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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We are Barnum, a PR agency founded in 2019 by some of Boston University's finest students. We embody creativity, functionality, and diversity. Our agency's founders include Olivia Fordyce, Prodpran Sukcharoen, Minea Toker, Lia Valdez, Nicolle Valladares, Amanda Boucourt, Sarah Serhan, and Niya Doyle. We are a new agency, but our team has a wide range of experience in consulting, marketing, international business, market research, design and journalism. At Barnum, we believe in hard work and real results. Our agency's culture emphasizes the importance of being innovative and resourceful. Ethics, specifically in regards to honesty and transparency, is our top priority. Our motto is "We will do our best without compromising our moral compass."

The goal of this plan is to increase undergraduate applications to Boston University by incorporating new technology and providing prospective students with an accurate vision of what life at BU is like. The excellent academics and urban location of Boston University makes it an attractive university to domestic and international students alike. However, because of geographic barriers many students do not get the opportunity to actually visit Boston and experience the campus first hand. Our mission is to provide that first-hand experience of Boston University to all students, regardless of where in the world they are. Through increasing the applicant pool, BU will not only have a wider variety of great minds but the admissions rate will drop. This would then lead to the institution's rank among other competitive universities to increase and, more importantly increasing, the diversity of the student body and, in turn, diversity of thought.

We hope to guide and support BU admissions through this transitional and progressive stage. Barnum is enthusiastic to help this institute to continue to grow. Through increasing

potential student's accessibility to the BU experience, BU will attract more students but specifically those that are aware of and excited about what BU has to offer. This plan will contain demographic research, suggested tactics, strategies, and methods for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the campaign.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

History:

Boston University is a private four year research university in the heart of Boston. Since 1839, BU rose to become one of the most prestigious institutions in the world. With over 16,000 undergraduate students, the university boasts a global network of students and alumni from all backgrounds. Even with such a large community, Boston University's Office of Admissions is always working to increase enrollment and diversity on its campus. BU Admissions actively recruits prospective students from around the world either on-campus through receptions in multiple countries.

Boston University has seen immense growth from 2009 to 2019 in U.S News College Rankings. The admission rate for BU for the 2008-2009 academic year was 54% and jumped down to 18% for the 2019-2020¹ academic year. In 2009, BU was ranked #60 in National Universities in U.S News & World Report College Rankings, and #40 in 2019². Renovations of residential halls like Myles Standish plus the addition of Student Village 1 & 2 have enhanced the student life experience BU, and makes it a more attractive university for prospective applicants.

¹ Boston University Admissions "Academic Profile" Accessed October 12th, 2019
<http://www.bu.edu/admissions/why-bu/academic-profile/>

² U.S News & World Report "Boston University" Accessed October 12th, 2019
<https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/boston-university-2130>

Boston University Admissions can be split into two buildings on campus. The first is the Office of Admissions which handles applications, marketing, and houses the Board of Admissions. Down the road is the Alan and Sherry Leventhal Center, the Admissions Visitors' Center, which handles the "Visitor Experience." This building handles and hosts various programming and events for prospective students and their families. These events can range anywhere from a casual campus information session, to organized full-day programming during a Visit Day. The Admissions Visitors' Center was built in 2014 with the sole intention of welcoming visitors to the university. The facility welcomes around 80,000 prospective students and their families every year.³

Problem:

Diversity is one of Boston University's core mission statements; however, BU Admissions lacks accessibility to everyone which in turn creates a lack of diversity. We found that BU Admissions does not have equal outreach not only in the United States, but across the globe. Diversity isn't limited to racial diversity, but also socioeconomic diversity. There could be potential students who are interested in the institution but do not have the means to visit in person for financial reasons. While BU Admissions does visit certain schools in all different states and countries, the students who do not happen to be enrolled in one of those schools or perhaps come from nontraditional education backgrounds are left behind. Boston University employs Admission Representatives in all 50 states and in multiple regions of the world, but BU assigns one Admission Representative to places like Africa, the Middle East, and South America while multiple Admission Representatives are assigned to reach multiple locations in Asia and

³ Kimberly Murray, communication with Senior Assistant Director of BU Admissions Visitor Center, October 9, 2019.

Europe. This greatly inhibits prospective students from underserved minority communities from applying to the university if they aren't able to determine if the institution can meet their needs.

Media Audit:

Paid Media:

Boston University Admissions pays to advertise itself on social media, through native advertisements, as well as on different T cars as part of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. The majority of social media ads feature a picture of campus and encourages students to “Apply to BU” along with reasons why they should. This may include statistics and rankings or general information about the university i.e highlighting its location in the heart of Boston, or showcasing school traditions such as lobster night. Using data mining and the tracking of cookies, Boston University Admissions tailors these ads towards prospective students who have recently searched college-related information. For example, some tailored ads include ads about Financial Aid information, which highlights the AffordableBU promise that Boston University has to offer. Boston University Admissions also advertises on different lines and T stops of the MBTA. This is a great advertising tactic because those who see it are already in the city of Boston and could very easily make a trip over to BU admissions for a tour. In addition, over one million people ride the T every weekday and thus are exposed to BU admission advertisements. According to the MBTA website⁴, advertisements made up over \$30 million in revenue last year, and are a major part of keeping costs low.

⁴ Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. “Advertising FAQs.” MBTA. Accessed October 16, 2019. <https://www.mbta.com/business/advertising/advertising-faqs#8>.

Shared Media:

Boston University Admissions, @applytobu, has an active social media presence.

The social media content of Boston University Admissions can be split into two categories: recruitment and commitment. Some content is tailor-made to target high school seniors to apply to Boston University, and occurs from late July until the January 1st application deadline.

Commitment season begins from January 1st until May 1st, the commitment deadline.

Recruitment content varies from commitment content by being more quantitative in nature and about the university as a whole. Commitment content focuses more on the culture of BU and student life. The Instagram Account, @applytoBU currently has 1,949 posts spanning from February 2013, to the present day. The account has 8,200 followers while only following 289 people, hence displaying BU does not engage in the act of mass following in order to gain followers. The @applytoBU twitter account was created in 2009 and currently has 4,205 followers and follows 946. The most popular platform is the @buadmissions facebook with over 9,500 likes, a 4.3 out of 5 rating, and 1,127 check-ins.

