

# Annual Assessment Report

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## Executive Summary

As the final step of the AES assessment process, each AES unit is required to submit an Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is a short document which provides an overview of the Unit, and the overall assessment process, highlights key findings and provides recommendation and next steps.

Unit name: **Marketing and Communications**

Assessment year: **2021-22**

### **Department Mission**

The Marketing and Communications Department (M&C) develops and implements strategies supporting the achievement of LaGuardia's mission and goals for student recruitment, enrollment, education, retention and graduation. M&C provides direction, expertise and oversight of marketing and communications to the College community and external audiences; assures adherence to LaGuardia's brand messaging and visual identity; and ensures communications are effective and efficient.

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## Assessment Results by Goal and Objectives

**Goal 1: Develop and implement marketing and communications strategies that increase the number of prospective and current students.**

**Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:**

1. Build Student Access and Success

a. Develop new enrollment strategies (off-sites, iGen and older students) and more fluid connections from ACE to credit, and credit to ACE

Objective	Method and Measure
Increase number of prospects and applicants through targeted and strategic communications and advertising plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Total applicants</li><li>• Digital advertising analytics (CTR)</li><li>• Unique webpage views</li><li>• Time spent on site</li><li>• Bounce rate</li><li>• Number of leads</li></ul>
Support continuing student retention through continued refinement and implementation of communications plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email open rates</li></ul>

There was a total of 36,886 applications for Fall 2021- Spring 2022 which represents an increase of 12.47% over Fall 2020- Spring 2021. While some of this increase may be attributed to changes related to the pandemic, an increase in advertising is also a significant factor. More than 207,000 ad views and engagements were captured, far exceeding the 42,664 engagements of the prior time period. Ad click-through rates also increased significantly from 1.42% to 11.08%, largely due to the addition of Google Ads and a video campaign. Time-on-page increased from 76 seconds last year to 140 seconds this year, and the bounce rate reduced from 10.14% to 1.32% as an outcome of stronger targeting and engaging content. Marketing & Communications will continue to regularly update webpage content to reduce bounce rate across the full website and to optimize digital advertising to increase CTR. Student email open rates increased in 2021-22, largely due to an increase in text messaging as part of the overall student communications plan.

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## Goal 2: Increase student engagement through social media.

### Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:

3. Enrich the Student Experience

a. Advance communication and interaction, linking students with faculty and administrators and focusing on students as active agents of their own education

Objective	Method and Measure
Increase social media engagement rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Engagement rate</li></ul>

Instagram engagement fell from 8.7% in 2020-2021 to 6.7% in 2021-2022; this is attributed in part to platform changes that prioritized video content and departmental limitations in keeping up a high volume of video production. While down for this year, the Instagram engagement rates still exceed our baseline target of 4.73%. Facebook engagement is down slightly year-over-year from 3.6% to 3.29%; a lack of community content is a contributing factor. Twitter engagement rose significantly, from 2.36% to 4.39% due to an increase in external account collaboration. LinkedIn will be monitored going forward; the engagement for this year was 4.43%, and content prioritized faculty and staff recognition, and ACE program opportunities. In 2022-2023 we aim to revive the declining engagement rates by relaunching the social media champions, and new content opportunities found through increased campus activity.

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## Goal 3: Improve website by keeping content relevant and current through enhanced user experience.

### Supporting Strategic Plan Goal:

3. Enrich the Student Experience

a. Advance communication and interaction, linking students with faculty and administrators and focusing on students as active agents of their own education

Objective	Method and Measure
Maintain benchmark number of annual unique visitors, increase average time on page, and maintain bounce rate for pages designed for <u>prospective students</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Maintain unique page views</li><li>Increase average time on page</li><li>Decrease bounce rate</li></ul>
Maintain benchmark number of annual unique visitors, increase average time on page, and reduce bounce rate for pages designed for <u>current students</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Maintain unique page views</li><li>Increase average time on page</li><li>Decrease bounce rate</li></ul>

Significant issues with Google Analytics were experienced in 2021-22 and data was not recorded for a portion of the year. Additional tracking code from Facebook also failed during some campaigns, leading the Web Team to believe the issue lies within Ektron. Secondary tracking was set up mid-year as back-up to be utilized in the future.

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## Overall summary

Strategic adjustments to communications, website content and advertising activities yielded positive results overall. Looking ahead, Marketing & Communications will be splitting into two departments and will establish separate goals and objectives. The current goals will likely evolve to more specifically support the new units and their missions.

## Appendices

- No appendices provided