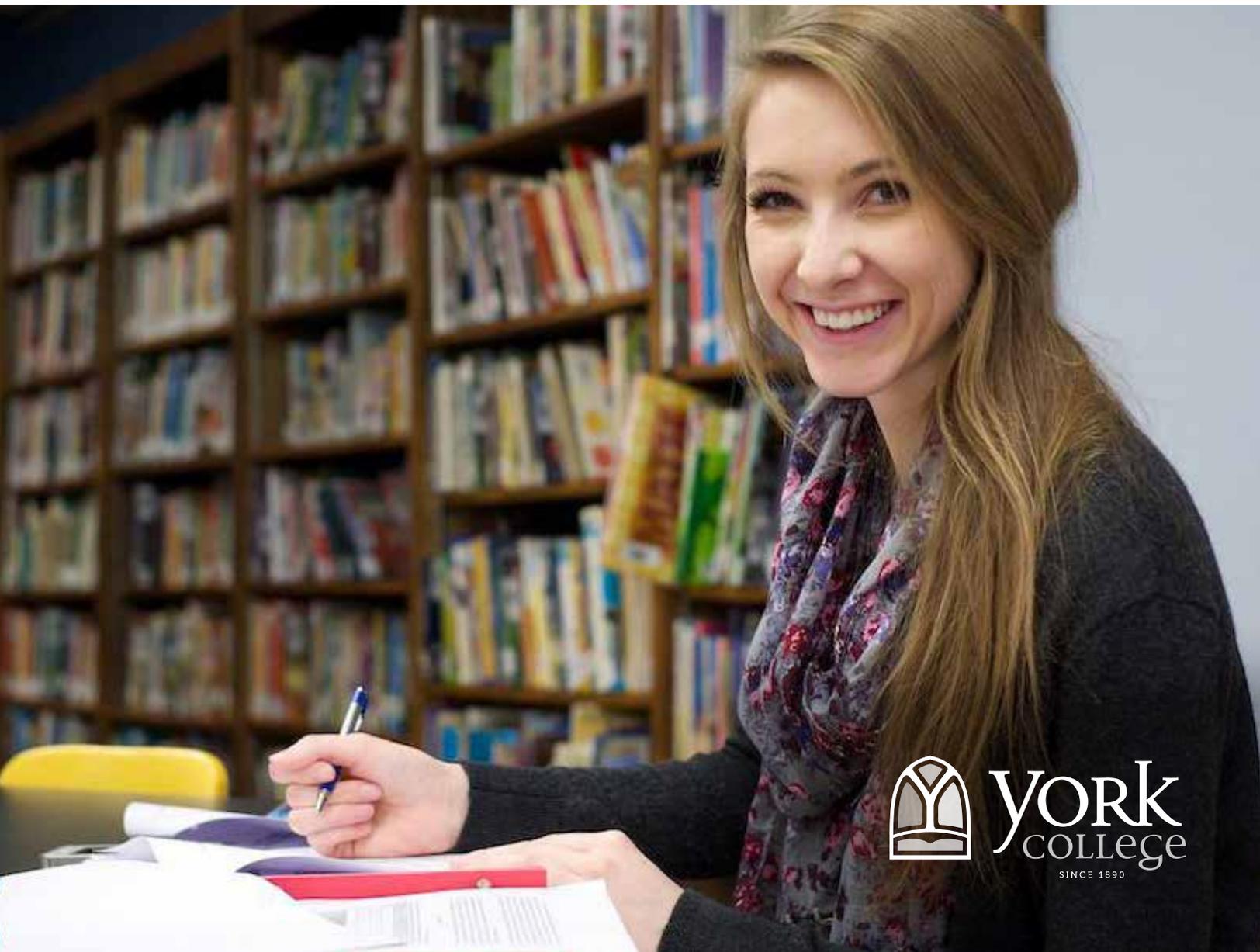


YORK COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS AUDIT

JUNE 2014

C. Grant & Company created a new logo, identity manual and branding guidelines to help York College effectively and consistently communicate the York brand across all platforms. Included in this audit is an evaluation of how the various communication tools are being used to effectively showcase the new brand as articulated in the identity manual.



MISSION

A mission statement articulates the purpose of the institution.

The mission of York College is to transform lives through Christ-centered education and to equip students for lifelong service to God, family and society.

BRAND PROMISE

A brand promise identifies what constituents should expect in their experience with the institution.