By scrolling through any of the Boston University admissions social media, one will notice a recurring theme of heavily featuring current students. Student takeovers, in which a student shows viewers and followers a day in their lives, are a major part of Boston University Admissions social media presence and helps them achieve third-party credibility. Displaying a day in the life of students shows prospective students and parents what their day could look like at BU. In addition, it also allows prospective students to ask a peer questions about their experience at BU or about their personal experience applying to the university. Student takeovers

(#TerrierTakeover) are the most common on Instagram, with one happening at least once a week during the recruitment season and three times a week during commitment season.

Every Tuesday during recruitment season, Admissions posts a #TerrierTuesday in which it features a student, a biography of them, and why they chose BU. This is a great way for prospective students to learn more about the BU student body and to persuade them to attend the University. Snapchat is used by admissions to also feature student takeovers. According to a 2017 article by the Digital and Social Media Marketing Manager at Boston University Admissions⁵, the Admissions Snapchat gained over 4,000 followers in a year with over 2,600 people viewing each post. This shows how much the audience of prospective students appreciates getting insight into campus student life as well as who may be reading their application. During commitment season, BU Admissions Instagram and Twitter interact with prospective students by congratulating them on their acceptance with a personalized message.

Instagram and Snapchat takeovers give faces to what can be the most stressful process of a student's academic career. It allows prospective students to see admissions directors as they travel to different cities and breaks down the barrier of intimidation. Oftentimes, the admissions process is seen as almost robotic, and it can be easy to forget there's a human being reading every single application.

On social media, Boston University admissions regularly interact with prospective students. When professional staff and students do takeovers, they answer student questions. These questions range from "Does applying early decision help my chances of getting into BU?" to "How big is your dorm room?" Answering these questions allows BU admissions to practice a

⁵ BU Social Media. "Hosting Student Takeovers on Snapchat." *Medium*. Medium, June 29, 2017. <https://medium.com/@busocial/hosting-student-takeovers-on-snapchat-bdbe12bcd03a>.

two-way symmetrical model by directly interact with students and allowing for prospective students to get questions answered.

Owned Media:

Boston University Admissions website, bu.edu/admissions, includes four tabs directly marketed to prospective students, including “Why BU?”, “Visit Us”, “Tuition & Aid”, and “How To Apply.” The “Why BU” section covers various aspects regarding significant sections often looked for in regard to the quality of an institution, including featured students, study abroad opportunities, available academic pathways and rankings. The website utilizes in action images of current students climbing a rock wall in the Fitness and Recreation Center, in lab attire, and the Hockey team in Agganis Arena, appealing to a diverse background of prospective students⁶. The website also provides an in-depth breakdown of the cost of attendance and lists three ways students can afford the institution, including Merit Scholarships and Financial Aid. Boston University attempts to appeal to various socio-economic classes by also introducing the concept of “AffordableBU” with 100% Financial Need met as well as a Scholarship Assurance program.

In terms of events, Boston University holds consistent Information Sessions in their Sherry and Leventhal Center, located centrally on their campus. The information consists of a 45-minute session that includes an Assistant Director and a current Boston University student. These students relate their personal experience to an audience of up to 150 visitors. Additionally, the university holds online webinars that relay information on the application process and financial aid, among other topics⁷. After an Information Session, visitors get the chance to tour

⁶ “Why BU?” *Why Apply to Boston University | Admissions*, www.bu.edu/admissions/why-bu/.

⁷ “Visit Us.” *Information about Visiting Boston University's Campus | Admissions*, www.bu.edu/admissions/visit-us/.

the campus for about an hour led by an Admissions Ambassador to learn more about the student life aspect and the academic programs of the institution. Throughout it, prospective students get the opportunity to go inside of Marciano Commons, the largest dining hall on campus, the library, as well as one academics school or college.

Earned Media:

Boston University Admissions utilizes its extensive Alumni network to gain coverage across various news related sites. With a quick “Boston University” search on the News tab of Google, non-BU owned media highlights professions who received a variation of degrees from Boston University. Those include an article from Symmetry Magazine, lists the featured professional, Alfredo Aranda - a Physics researcher - from receiving a postdoc at Boston University⁸. Although this is not a direct highlight on the institution, it does create a parallel between being an accomplished professional and an education from Boston University in the mind of the spectator. When discussing admissions, learning what alumni have accomplished after receiving an education there can impact the positioning of the institution and could increase the prestige of it along the way.

Boston University is more commonly cited in regards to ground breaking discoveries and research opportunities. Currently, Boston University has been cited for its research concerning its CTE studies which investigate the impact of consistent blows to the head, often discussed in the sport of Football⁹. By being a lead in the study, the institution has been regarded as a prime

⁸ Anderson, Angela. “Building on Luck.” *Symmetry Magazine*, Oct. 2019, www.symmetrymagazine.org/article/building-on-luck.

⁹ Hille, Bob. “Pointed 'Tackle Can Wait' TV Ad Hits amid Sobering New CTE Study's Stats.” *Sporting News*, (Concussion Legacy Foundation), 14 Oct. 2019, www.sportingnews.com/us/nfl/news/pointed-tackle-can-wait-ad-hits-amid-sobering-new-cte-study-stats/1gickot4k9j7e1wpa7wk17qq3d.

institution to conduct and fund such vitals studies, increasing its credibility in the academic world. This type of earned media relates to the spectators not only the available possibilities of attending the institution, but also correlates the name of “Boston University” with positive progress in research within our society.

AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

From researching the statistics and qualitative data on the admitted students to BU for the previous graduating classes, it is clear that most of the admitted students might not have had the opportunity to visit the BU campus and take part in information sessions due to the difference in geographic location.

According to an article published in Huffpost¹⁰, college visits are a significant determinant in the decision making process for prospective students. Students can go from interested to invested in an institution during their visits, by having face to face interactions with faculty or staff within the college community. College visits are a handy tool for bolstering a student’s college applications through the application essays as the students themselves can express their motives for applying to certain schools meanwhile backing up the essays with evidence of taking time and effort to visit the college. In the Common Application, certain colleges have questions that relate to how the student has heard of the college itself. Getting one more ticked box off the list of the ways the student has heard of the college is considered another step up the ladder. Therefore, college campus visits are considered as an essential.

¹⁰ Puri, Ishan. “College Visits: Do They Really Matter For College Admissions?” HuffPost. HuffPost, August 4, 2017. https://www.huffpost.com/entry/college-visits-do-they-re_b_11339892.

