

University of Washington  
School of Forest Resources  
Communications Plan 2010-2011  
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I. Executive Summary:

Established in 1907 as one of the oldest units on the University of Washington (UW) campus and one of the original natural resource programs in the country, the School of Forest Resources (SFR) provides world class, internationally recognized knowledge and leadership for environmental and natural resource issues. Its teaching, research, and outreach programs focus on the integrating theme of sustainability in natural and managed environments that include wilderness and park-like ecosystems, intensively managed planted forests, and urban ecosystems. In July 2010 SFR (formerly the College of Forest Resources) became a founding unit in the UW's new College of the Environment (CoEnv).

The communications focus of SFR is driven by a strategic planning process that develops a mission, vision, and core values for the School and sets strategic three-year goals and objectives (the most recent strategic plan was developed on September 23, 2009). Strategic deliberations by the School incorporate alignment with the UW's marketing and communication goals and strategies and recognize the power of a unified UW brand essence. This alignment will also occur with CoEnv's marketing and communications goals and strategies, once they are more clearly defined.

SFR's challenge is to communicate effectively with a diverse and wide-ranging set of stakeholders representing the breadth and diversity of SFR programs and its 100+-year history. This history includes significant collaboration across the UW campuses and with academic institutions; international, federal, state, and local governments; industry; non-governmental organizations; Native American natural resource managers; and small forest landowners. Individual stakeholders include prospective students, alumni, donors, friends, scientists, professionals, and the general public who are interested in, benefit from, and support SFR's programmatic initiatives.

SFR's communications plan is guided by the School's core values of accountability, excellence, open communication, and respect as it creates and nurtures partnerships with School stakeholders and enlists their support in solving the major environmental and natural resources challenges of our century.

## II. Situation Analysis

<p><i>Strengths:</i></p>	<p><i>What do you do really well?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use an interdisciplinary approach across multiple scales ranging from the organism, plant collection, landscape, watershed, and region to play a leadership role in developing the science of sustainability</li> <li>• Teach and research issues of global importance in a world-class laboratory that covers the urban to wild land gradient found in the Puget Sound basin</li> <li>• Leverage 100+-year tradition of collaboration with core UW programs and international, national, and regional bodies concerned with sustainability to solve natural resource and environmental challenges</li> <li>• Provide a neutral and information-rich setting for dialog surrounding environmental and natural resource issues through the Northwest Environmental Forum</li> <li>• Provide significant public education and technical transfer through centers and research cooperatives supporting outreach to K-12, adult, and professional clients on topics that include horticulture, conservation, forest management, sustainable business, ecological restoration, international trade, and ecosystem science.</li> <li>• Partnerships with a strong alumni and donor base worldwide</li> </ul>
<p><i>Weaknesses:</i></p>	<p><i>What could you improve?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing breadth of alumni engagement to include all disciplines</li> <li>• Expanding communications efforts to strengthen affiliations with private foundations and NGOs</li> <li>• Developing new sources to augment limited staff and financial resources</li> </ul>
<p><i>Opportunities:</i></p>	<p><i>Where are opportunities facing you; interesting trends you are aware of?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A cohort of 14 new faculty hired since 2006 in strategically chosen disciplinary areas</li> <li>• Opportunity to play leadership role in the CoEnv</li> <li>• Opportunity for increased collaboration with the larger CoEnv community</li> <li>• Increasing public awareness of role of natural resources and the environment in the health of the world's human populations, local/global economies, and sustainability of biodiversity and healthy ecosystems</li> </ul>
<p><i>Threats:</i></p>	<p><i>What should you be worried about?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced funding opportunities from federal and state sources</li> <li>• Economic downturn that will affect private support</li> <li>• Enrollment trends nationwide in natural resources schools</li> <li>• Articulating a unique niche within a large, new UW unit focused on the broad topic of the environment</li> <li>• UW ABB funding model that does not provide metrics for core SFR outreach and publication education programs</li> </ul>

III. Programmatic Goals(s) What are your primary goals for this communications plan?

SFR will integrate SFR, CoEnv, and UW-wide communications brand messaging in the fulfillment of the strategic goals (with accompanying objectives) that it has developed for the 2008-2011 planning cycle. The six goals are:

