

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



AUBURN

## BRAND STUDY

### BACKGROUND

Development and execution of a three-part brand strategy for Auburn:

1. Define the Brand:
  - Assessed brand usage, developed solutions to long-standing branding issues.
  - Created meaningful, ownable visual identity system that reflects Auburn's mission.
  - Soft-launched the brand internally, creating resources, tools, technology to aid in adoption.
2. Manage the Brand:
  - Empowered campus-wide adoption via Brand Center, a central hub for resources and assets.
  - Streamlined the brand review process.
  - Conducted RFP process for Digital Asset Management (DAM) system that will measurably optimize adoption and create brand consistency.
  - Began development of brand training plan via HR Learning's ELEVATED platform.
3. Advance the Brand:
  - Ready to begin brand health study with research vendor, RHB, who recently completed study for Admissions among prospective student audiences (learnings will be incorporated into this study). RHB proposal attached.

### BRAND OBJECTIVE:

Establish a meaningful, differentiated and competitive position in the market that will create long-term brand value for Auburn.

### GOALS TO ACHIEVE OBJECTIVE:

Conduct a brand health study to:

1. Determine the baseline brand health score and establish formula for ongoing measurement of brand health and Net Promoter Score (NPS) incorporating brand awareness, familiarity, associations, perceived quality/excellence metrics.
  - Answer three foundational questions: *What is true about AU? What does AU say is true about itself? What do others believe is true about AU?*
2. Fully define Auburn's brand positioning based on target audience insights, allowing articulation of purpose, values, personality, voice and brand essence.
  - Define target personas (will provide the lens for brand positioning development).

### PROCESS/TIMING/COST:

- Qualitative: Focus groups with identified target audiences. (6-8 weeks, \$48k-\$72.5k)  
*The following not to begin until after completion and assessment of Qualitative portion by CCO:*
- Coherence Inventory: Analysis of marketing materials, plans, tools (4-6 weeks, \$18k)
- Quantitative: Diagnostic survey assessment -- perceptions of Auburn among target audiences, in comparison to competing universities. (8-10 weeks, \$110k)

### NEXT STEPS:

- Sign RHB contract, PSC, vendor agreement. COMPLETE
- Identify internal stakeholders.
- Schedule kick-off meeting with RHB and stakeholders for mid-March.

## Communication to stakeholders:

For the past two years we have been executing our brand strategy collaboratively across campus to define Auburn's brand basics, create brand guidelines, visual assets, resources and processes that achieve consistency and ensure high-quality visual representation across all communications. Having made significant progress putting this in place, we are very excited to begin work on this next phase, the first brand study for Auburn in about eight years. The attached Executive Summary provides background on the objectives for the brand study. I've also attached a document from the vendor, RHB, that provides more insight into their process. FYI, this is the same vendor Joffery Gaymon used for a specific prospective student research study last year and that information, as appropriate, will be wrapped into this overarching brand study.

Below is our current list of leadership and project stakeholders:

- John Morris, SVP Auburn Advancement – project sponsor
- Erin Lewis, Advancement – Chief Operations & Strategy Officer: Erin designated Jessica King and Taylor Logan as project stakeholders for Strategy & Ops/Alumni – will lead management of Alumni data
- Rob Wellbaum, Advancement – VP, Philanthropy: Rob designated Beth Smith as project stakeholder for Philanthropy – will lead management of Donor data
- Jennifer Adams – Executive Director, Public Affairs (President's office)
- Joffery Gaymon – VP, Enrollment (Conducted prospective student study with RHB last year and we'll wrap that into this overall study as appropriate) – Awaiting response; Joffery may not designate a project stakeholder due to RHB having the enrollment study data.
- Julie Huff - Asst Provost (Provost Office, to rep colleges/deans): Julie designated Staci Sarkowski as project stakeholder
- Susan Hubbard – Dean, College of Human Sciences: representative dean for faculty/leadership perspective; Kim Hendrix (Comms Director) as project stakeholder
- Bobby Woodard – SVP, Student Affairs / Lady Cox – Assoc. VP Student Affairs: Corey Edwards (Asst. to SVP) and Hayley Harris (Comms Director) project stakeholders. Student research needs relative to this project beyond the insight gathered as part of last year's Enrollment-specific study.
- Athletics – Rhett Hobart, Deputy Athletics Director for External Affairs; Morgan Smith (graphic design/brand) as project stakeholder.
- Brand Council members – this includes reps from four colleges (Engineering, COSAM, Ag, Harbert) plus Trademark & Licensing and others