The BU community is a diverse community that comprises of students from various demographic backgrounds, with approximately 24% international students who come from overseas (the most popular countries being Taiwan, India, China, South Korea, and Canada)¹¹. About 22.3% of students come from Massachusetts, with roughly four fifths of the population needing to commute for a tour¹². It would be safe to assume that some of the students would prefer the convenience of having an effective college tour that does not require them to fly miles to BU. Thus, through the launch of the AR campaign to provide a deep insight to BU's campus visit, high school and transfer students would highly benefit from the campaign's launch.

Demographics:

As of the moment, the "BU prospective student" we are aiming for has roughly a GPA of 3.66 with an SAT score of 1350 or an ACT score of 30 in accordance with the average. More than 12,000 underrepresented minority students (African Americans, Hispanics, and Latinos) make up 18 percent of the 2022 applicant pool. The current class of 2022 is one of the most racially diverse in recent memory: 17.6 percent as Asian American, 10.2 percent as Hispanic, and 6.3 percent as African American, among other groups. Approximately 16% of those students are first generation college students¹³.

¹¹ Laskowski, Amy. "The BU Class of 2023: The Numbers Tell the Story: BU Today." *Boston University*, 13 Sept. 2019, www.bu.edu/articles/2019/the-bu-class-of-2023-the-numbers-tell-the-story/.

¹² "Undergraduate Geographic Diversity at Boston University." *College Factual*, 13 Sept. 2019, www.collegefactual.com/colleges/boston-university/student-life/diversity/chart-geographic-diversity.html.

¹³ Laskowski, Amy. "Six Quick Stats about Who Applied to the Class of 2022." *Boston University*, BU Today, 12 Feb. 2018, www.bu.edu/articles/2018/six-quick-stats-about-who-applied-to-the-class-of-2022. "Why BU?" Why Apply to Boston University | Admissions, www.bu.edu/admissions/why-bu/.

Psychographics:

BU prospective students are at the top 7% of their classes. They're enrolled in AP, IB, and honors classes, and are involved in extracurriculars that they're genuinely interested in. In order to support its 450 student groups and 24 athletic teams, BU students are go-getters. Invested in their communities, passionate, and well-rounded, BU students have a resume of activities which reflects people who will be successful in corporate jobs¹⁴.

Media Consumption Habits:

Kelly Walter (SED'81), Associate Vice President for Enrollment and Dean of Admissions says new social media initiatives, like Snapchat takeovers and encouraging early decision applicants to use the hashtag #BUEarlyBirds have been especially effective because they give students a platform to talk to admissions staff and current BU students. "Our goal is to meet students where they are, and I mean 'meet' parenthetically—we don't have to see students in person anymore," Walter says. "It used to be that meeting students on campus and in person was the only way to connect with them. While this type of outreach remains important and is the bedrock of what we do, the reality is that social platforms are where we are connecting with students today. We ramp them up each and every year. It's very effective."¹⁵ Through qualitative research, it seems that the largest influences on BU applicants are rankings on Forbes and US News in addition to exposure to BU YouTubers such as Geneve Lau and Gretchen Geraghty. News on the university seems to be trafficked mostly from BU sourced websites by students and

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

twitter or instagram by their interested parents. The first audience remains with prospective college students, but the second audience will be the parents of those students.

TRENDS REPORT

Competitors

Northeastern University:

In terms of diversity, Northeastern Admission Representatives have similar outreach to the BU Admissions Staff with the exception of the U.S Territories like Guam and the American Samoa. Northeastern University and BU have near identical numbers of first-time degree seeking enrollment racial minority with Black non-hispanic freshmen being 721 total students in the whole university¹⁶. Furthermore, NU lacks established international campuses like BU and NYU which could potentially hurt their reach to international communities and standing as a global institution like its peer schools.

Northeastern Admissions markets its college experience as unique such that “here you choose your educational path. No two are the same.”¹⁷ Leveraging its location in Boston, both on-campus programs and off-campus opportunities including attending an event, campus visits, and virtual tour options are offered by the Northeastern Admissions office. Northeastern Admissions offers virtual tours which are marketed as a “360° views of Northeastern and a wealth of information about our campus and programs, from the comfort of your home.”¹⁸

¹⁶ “Facts: Our Community by the Numbers” *Northeastern University*, Accessed October 29th, 2019 <https://provost.northeastern.edu/uds/facts/common-data-set/>



¹⁷“Northeastern University Undergraduate Admissions” *Northeastern University*, Accessed October 29th, 2019 <https://www.northeastern.edu/admissions/>

¹⁸ Ibid

Northeastern effectively uses owned media and on their website by providing demographic and geographic information on their students. In addition on NU admissions homepage, it has a social hub which illustrates both their earned media and social media as well as sharing articles about general information to help out college students

Social Hub



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The global alumni network at
@Northeastern is 255,000 strong—learn how you too can become a member of our global community at the 2019 Education Exhibition in Mumbai, India! Register today to reserve your spot:
bit.ly/NUEducationExh... pic.twitter.com/eKpWdWdfcP

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Join @Northeastern for our
2019 International Education Exhibition in Mumbai, India on Sunday, October 20 from 1 - 5 P.M. IST. Register today at:
bit.ly/NUEducationExh... oic.twitter.com/30Jb5frhME


Undergraduate Student Demographics

- States Represented: **50**
- Countries Represented: **79**
- International Students: **18%**
- Asian American Students: **16%**
- Hispanic Students: **8%**
- African American Students: **5%**
- Native American Students: **1%**



Geographic Distribution of Freshmen

- New England: **30%**
- Mid-Atlantic: **28%**
- International: **11%**
- West: **10%**
- South: **12%**
- Midwest: **5%**
- Other (U.S. Territory/Other Country): **4%**



Furthermore, Northeastern has Husky Ambassador blogs written by current students that can provide prospective students with valuable information regarding the institution's culture. In addition, on the Admissions website there is a section titled *Diversity at Northeastern*. This page describes the university as a cultural hub and communicates to prospective students about statistics regarding student demographics and about the various cultural centers on campus

including the LGBTQA Center, the Asian American Center and the Center for Intercultural Engagement. Regarding shared media, the Admission's Instagram page contains a question and Answer story where prospective students questions and concerns are answered promptly and casually in order to accommodate potential students. NU's Admissions appears to emphasise two-way symmetrical communication.

