Driven to Discover: Elements of Identity

University of Minnesota
The assignment

Identify elements that will influence and impact University of Minnesota positioning in Rochester and southeast Minnesota
“The [University of Minnesota] Rochester has an identity crisis.”

--Rochester community member

“It’s been a series of compromises, not commitments.”

-- UMR Student

“UMR is a mom-and-pop outpost now.”

-- Senior University leader
Project Scope

In Scope
- Stakeholders
- Identity themes
- Understanding of current relationships between UMR and other University campuses/programs

Out of Scope
- Marketing campaign
- Impact on coordinate campuses
- Impact on MnSCU and RCTC
- Infrastructure (e.g. building and space)
- Degree offerings and academic programs
The project team

• President’s Emerging Leaders
  – As interested in the process as the outcome
  – Diverse backgrounds
  – Neutral
METHODOLOGY
Telephone Survey

850 adults, age 25+
December 4-11, 2006

Oversamples:

• 100 opinion leaders
  – news-attentive
  – affluent
  – registered voters
  – college educated

• 150 Rochester-area residents
Focus Groups

11 focus groups (47 people)
February 28-March 29, 2007

- GRAUC
- RAAFUM
- Rochester Chamber of Commerce
- Rochester City Council
- Rochester Higher Education Development Committee (RHEDC)
- Rochester Public Schools’ high school guidance counselors
- Rochester School Board
- State senators, representatives, and appointed officials
- UMR students (both undergraduate and graduate)
- UMR staff
Interviews

21 interviews
February 15-April 4, 2007

• Senior University administrators
• Local and state elected officials
• Those unable to participate in focus groups
Limitations

• Missing voices
  – The general public of southeast Minnesota
  – Prospective students

• University-driven changes
  – Designation as coordinate campus
  – Move to University Square
Focus Groups--Questions

• What makes you proud to live and work in southeast Minnesota?
  – Students: Why did you choose to attend UMR?

• What differentiates UMR from other institutions of higher learning in southeast Minnesota?
Focus Groups--Questions

• What 3 words or phrases would you use to describe UMR today?

• What 3 words or phrases would you like to use to describe UMR 10 years from now?

• How does UMR get from here to there?
Focus Groups--Questions

- What is your greatest hope regarding UMR’s expansion? Greatest concern?

- How do you feel about UMR’s current partnerships with area business & industry?

- What advice would you have for President Bruininks about the UMR expansion?
RESULTS
Rochester residents are familiar with the U’s local presence and strongly support expansion

**Rochester Residents**

The University of Minnesota has a campus in Rochester. How familiar would you say you are with the University of Minnesota Rochester - very familiar, somewhat familiar, not very familiar, or not at all familiar?

**Total familiar: 65%**

And do you favor or oppose the University of Minnesota expanding its presence in Rochester? [IF FAVOR/OPPOSE: Is that strongly or somewhat?]

**Total favor expansion: 96%**
Rochester residents are more likely to have heard something recently about the U

Have you seen, heard or read anything recently about the University of Minnesota?

Most likely to recall:
Rochester men (80%) and respondents with incomes above $40,000 per year (78%) are most likely to recall recent information

O indicates significant difference from the general public at 95% confidence level
The big news about the U in Rochester is its expansion; statewide it is sports

What did you see, hear or read? Anything else?
Base: Respondents who had seen, heard, or read anything recently about the University, N=524; Rochester Residents, N=122

- Basketball coach: 18% (Rochester), 34% (Statewide)
- About sports: 17% (Rochester), 33% (Statewide)
- New stadium: 11% (Rochester), 18% (Statewide)
- Tuition increases: 5% (Rochester), 13% (Statewide)
- Expanding to Rochester: 5% (Rochester), 60% (Statewide)
- News (general): 4% (Rochester), 0% (Statewide)
- About various programs (general): 4% (Rochester), 7% (Statewide)
- About the President/about the President’s salary: 4% (Rochester), 5% (Statewide)
- Making it a better school: 3% (Rochester), 0% (Statewide)
- About the medical school (general): 3% (Rochester), 9% (Statewide)
- Positive news about the U’s research: 2% (Rochester), 2% (Statewide)

* indicates significant difference at 95% confidence level
What 3 words or phrases would you use to describe UMR as it is today?

“When I talk to other people they don’t realize what programs are here or what we’re talking about.”

--Rochester opinion leader
What 3 words or phrases would you use to describe UMR in the future?

“I honestly believe that if done right, UMR will contribute significantly to our goal of emerging as one of the Top Three.”

--Senior University leader
Common Themes

Invisibility, diverging opinions, and missing key elements create the sense UMR has no identity.

“We have borrowed space, but no real identity.”
--UMR student
Common Themes

Partnerships are important, both now and in the future.

“UMR will not exist without partnerships within the community.”

--Rochester opinion leader

“What the hell are we [the U] doing in China, India, and Africa if we can’t have a vibrant, mature relationship locally? Rochester is our first global opportunity.”

--Senior University leader
UMR’s future success will require strong, visionary, and effective leadership as well as resource investment.

“To make UMR look like Crookston or Morris… a potential for reinventing higher education will be lost.”

--Senior University leader
RECOMMENDATIONS

University of Minnesota
Create the Identity

1. Use existing elements as a basis for a new identity.
2. Let imagination be the only constraint for considering UMR’s future.
3. Foster UMR’s mission and vision as a guide for strategic planning and decision-making.
4. Create a campus-wide community.
5. Identify appropriate venues for community engagement.
Communicate the Identity

6. Create and continually share consistent messages regarding UMR.

7. Frame UMR’s identity so it resonates effectively with stakeholders and builds additional support.

8. Use the existing University of Minnesota brand as a springboard for UMR.
9. Expand dialogue with partners.
10. Seek strategic new partnerships.
11. Commit to UMR and demonstrate support in action.
12. Empower UMR.
“We’re not giving you a general Chevrolet. We’re giving you a hybrid vehicle. You need something that’s new and different to meet the true needs of the community.”

--Senior University leader
“We see the University of Minnesota Rochester as an integral part of our ambitious aspirations and the drive to discover that make the University of Minnesota unique. UMR has great potential to benefit not only southeast Minnesota, but also the state—particularly its healthcare infrastructure and resources.”

--President Robert Bruininks, 11/16/06
THANK YOU!

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• Laura Johnson and Jessica Mooney, University Relations
• Beth Zemsky and Dave Dorman, PEL
THANK YOU!

- Zumbrota Dairy Queen
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