- Create a positive public image for SFR, both on and off campus
- Increase funding for SFR
- Increase the number, quality, and diversity of SFR students, faculty, and staff
- Improve SFR facilities
- Increase morale and a sense of community within SFR
- Take a leadership role in making the College of the Environment successful

IV. Objectives

- Use communication vehicles to create a positive public image for SFR, both on and off campus that results in increased enrollment, financial support, and engagement
- Use UW's creative direction and brand messaging throughout all print and electronic materials developed in furtherance of SFR's strategic goals
- Integrate UW's Reputation Building Initiative (RBI) core message on SFR website, on-line newsletter, E-newsletter, and student recruitment, fundraising, and outreach communications relevant to SFR's strategic goals

V. Target audience(s):

- Internal
  - SFR faculty, staff, students
  - UW faculty, staff, and students on all three campuses
  - UW administration
  - Prospective students (within UW)
- External
  - Alumni
  - Prospective students
  - Donors
  - Friends
  - Professional and public education clients
  - Collaborating partners and programs (international, national, regional, local) in all spheres (governmental, nonprofit, corporate, tribal)
  - Media
  - Legislative and Congressional delegations

The committee selected the grid that appears on the next page as a diagnostic and tracking tool for setting priorities for communications vehicles vis-à-vis designated target audiences.

**TARGET AUDIENCES AND COMMUNICATION VEHICLES**

	<b>Communication Vehicles</b>	SFR Home Page	UW Home Page	Direct Mail	E-mail	E-news-letters	Fact Sheets	Annual Reports	Brochures	Advertising	UW Publications (e.g., Columns, UWeek, Daily)	Social Networking (Web 2.0)	Earned Media (PR)	Events
<b><u>Audiences</u></b>	Students													
	Parents													
	Faculty/Staff													
	Legislature													
	Alumni													
	Donors													
	Businesses													
	Public Agencies													
	Foundations													
	Peer Institutions													
	Media													
	General Public													
	International													

VI. Select priority audience(s). Three priority audiences were targeted for the 2010-11 SFR communications plan:

- Students (current and prospective)
- Donors
- External Community

The committee recognizes that these three audience sectors have the potential for overlap; e.g., members of the external community can also be prospective students and/or donors; current students can be also be donors, etc. The committee developed key messages for each of these audiences, based on input from committee members, graduating student exit questionnaires, and surveys and other materials used in curriculum revisions and other strategic planning initiatives during the past decade.

**KEY AUDIENCES**

<b><i>Audiences</i></b>	<b><i>What we want them to think</i></b>	<b><i>What we want them to do</i></b>
<b>Students (current and prospective)</b>	SFR provides <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• exciting and dynamic study areas in environmental and forest sciences and management</li> <li>• a sense of special community, with small classes and good access to faculty</li> <li>• marketable skills and opportunities for career development</li> <li>• undergraduate research opportunities in a prestigious research university</li> <li>• a faculty of outstanding teachers and researchers</li> <li>• unrivalled opportunities for field experiences in varied Pacific Northwest ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enroll in SFR and graduate from SFR</li> <li>• support SFR with other key audiences</li> <li>• view SFR as a place for lifelong engagement</li> </ul>

<p><b>Donors</b></p>	<p>By supporting SFR they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• investing in development of social responsibility and environmental and financial sustainability</li> <li>• investing in innovative research in cutting edge areas, including climate change effects, biofuels, ecosystem restoration, and triple bottom line performance, among others</li> <li>• investing in environmental stewards for future generations</li> <li>• leaving a legacy for future generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support SFR financially</li> <li>• speak enthusiastically and with pride about the quality, impact, and initiatives of SFR</li> <li>• support SFR with other key audiences, including legislators, business leaders, and others.</li> <li>• connect with SFR for a lifetime.</li> </ul>
<p><b>External Community</b></p>	<p>SFR provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for engagement (K-adult), including courses, lectures, outdoor experiences at UWBG and Pack Forest</li> <li>• Opportunities for involvement through internships, volunteer work, advocacy, and networking</li> <li>• Training and education for future natural resource and environmental leaders that informs policy and professional practice</li> <li>• a neutral and information-rich setting for dialog surrounding environmental and natural resource issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speak enthusiastically about the quality, impact, and initiatives of SFR</li> <li>• advocate for state resources.</li> <li>• support SFR with other key audiences, including legislators, business leaders, and others.</li> <li>• connect with SFR for a lifetime.</li> </ul>