Northeastern values diversity and attempts to make the theme of diversity shine through in all mass communication efforts as well as the perception of high accessibility and experiential learning.

New York University:

New York University Admissions uses New York City and the global reach of the institution to market their university to prospective students. Statistics¹⁹ show that NYU is the American university with the most international students enrolled and the most students studying abroad. With additional campuses in Abu Dhabi and Shanghai and programs across the world from Berlin to Buenos Aires there are many opportunities for students to go out and experience the world. The admissions site also talks extensively about the urban location of the NYU campus. Students get free entrance to many New York City museums and the student life is rich. Additionally there is 24/7 wellness center dedicated to mental health and a production lab dedicated to students creating art. NYU sustainability initiative

¹⁹ NYU. "Undergraduate Admissions." *NYU*, 2019, www.nyu.edu/admissions/undergraduate-admissions.html.

NYU offers a virtual tour on their website where prospective students can visit the campus, dorms, and class buildings on their New York City campus and their Shanghai campus. This is paired with a video of students giving a campus tour and speaking about their experiences studying at NYU. There also is a virtual tour offered on YouVisit (a platform for virtual campus tours). The NYU Q magazine that covers campus happenings and is meant to help prospective students get an idea of what the NYU experience is really like. Influential students have the opportunity to take over the MeetNYU Instagram page and show followers what life is really like at NYU, including the Abu Dhabi and Shanghai campuses. The page also provides freshman advice, cool things to do in New York, and information regarding academics and classes.

Industry Trends

According to The Chronicle of Higher education, students of color make up one-third of the American undergraduate population, with hispanic students enrolling into college than any race in America²⁰. Also, there is a rise in students attending universities out of their home country²¹. Globalization and increased ambition contribute to this trend, as more and more people around the world have the means and curiosity to leave their country for a better education. Although this is an all time high for international students around the world, new immigration policies are expected to deter students from applying to American schools, which could be a threat for BU Admissions.²²

²⁰ “Sarah Brown “Nearly Half of Undergraduates Are Students of Color. But Black Students Lag Behind” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 14th, 2019

[.https://www.chronicle.com/article/Nearly-Half-of-Undergraduates/245692](https://www.chronicle.com/article/Nearly-Half-of-Undergraduates/245692)

²¹ “2019 Higher Education Trends.” *Office of Planning & Budgeting*, 23 July 2019, www.washington.edu/opb/2019/07/23/2019-higher-education-trends/.

²² Chip Cutter, “Elite M.B.A. Programs Report Steep Drop in Applications,” *The Wall Street Journal* (Dow Jones & Company, October 15, 2019), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/elite-m-b-a-programs-report-steep-drop-in-applications-11571130001>.

The use of AR applications is expected to grow rapidly in higher education. It is predicted that by 2021, 60 percent of U.S. higher education institutions will be using the technology to create simulations and immersive learning environments.²³ AR technology is becoming a more common recruitment tool, specifically targeting applicants from Generation Z.

Test-focused admissions is also changing. The University of Chicago pioneered a test optional strategy¹⁵ and many other schools are following this trend. Although grades continue to be the most important aspect for US applicants, schools are moving their focus away from standardized test results and towards essays and community involvement. This could be a huge opportunity for Boston University to follow suit and appeal to the large size of the applicant body who are smart but do not necessarily test well.

²³ Bengfort, Jacquelyn. "College Recruiting Goes Virtual with Immersive Technology." Technology Solutions That Drive Education, 1 May 2019, <https://edtechmagazine.com/higher/article/2018/05/4-ways-colleges-are-embracing-virtual-realit>

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Well funded services to promote admissions</p> <p>Several mediums of communication of admissions (technological convergence)</p> <p>Break barriers - visitor's experience</p> <p>Established legacy and heritage</p> <p>Alumni Network</p> <p>Global Networks Partnerships - Study Abroad</p> <p>Trend of more students going international + high ranking as an international school</p>	<p>Cost of attendance</p> <p>Cost of attending events, visiting campus</p> <p>Lack of accessibility of materials or resources regarding domestic diversity</p> <p>Socio-economic diversity</p> <p>Campus visits are limited in language and location: only get to visit one college</p> <p>No access to the Common App application, limiting the outreach of the institution</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Exploit its brand</p> <p>Virtual reality videos</p> <p>Expand language diversity to all tour groups</p> <p>Interpret the website to multiple languages</p> <p>100% need-based financial aid met</p> <p>Tapping into a new audience - expand the featured students on the website</p>	<p>The credibility of admissions process in prestige institutions</p> <p>Increasing tuition prices</p> <p>Increasing concern on student loan crisis</p> <p>Decreasing rankings - alumni givings, class size, ACT scores, academic reputation, and faculty salary</p> <p>Upcoming competitor product language</p> <p>Political tension and changes to immigration policies</p>

Strengths

Boston University Admissions use of social media and high school visits allows it to appeal to a wide audience of prospective students by breaking the barriers of intimidation. Breaking down this barrier of intimidation, is one of Boston University Admissions greatest strengths. By breaking down the barrier that exists between students and Assistant Directors,

prospective students feel a real connection with the University. As Assistant Directors travel across the country and the world, they are able to form a human connection with the students whose application they will read at a later time. This is crucial to Boston University's success. When reading the statistics of over 62,000 applicants, and an 18.9% acceptance rate²⁴, prospective students feel more like a number, and utterly lost in the process. With an extensive number of staff in the Board of Admissions, students have the opportunity to meet a staff member that is well versed in their state, and often, the unique curriculum of the schools in the area. In addition, Boston University Admissions assure that International Students have similar opportunities by sending their own regional representative to high school visits around the world. This extensive network of Assistant Directors indicates a commitment of the institution to get a diverse class of incoming students by providing sufficient funding to creating that global network.

The organization also provides several forms of media for students to access information on the application process. If prospective students' schools are not attended by Assistant Directors, they can access information by scheduling a campus visit, scrolling through the website, signing up for their mailing list, and tuning in to a series of live events on their facebook or to their Instagram takeovers.

Boston University Admissions also has access to a large Alumni Network, extending to over 390,700²⁵. Once students begin attending Boston University (BU), BU students have access to Alumni Career Advisory Network. According to the BU Center for Career Development

²⁴ "Academic Profile." *Academic Profile Boston University Admissions*. Accessed October 18, 2019. <https://www.bu.edu/admissions/why-bu/academic-profile/>.