York College inspires students to grow intellectually, physically, and spiritually through a caring Christian community of supportive peers, excellent educators, and dedicated alumni.

POSITIONING

Positioning helps establish the distinctive benefits of the institution as compared with competitive offerings.

York is an intentionally small and Christian college, providing students opportunities to be deeply involved in all aspects of a residential college experience: academics, athletics, spiritual life and service opportunities. Its Christ-centered foundation, midwestern values and connection to the local community provide a grounding for students as they grow in mind, body, and spirit.

SIX YORK COLLEGE COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

- Show, don't tell
- Prioritize benefits, not features
- Use simpler, shorter content
- Focus on keywords
- Advance the York personality
- Feature prominent calls to action

YORK COLLEGE DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Use clean, contemporary fonts
- Implement flat design and maintain design consistency
- Incorporate an effective use of white space
- Follow a consistent grid design on publications
- Treat photos consistently and use York-friendly images
- Establish publication names that are forward thinking and custom to York
- Use active headlines

WEBSITE EVALUATION: YORK.EDU



BRAND PROMISE

The brand promise should be emphasized throughout the site by incorporating text that highlights the combined intellectual, spiritual and physical growth at York through a caring community. Quotes and video clips from alumni on key pages shows their appreciation of York College and offers encouragement to current and prospective students. Alumni and current, successful students are York's best salespeople and they should be featured more prominently throughout the site.

POSITIONING

Overall the language of the website needs to reflect the new positioning statement. Headlines and copy are all fact-based and flat and they should move from features to benefits. For example, Campus Life could be Campus Life Comes Alive at York.

Copy throughout website should have a family-oriented tone that focuses on community and the benefit of a smaller school. The small size of York should be celebrated and be an intentional focus throughout all the copy. Incorporate words and phrases of the brand as outlined in the identity manual.

STUDENT PROFILE

When selecting video clips, photos and quotes to use throughout the website, make sure that the images of the students portrayed are consistent with the profile in the identity manual. York students are: diligent, hard-working, spiritually-minded, motivated, and have high aspirations.

WORDS/PHRASES

In the About section re-word transformation so that it is positioned as the overarching, foundational value with the three other values growing out of Transformation. The other values should be Educate, Equip, Engage. Also, the goals listed underneath should reflect the “Engage” language.

GENERAL FEEDBACK ON WEBSITE

- Incorporate more photos with students showing energy and excitement where possible.
- Video on academics page is good, but too long. Some excellent student and alumni quotes get lost in this video. Use testimonial clips on other key pages of the site. Shorter testimonial clips that are not buried in a 7+ minute video can be extracted and used throughout the site to make a greater impact.
- Use current student and alumni quotes or video testimonials more frequently throughout the site (Campus Life, Spiritual Life, Concert Choir, Theater, Celebration singers and Forensics pages). How did specific programs, academics, faculty prepare alumni for their current position/stage in life?
- Currently too many videos are featured on the Academics page; they seem misplaced. Keep one shorter video on this page and use others elsewhere.
- Many of the right-hand, vertical photos on interior pages are stretched and out of proportion; looks unprofessional. This is occurring on many pages. The vertical blue line along the edge of the photo is low resolution and looks very jagged.
- Do not use the same photo on both the Online degree page and the Graduate degree page. Does not communicate that each student is unique.
- Photos of faculty should be included with names with a few sentences of interest. This emphasizes the family atmosphere and gives personality to the faculty members.
- Campus Map: The PDF looks too much like a cartoon which hurts credibility of the campus and facilities. Consider upgrading to some type of virtual tour or a map with photos of the buildings that include hover-overs to explain the purpose of each building. This would provide a much better orientation to campus for prospective students and visitors.

HOME PAGE

Good video on home page, but buried under the fold. Move the video further up on the page. Photos for the online education banner are clearly stock images and the program may be received better if photos of actual students are used.

WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT PAGE

President Eckman is clearly one of York College's greatest assets and he adds incredible warmth to the campus atmosphere. We would recommend including a video clip of Steve on this page as a warm welcome to York, along with an invitation to visit and join the York family. Here is an example of a warm, engaging college president video: <http://www.faulkner.edu/about-faulkner/leadership/office-of-the-president/>

Also, add Steve's signature to the welcome letter, tighten up the spacing of the paragraphs and make the text as concise as possible.