For these three target audiences, the committee completed a prioritization exercise using the “Target Audiences and Communications Vehicles Grid” on page 4. The results of that exercise appear in the grid below:

## Final - Ranked importance of the communication tools with the target audience

1 = most important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = least important

COMMUNICATIONS VEHICLES	SFR Home Page	UW Home Page	Direct Mail	E- mail	E- news- letters	Fact Sheets	Annual Reports	Brochures	Advertising	UW Publications (e.g., Columns, Uweek, Daily)	Social Networking (Web 2.0)	Earned Media (PR)	Events
Students	1	1	3	2	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	3	2
Donors	3	3	1	1	2	1	1	3	2	3	2	1	1
External Community	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3
Expanded list below:													
Current Students													
Prospective Students													
Parents													
Faculty/Staff													
UW Administration													
College of the Environment													
Legislature													
Alumni													
Donors													
Businesses													
Public Agencies													
Foundations													
Peer Institutions													
Media													
General Public													
International													
Friends													
Professional/public education clients													
Collaborating partners and programs*													
*international, national, regional, local in all spheres; governmental, nonprofit, NGOs, corporate, tribal													

## VII. Tactics: delivering the message

Incorporation of UW's, CoEnv's, and SFR's core messaging to target audiences will include:

- Developing faculty, student, staff, and alumni profiles that demonstrate a personal commitment to shared themes of concern such as sustainability of the earth, globalism, social responsibility, and collaboration. The profiles will be developed for flexible use in a wide range of print and electronic media, including E-newsletters, on-line newsletters, annual reports, Web pages, program brochures, and fundraising and student recruitment communications.
- Developing fact sheets and research and education project profiles that demonstrate the centrality of collaboration and partnerships in fulfilling SFR's mission and vision. These profiles will be developed for flexible use in a variety of print and electronic communications.
- Developing outreach events, such as the Denman Forestry Issues Series, the SFR-UWAA Lecture Series, the Northwest Environmental Forum, the Distinguished Alumni Seminar Series, and center public and professional education that incorporate key issues of pressing concern, express collective and integrative action, and are driven by shared, explicit goals. The research and partnership assets of SFR and the regional advantages of place in the UW setting will play a strategic role in framing the issues and challenges presented in these events.
- Ongoing attention to updating and renewal of SFR's website, including development of interactive features that will assist in recruiting students and enhancing public awareness of SFR's mission and vision and its alignment with broad UW messaging.
- Incorporating into the SFR media/communications plan a process for ensuring the integration of SFR, UW, and CoEnv messaging.

## VIII. Metrics

How will you evaluate the success of your goals?

- Survey quality and relevance of SFR newsletters and Web site
- Measure success in student recruitment, fundraising (gifts, grant and contract awards), and attendance at outreach events
- Document media coverage

## **SFR Communications Strategy**

### **Key Strategic Aim: enhance overall function, image, and support of SFR**

#### ***Building Blocks:***

- develop communication vehicles that create and nurture ties with prospective students, alumni, donors and friends, public and private partners, the general public, and others interested in SFR programs
- integrate approach to communication by SFR teaching, research, and outreach programs and interdisciplinary centers
- ensure seamless coordination with UW communications strategies
- improve communication processes within SFR to enhance faculty, staff, and student awareness of SFR mission, vision, goals, objectives, and strategic themes
- develop and use communication vehicles that are accessible, reliable, and, whenever possible, interactive

### **Core Guiding Principles: accountability, excellence, open communication, respect**

#### ***Guidelines:***

- accuracy, consistency, and presentation to highest professional standards
- timely and strategic placement, using most effective vehicle at most appropriate time
- accurate representation of SFR programmatic accomplishments and goals
- accountability for outcomes through established and transparent organizational procedures

#### **2010-2011 Standard Requirements for Major SFR Communication Pieces**

- Determine most cost-effective vehicle to tell your story
- Determine most strategic time to tell your story
- Clearly identify your audience
- Clearly identify desired outcomes
- Write, edit, and produce to highest professional standards
- Accurately present program/unit and its accomplishments and goals
- Review with Director's Office in key stages of planning and production