²⁵ "Our DNA." *Boston University*, 2018, www.bu.edu/about/dna/.

website, “The Career Advisory Network (CAN) is Boston University’s online directory of nearly 8,000 alumni volunteers who are eager to share career advice and networking connections with current students and their fellow alumni.²⁶” When an institution has access to a large-donating alumni base,²⁷ it increases prestige which in turn allows admissions to be backed by a longstanding legacy of greatness. In the long run, this legacy attracts students and gives Boston University admissions the strength of credibility and prestige. Additionally, Alumni can act as earned media, as they can be cited in their professional development features or offer encouragement to future prospective students interested in the university. Access to a large alumni network also aids in reinforcing a legacy on campus, one that has been established at Boston University (and promoted by Admissions) through their many distinguished alumni.

Boston University reinforces their commitment to diversity and inclusion through proving spaces for alums like Martin Luther King, the renowned civil rights activists that received a Ph.D. from the institution in.., and for women, as they were the first institution to open all divisions to women. Boston University also placed the first black dean, Howard Thurman, in a predominantly white institution and further their actions through the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground and the Admissions Student Diversity Board. This provides Boston University Admissions with an advantage among other Boston schools as it directly indicates their commitment to ensuring their students are engaging with world renowned peers, and have sufficient space to explore all areas of their identity, a fact that is popular within consideration of college selection.

²⁶ “Career Advisory Network.” Career Advisory Network | Alumni Association. Accessed October 17, 2019. <https://www.bu.edu/alumni/careers/career-development-resources/career-advisory-network/>.

²⁷ Berman, Jillian. “Alumni Donations Can Improve College Rankings - and Their Prestige.” MarketWatch, 13 Jan. 2019, www.marketwatch.com/story/the-link-between-alumni-donations-and-college-rankings-2019-01-09.

Weaknesses

As Boston University's strides increase yield numbers, the sheer price tag of \$75,000 per year can dissuade applicants.²⁸ Moreover, efforts to diversify the student body and increase the overall applicant pool are useless if affordability is not even within reach for various socio-economic groups.

Boston University requires to submit either the Common Application or the Coalition Application. These applications are both private organizations through which prospective college students fill out in order to digitally submit their application to colleges. The Common App and the Coalition App are parts of applications that are mandatory to BU's application process, but also completely out of BU's control. Therefore, the lack of jurisdiction also affects the level of support the Office of Admissions can provide students in the application process. Similarly, the FAFSA and the CSS Profile, both of which are necessary for applicants needing financial assistance, are also out of Boston University's control. Specifically in the case of prospective students whose parents are unable to help them complete applications, this portion of the application can be extremely daunting. The Office of Admissions can also only provide limited assistance in this portion of the application.

Realistically, Boston University's campus is not a possibility for many individuals. For out-of-state or international applicants, a single visit to BU's campus can cost anywhere from hundreds to thousands of dollars. An on-campus visit can have a large influence on prospective students' decisions to attend an institution. Even if a student has the resources to visit campus, all programming offered is in English. While proficiency in the English language is needed to attend

²⁸ Boston University Financial Assistance "Cost of Education for Undergraduates," Accessed October 11, 2019, <http://www.bu.edu/finaid/aid-basics/cost-of-education/undergraduate/>.

Boston University, students whose parents are not native speakers will struggle to grasp all the information. This can be especially troublesome when provided information on financial assistance. This is because this part of the application largely depends on the overall family income, which is information that might not be readily available to students. This aspect of the Visitor Experience not only hinders international prospective students and their families, but also prospective students who are first-generation college students or first-generation Americans from non-english speaking countries.

Opportunities

BU is an established, well known organization that has the potential to further exploit its recognizable brand name for attracting prospective students. BU admissions can use brand loyalty and their mutually beneficial relationships with alumni to create even more third party credibility. In addition, BU has a positive reputation in an international context and the university is ranked by Forbes as #7 in the US for international students. BU admissions can use this to their advantage when targeting international students.

Specifically, regarding campus tours, there is the opportunity to enhance their virtual tour by moving from solely videos to using view 360 or YOU | VISIT. The virtual experience can better be tailored to the individual by adding a greater element of free range by being able to jump to locations at one's own will rather than having to watch a fixed video. BU is a diverse school where one gets to choose their own BU experience so why should the virtual tour be any different?

By allowing for virtual tours, BU will foster an environment for socioeconomic and racial diversity. While BU boasts representations from all 50 states and 119 countries in the world²⁹, only about one fifth of the students are international. BU has a strong recruiting presence overseas, but not enough in underrepresented minorities. For example, in the 2018-2019 academic year, 135 non-hispanic black students first-time freshmen were admitted and in total there were 749 non-hispanic black students at BU³⁰. Considering the amount of outreach that BU claims it has, there is no reason that these statistics should be so low. Even worse perhaps, is the fact that less than 30 students in total represented for Native American students and Native Hawaiian/Islander students³¹. Increasing racial diversity will further show BU's commitment to diversity and mission to make all students from all backgrounds to feel safe and succeed at BU. This initiative also seeks to promote a lot of BU's brand surrounding it's history having the first black dean, Howard Thurman, and Martin Luther King Jr.'s work on campus. Should BU undertake augmented reality as a means to reach all students, then it will reinforce the narratives that they promote on their general campus tours.

Additionally, knowing via the New York Times that the average income of a student's family makes \$140,000 a year indicates that there isn't much diversity of thought concerning class structures within the BU community. While 61% of students coming from the top 20% income quartile of the U.S.³² means that the school can focus their efforts towards new buildings,

²⁹ Boston University Admissions "Meet the Class of 2023" Accessed October 12th, 2019, <http://www.bu.edu/admissions/admitted/bu2023/>

³⁰Boston University Institutional Research "Boston University Common Data Set 2018-2019" Accessed October 12th, 2019, <https://www.bu.edu/oir/files/2019/04/cds-2019.pdf>

³¹ Ibid

³² The New York Times "Economic Diversity and Student Outcomes at Boston University" Accessed October 12th, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/college-mobility/boston-university>

having less than less than 1,000 Pell Grant recipients each in class³³ in reflection of the “Affordable BU” campaign seems mostly unfit for the 2022 class. With the addition of an AR tour, students that would not previously be able to access BU’s campus and facilities could make an educated decision on BU being the best choice for them, yielding an increase in applicants.