ABOUT STEVE ECKMAN PAGE

The photo of Steve effectively emphasizes his academic/professional credentials, but the photo is distorted and stretched too much vertically. Consider adding a photo of Steve on each of the topical pages where he shares his thoughts on various issues. Photos will warm up the content and communicate "small, intimate, caring, family" atmosphere that is part of the York brand. Photos of Steve engaging in conversation with students, sitting at a baseball game, in the dining hall with students, sharing in chapel with students, etc. should be featured. Use casual and informal photos, and not all photos with Steve in a business suit.

ABOUT PAGE

Add a Fast Facts page that helps students and parents get a broad view of the school in a clean, concise manner. Here is an example of an effective facts page: <http://www.faulkner.edu/about-faulkner/fast-facts/>

HISTORY PAGE

Photos are cold and many of the photos lack engaged students and people. One photo focuses primarily on the parking lot and the historic white chapel is obscured by trees and cars. A better photo of the chapel, which is a campus landmark, should feature a frontal view with students sitting on the steps. This would be more welcoming. The quaint swing should have cheerful students sitting on it, laughing and talking/walking on the grass nearby. Currently it's eerily quiet with no students in the photo, and the same issue applies to the indoor athletic facility photo. Whenever possible include photos with students engaged, plugged in and enjoying fellowship with one another and faculty/staff.

CAMPUS LIFE PAGE

This page and the Spiritual life page need to overflow with energy. This is the heart of York College. Students want to picture themselves having a great time connecting with friends and faculty. The Campus Life page should reflect energy and co-curricular opportunities that are mentioned on that page. There are a wide array of activities mentioned on that page including social clubs, outreach, special interest, and sports. The heart of York College underscores the fact that students can be involved in one or more activities. The photos need to communicate involvement on multiple levels. This is the perfect page to feature a short video testimonial from a student who has been blessed with the opportunity to participate in more than one activity.

SPIRITUAL LIFE PAGE

Featuring a short video clip on a student's spiritual transformation on this page is an ideal way to show what the overarching value of transformation looks like in a student's life.

RESIDENCE LIFE PAGE

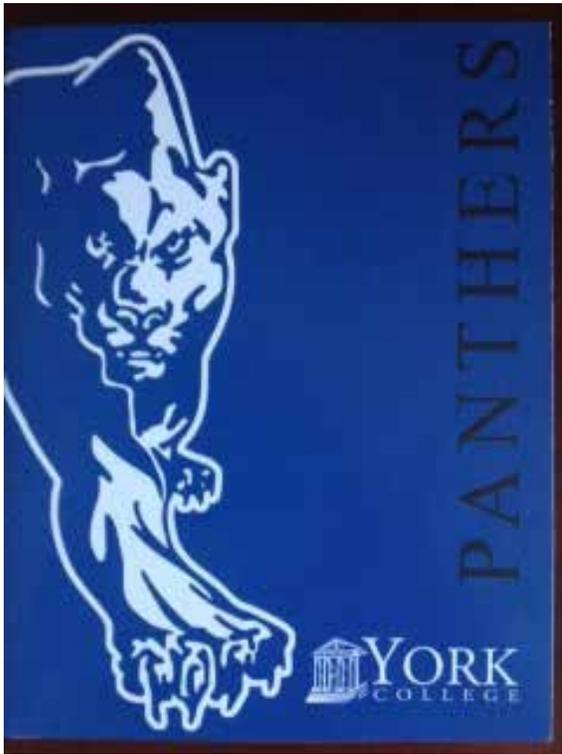
A brief letter from a residence hall student assistant to a prospective student, along with his or her photo, would add a personal touch on this page. What should a prospective student expect moving into a residence hall on York campus?

EVENTS PAGE

Many visitors will be visiting these high profile pages. If York is a place where individuals are not just a face in the crowd, then the Soul Fest photo communicates just the opposite. A young person may feel like they could easily get lost in the crowd. Homecoming page should have lots of energy. Showcase photos of exciting events that are happening that weekend. Show visitors why alumni are anxious to return to campus.

PRINT MATERIALS

PANTHERS RECRUITMENT BROCHURE (34" x 11," 8 PANELS FOLDED DOWN TO 8.5" x 11")



BRAND PROMISE, POSITIONING AND STUDENT PROFILE IMPROVEMENTS

All copy is feature-based not benefit-based. When compared with the language of the brand promise and positioning statement, the brochure copy is lacking the York personality. The fact that York students are able to participate in more than one co-curricular activity should be highlighted on the Get Involved panel. Also, the use of short testimonials would add a personal touch to the copy.