Threats

Boston University Admissions is faced with various external threats that mostly root from its diverse pool of applicants³⁴. The diverse pool of applicants indicates that students applying are from various economical and financial backgrounds. Thus, a portion of the applicants are students with concerns towards tuition fees, political tension, or immigration policies. Applicants may choose colleges with cheaper tuition fees compared to BU. In fact, BU had increased their tuition rates³⁵ by 3.6% over the past semester. In addition, a forecasted threat is its expected decrease in college ranking if fewer and fewer students choose not to attend BU. Having fewer students attend BU will likely result in a decrease in academic reputation, which creates a knock-on effect towards contributing to lower average SAT/ACT scores for an average BU class of graduates. Psychologically, prospective students with interests in applying to BU can be discouraged to apply if they were to find BU with low average SAT/ACT scores or low academic reputation.

³³ Boston University Institutional Research “Boston University Common Data Set 2018-2019” Accessed October 12th, 2019, <https://www.bu.edu/oir/files/2019/04/cds-2019.pdf>

³⁴ “Diversity at Boston University ” Office of the Provost: Boston University.” Office of the Provost RSS. Accessed October 18, 2019. <http://www.bu.edu/provost/diversity/>.

³⁵ LaSalvia, Alex, and Alex LaSalvia. “BU to Increase Tuition by 3.6 Percent.” The Daily Free Press, March 19, 2019. <https://dailyfreepress.com/blog/2019/03/19/bu-to-increase-tuition-by-3-6-percent/>.

BU campus tours and information sessions are only offered at certain times during the year³⁶ and they are only offered in one language: English. This exposes BU Admissions to the threat of its competitors if other colleges were to offer their campus tours and information sessions all year long and in more than one language.

RESEARCH PLAN

In order for Boston University to accurately and effectively reach its target audience of prospective students, it is essential to research what is important to students in their college search. We will implement one quantitative and one qualitative research study with the goal of garnering ample data to shed light on the trends of students in order to serve them better.

Quantitative

Based on our audience analysis, the best way to receive accurate and timely feedback on Boston University Admissions would be through a survey. The survey would reach an audience of prospective students who are beginning their college search with no specific inclination towards Boston University Admissions. This would correlate with the Recruitment cycle of the institution which begins in late August to mid-October mentioned during research on the Media Audit. A pop-up will appear on popular college forums, such as College Confidential and Niche. This will allow us to reach a wide-audience of prospective students during the early stages of their college process, hoping to garner a candid response of what they are looking for within a four-year institution. The pop-up will appear on College Confidential websites, the worlds'

³⁶ Boston University Admissions "Visit Campus." Visiting Boston University's Campus | Admissions. Accessed October 18, 2019. <http://www.bu.edu/admissions/visit-us/campus/>.

largest college forum, during their peak visit period beginning in July of each cycle. The pop-up will appear consistently for a period of four weeks, with the hope of receiving a minimum of 5,000 survey responses.

The survey will consist of a variety of questions designed to gauge a number of different aspects important to their decision to apply to Boston University.

1. Rank the following variable from least to most important to choosing to apply for a college:

College traditions

College sports

School spirit

Academics

Alumni network/prestige

Access to world class laboratories and facilities

2. Having access to a city is very important to me:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

3. It is important for me to attend a college with socio-economic diversity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

4. It is important for me to attend a college with cultural diversity.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Qualitative

Upon receiving and reviewing the results of the quantitative survey, Boston University Admissions will gain insight into what prospective students look for in a university. However, in order to receive further and more specific feedback, BU Admissions will conduct qualitative interviews in small focus groups. These will begin as structured interviews featuring pre-set questions which hopefully will stimulate free-flowing conversations to explore areas of improvement as they come up. The students interviewed will be from a wide variety of backgrounds, races, and socioeconomic statuses. The results from this interview will be used to guide the things Boston University Admissions highlights to prospective students.

In addition to our own research, we would also work with Boston University Admissions Center to utilize their post-campus visit survey results. These surveys are sent to all prospective students and families who attended formal campus programming. The surveys inquire about their overall campus visit experience and then goes into specifics on the Information Session and Campus Tour.³⁷ The Admissions Center has been using this information in order to adjust their campus experience, and this data will be equally as useful to our group in order to shed light on what visitors like and dislike.

³⁷ Kimberly Murray, communication with Senior Assistant Director of BU Admissions Visitor Center, October 9, 2019.

ACTION PLAN

Goal and Objectives

Boston University's overarching goal seeks **to increase the number of applications from underrepresented minority communities and low socioeconomic communities both by 25% within the next three years, BU Admissions aims to raise global awareness of the university.** Approaching admissions with a mentality of inclusivity and awareness of all students from different ethnic, religious, and financial backgrounds yielding an outcome of a more diverse applicant pool will be paramount to achieving this. In an academic setting, the outcome of an inclusive population means a heightened diversity of opinion and thought hence through an exchange of ideas, educational value would be enhanced.

- A. **Change opinions** concerning BU's financial inaccessibility through publishing paid advertisements concerning AffordableBU to increase interactions in three years by 10% through measurable clicks on sponsored posts.
- B. Add accessibility by 10% in the three years to BU's campus through the Hoverlay App's channels which are made measurable by data mining.

Strategies

The vision is simple: Boston University's student body needs to reflect the world's populations in a more effective way. If BU is to claim to celebrate diverse thought, then they must have a diverse student base.

In a modern context, diversity and inclusion is a paradigm of good business practices considering that with multiple perspectives we can only gain more knowledge. Boston University specifically fosters an environment where the goal of diversifying its student

population aligns with its values due to its “Common Ground” philosophy: the idea that through conversation and communication all people can understand each other’s way of life. The setting of education allows for an exchange of ideas which begs for new perspective students only reached through the multiplicity of backgrounds, and can be accumulated by a modern university’s unique opportunity to receive applicants from anywhere.

In the mission statement, the university states that they “remain dedicated to our founding principles: that higher education should be accessible to all... local and international.”³⁸ As such, affordability and accessibility are paramount to what the university stands for.

The short term priorities are working on awareness of the university that mostly exists within the technological world as this is an easier way to target our key audiences: international students that can afford full tuition and American students from all backgrounds. We will be pushing the boundaries on what a campus tour looks like, how student connection can be cultivated via social media, and creating an environment that supports students better so that applicants can identify BU’s culture and inherent values instantly.

We suggest the strategic use of mass media to influence public opinion on the attractiveness of the university. In regards to crafting persuasive messages, BU admissions can use the yes-yes approach; starting with questions such as “Do you like cities?” and ending with questions like “Visit BU?” and “Apply to BU?” (clear suggestions for action). Through this approach, the university would be informing prospective students about BU while also finding students who genuinely are interested in the BU experience. The delivery of persuasive messages

³⁸ “Mission Statement.” *Boston University*, Trustees of Boston University, 2019, www.bu.edu/about/mission-statement/.

via social media should be concise, direct and promote audience participation. BU admissions could utilize the persuasion principle of liking by actively taking an interest in a prospective student first as well as social proof by exposing prospective students to footage of fun student events and experiences on campus. In addition, the messages should come from a variety of sources not only BU admission's owned media. Messages from real students will not only help exemplify that every BU experience is unique but will also increase source credibility.

Furthermore, Prospective students are more likely to trust current students because they take the role of informal public opinion leaders therefore the 2 step approach should be followed to increase third party credibility.

BU can also use the storytelling method of “overcoming the monster” of diversity through the stories of Howard Thurman and Martin Luther King Jr. in order to promote a brand of inclusivity. By honing in on their stories and celebrating more recent graduates such as Uzo Aduba, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Ayanna Presley BU would be able to advance the importance of this message. Stories of overcoming diversity and adversity will suggest that by going to BU, one can accomplish anything, and will inevitably increase the variety of applicants.

Tactics

Paid Media

Boston University Admissions aims to budget \$6.7 million to help implement the Augmented Reality (AR) experience on the BU Admissions website, and in addition to hiring new Admission Representatives to cover ground in underrepresented countries such as regions in Africa, Oceania and the Pacific Islands, and in the Middle East. BU Admissions will also work in tandem with the Diversity and Inclusivity Provost to expand out in these regions including

underrepresented minority communities in the U.S.A. Diversity and Provost Communications Director position will be created to aid in direct outreach in underrepresented regions in the U.S and outside the country. These expansions will happen immediately after the budget is approved and is the beginning of the implementation process.

Over the course of three years, BU Admissions also will continue to advertise online by using methods like utilizing banners, optimizing keywords and improving the SEO to the BU Admissions website. However, additional attention will be spent on SEO in certain regions aforementioned. The goal is to increase web traffic in these targeted regions.

Likewise, BU will pay more in social boosting in social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to specifically target prospective new students and to advertise the AR experience. Prospective students are more likely to use these platforms, so these mediums are ideal to spend the most money on. Snippets of video AR experience will be posted on Facebook and Instagram as well as boosting its presence by buying promoted tweets. The promoted tweets will advertise the AR experience and include links to the BU Admissions website. These tweets will come from the BU Admissions Twitter (@ApplyToBU) instead of the @BU_Tweets to differentiate the two accounts to make it clear it's paid media. The mass increase in paid media hopes to fully optimize SEO results making BU Admissions the clear winner of the AR experience and in keywords such as "Boston" and "AR" by the end of the three-year implementation process.

BU Admissions will also pay for space on websites like CNN.com and BuzzFeed.com in the format of sponsored advertising. Influential alumni from the university will show prospective students and interested parents where a BU education can take them and detailing each alumni's

BU journey and current careers via photo essays, personal profiles, and video formats. For example, Steve Kornacki, a Massachusetts native, (COM '01) is a current journalist and political TV host on MSNBC who recently published a book about the current American political landscape titled “The Red and The Blue”.³⁹ His story would be an example of you vs. we archetype. Of course, not every BU Alumni follows the same path. For example, Emmy-Award winning actress Uzo Aduba (CFA '05) attended BU for classical voice and came from a Nigerian family⁴⁰. Now, Aduba is a star in many TV shows such as *Orange Is the New Black* and *Steven Universe* as a voice actor. This showcases the diversity that makes BU the institution it is and what can achieve prospective students no matter where they came from at the university.

The same content will be available through paying for ad space on various websites. The user will click on a thumbnail, taking them to the BU Admissions website thus increasing traffic.

Earned Media

Boston University Admissions would benefit from complete transparency when managing media. In recent years, institutions who have withheld information from the general public and mass media have suffered from criticism and inevitable consequences. Boston University Admissions would also benefit from fostering a healthy relationship with the local media. This coverage of a range of stories detailing both developments on campus as well as the stories covering student life and extracurriculars would allow for the University to gain a presence as a household name, while also humanizing the admissions process. Similarly, stories that are not directly branded as “Boston University Admissions” but instead are about alums,

³⁹ BU College of Communication “Steve Kornacki ('01) Discusses and Signs New Book The Red And The Blue at COM. Accessed November 10th, 2019. Communicaton<https://www.bu.edu/com/2018/11/19/steve-kornacki-01-discusses-and-signs-new-book-the-red-and-the-blue-at-com/>

⁴⁰ <https://www.bu.edu/articles/2017/uzo-aduba-convocation-speech>

events on campus, and research will allow BU to build up their brand in the minds of the public. In a similar fashion, Boston University Admissions would be able to heavily benefit from revamping their social media presence in regards to utilizing hashtags and promoting shareable content. #BUAdmissions will be at the end of every tweet from the official @ApplyToBU Twitter account to encourage other users to like, retweet, and to share their #BUAdmissions timeline and application process.

Stories that Boston University would benefit from bringing to the media range in everything from ground-breaking changes to financial aid policy to new buildings on campus.

Affordable BU

Beginning with the incoming class of 2024 freshman, BU will now meet 100% of financial need for all students who qualify. This comes at a time where higher education can be equated to a luxury that many can not afford without assistance. In widening the amount of people able to afford Boston University, the administration is able to promote diversity on campus, both ethnic and socioeconomic. This will be pitched to both print and online media along with a press conference to address questions and concerns.

New Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground

In the spirit of promoting diversity on campus, the Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground will be relocating up the road. The new space will be five-times the size of the previous location, occupying 808 Commonwealth Avenue. The new location for the Howard Thurman Center will be entirely dedicated to housing the center and being a common area for the community where events can be hosted. The Howard Thurman Center is known for being a safe space for people of color to lounge and a space to talk about sensitive issues about race, gender,

and politics. This would be promoted through online and local print media, as the center will be a space open to the community.