Millennials are very interested in personal stories. Consider incorporating a brief story of a student's transformation that would greatly appeal to prospective students.

VISUAL IMPROVEMENTS

Cover of brochure looks primarily like an athletic brochure featuring the panther

graphic instead of the community atmosphere York offers. The opening spread has valuable information on Acceptance Policy and Campus visits, but it appears to have no people in the campus photo. There are two people on the right-hand side, however they are covered up with text so the reader gets a sense of an empty campus on holiday. The same concept applies for the panoramic shot along the inside bottom of panels one, two and three. Many of the featured photos are shot so that the backsides or backs of heads are in primary focus. The pep rally photo on the left is exciting and full of energy, along with the terrific missions photo of the student and little girl.

There is no visual hierarchy of information and there is an inconsistent use of type and graphics. Panther footprints are not appropriate for this piece and are a distraction from the content and photos. Use a more casual and more contemporary font. Stay away from all caps in headlines and the use of exclamation marks.

VERTICAL SIX-PANEL FOLDED BROCHURE



BRAND PROMISE, POSITIONING AND STUDENT PROFILE

The copy in this brochure is more consistent with brand promise and positioning statement.

VISUALS

Strengths

This brochure is a much stronger piece than the other recruitment brochure and it reflects the culture and personality of York. Excellent, warm and engaging photos, good use of testimonials.

Improvements

Changing font sizes within the context of testimonials is distracting. The positioning of the photos can be improved by not pushing them flush against one another. This makes the piece feel too busy. No effective use of white space and crowded content causes visual confusion. There is not a hierarchy of information.

ACADEMIC BROCHURES

GENERAL FEEDBACK

The copy is relatively consistent with respect to the brand promise and positioning statement. Be sure to evaluate these pieces through the filter of the communication principles and design guidelines outlined previously in this document. Some of these brochures have an effective use of testimonials, however the content needs to be shorter and more concise. Several brochures have too many alumni testimonials that are too lengthy. These quotes would be more impactful if there were fewer and if more white space was incorporated.

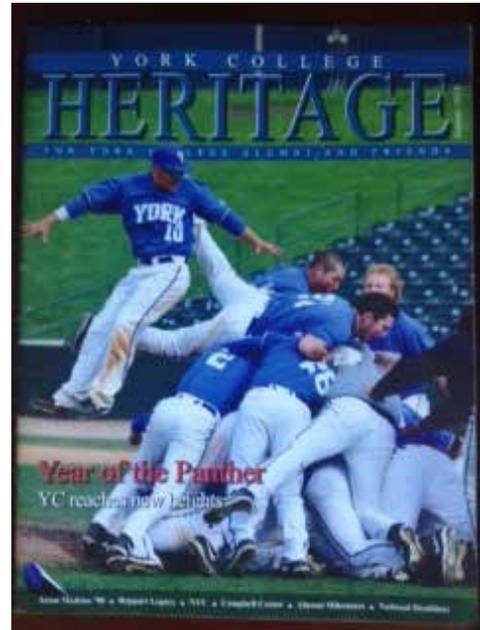
The photos used on these brochures are effective, engaging and reflective of the York personality. The use of more white space not only sets off the copy better, but it will also help the photos capture the readers' attention.



HERITAGE MAGAZINE

PUBLICATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- Name of magazine looks backwards; adopt forward-thinking name
- Update masthead with more contemporary look
- Use more up-to-date fonts
- Eliminate use of photo shadows, incorporate flat design
- Incorporate effective use of white space
- Implement new grid design
- Use active, engaging headlines
- Update color palette
- Do not tilt photos



EXAMPLE OF PUBLICATION/ARTICLE EVALUATION PROCESS

(Rating scale 1-5, 1 weakest, 5 strongest)

PUBLICATION OR ARTICLE NAME	FONTS	CLEAN, CONSISTENT DESIGN	WHITE SPACE	CONSISTENT GRID	EFFECTIVE USE OF PHOTOS	ENGAGING HEADLINE
<i>Heritage Magazine</i> Fall '12	2	3	3	4	4	4
<i>Heritage Magazine</i> Summer '13	2	2	3	3	3	4