Center for Computing and Data Sciences

Boston University has announced plans to build a Center for Computing and Data Sciences. Although the field of Computing and Data Sciences has been present at Boston University, this center will allow for a completely dedicated and new curriculum and faculty to form. This center is an investment in the inevitable future of the field, one that is increasingly connecting the human race globally every day. This story would be promoted through both online and print media through local media outlets.

Improvements on Campus

Boston University has not only announced new buildings on campus, but is also making huge, multi-million dollar improvements to its historical locations on campus. This story will cover upcoming process of renovating brownstones in Central, East, and South Campus, detailing the process of restoring historic buildings in Boston. This story will be promoted through online media, allowing readers to hyperlink to other articles.

Textbook Initiative

Current Student Government Senators at Boston University have created an initiative to implement change in order to make BU a more affordable place for current students. One initiative pushed forth is the Textbook Initiative, asking upperclassmen to donate their textbooks for intro courses at Boston University. Student government is hoping to expand to university a wide initiative of textbook sharing with the support of Mugar Memorial Library. This story will be promoted in local news, both online and print.

Combating Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a huge issue that plagues many college campuses across the United States. In an effort to curb this issue, BU's Center for Gender and Sexuality will be doing a food bank. In addition to this, a year-long meal share program will be implemented with the help and participation of current BU students. Students have the ability to donate their extra meal swipes into dining halls and have those swipes pooled and then provided to students in need of meals. This story can be strongly promoted in print and online local news outlets, but also has the ability to be a nationwide story.

Media Kit

- Fast facts about Boston University, including but not limited to the university's mission statement and a brief history overviewing the institution.
- Contact information for the admissions center and address.
- Statistics about the three main components of prospective student interactions.
 - On-Campus Visits By Prospective Students and Families
 - Off-Campus Receptions
 - Virtual Interest (ie. Social Media Engagement and Breadth)
- Statistics detailing applications and acceptances to the university.
 - Number of Applications
 - From which states/regions/countries
 - Demographics
 - Accepted Students
- Endowment and Financial Aid Statistics

- Photos of Boston University
- Archive of Boston University related news articles (both print and online).
- Links to Boston University social media accounts.

Soft News Story

10 Things College Students in Boston Love to Do

This soft news story would be pitched to regional publications, both online and in print, due to the Boston-specific nature of the article. It would detail the plethora of events open to college students, most of which are free. While not entirely “BU-Specific” this would allow for a more natural association of the article with Boston University.

Boston University Launches Augmented Reality Program at Local Boston School

In a stride to increase technological accessibility for low-income students in the Boston-area, BU sponsored the purchase of AR technology for a local Boston high school that specializes in STEM. This story would be promoted on local media outlets, both print and online. It would also be promoted on Boston University’s own news outlet, *BU Today*.

College Packing 101: What to Bring and What to Leave

This soft-news story would be a list of things to bring to college to move-in. It would be pitched to online publications such as BuzzFeed and Her Campus, but also placed on BU Today in order to solidify the association with Boston University. It would detail the essentials to pack; incoming students plan for the future.

Worried About the Common App? We’ve Got Insider Tips

This story would be focused on preparing prospective students for the Common Application. Completing the Common App is a necessity for college admissions, but also very

daunting, especially for first-generation college students who usually lack support in the college application process. This article will provide insider tips by current students and admissions representatives. It would be pitched to online publications that are popular with young adults, such as BuzzFeed and *HerCampus*.

Do's and Don'ts of Freshman Year

This story will be pitched to online publications such as BuzzFeed.com and Bustle.com that focus around list-based, lighthearted stories. It will help to ease the worries of incoming freshmen and encourage them to attend events such as club fairs and sporting events, and discouraging them from isolating themselves or giving into homesickness. The story will be general in its language regarding the do's and don'ts, but would provide multimedia (pictures/videos) that are BU related. An example of this would be:

Text: "Do: Attend your school's sporting events!"

Multimedia: Video montage Boston University hockey game emphasis on the rowdy student section.

Target Media

The Skimm

Online publication targeted towards young educated women. It consists of short news and lifestyle stories intended for quick and easy reading. It can help us reach Boston University's audience as it is increasingly growing in popularity.

Bustle

Online publication targeted towards young women. The publication is focused on promoting inclusivity. Reaching out to *Bustle* will allow for us to reach our target audience, but also the possibility of reaching the mothers/female guardians of prospective students.

New York Times

The *NYT* is widely circulated in all types of communities. It would allow for us to reach beyond our initial target audience of prospective students and their families and allow for Boston University to grow in prestige and recognition as a high-ranked institution.

HerCampus

HerCampus is an online publication by and for college-aged women. The publication is split into “campuses” where readers can get stories that are specific to their college or university. This publication is valuable because of the personalization of the content; prospective students get an “insider scoop” on what is like to be a BU student.

Buzzfeed

This is an online publication that focuses on both entertainment and news content. *Buzzfeed* is essentially a household name among youth and encompasses Boston University Admissions’ target audience. *Buzzfeed* frequently does list-based articles, how-to’s, or fun fact based articles. This platform would allow for a more light-hearted approach to reaching the target audience and attracting positive attention.

U.S. News and World Report

The news network is known for its college rankings and advice. This platform is popular with prospective students’ parents and guardians, but also for prospective students who are trying to narrow down their college search.

Forbes

The business magazine is also known for its college rankings. This platform, like *U.S. News and World Report* would effectively reach both prospective students and their families looking for help with the college search.

CNN

Being both a television news and an online news outlet, *CNN's* online presence would be most effective in reaching the target audience's guardians. The heritage of *CNN* lends a level of expertise and trust within the public. Thus, by featuring Boston University related content, the association is strengthened.

The New Yorker

This weekly magazine has a dedicated and loyal audience, many of which are older generations. By reaching this audience, Boston University Admissions has a good chance of reaching the guardians of prospective or interested students. A potentially pitch would be a featured profile on a successful BU Alum or trend-setting current BU student.

Shared media:

Over the next three years, the Boston University Admissions augmented reality (AR) experience will be heavily featured and promoted on social media. To begin, we will build attention for the project by doing a countdown on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat. Countdown to the release date of "a brand new BU Admissions experience" will catch the attention of our audience and build excitement for the launch. Staff members will reply to social media speculation with casual content and even providing small hints to prospective students. Throughout the roll-out process, staff members will abide by a strict rule to not engage with any

tweets ridiculing other colleges, even if the tweet is also praising BU Admissions. This will prevent any negative publicity that could potentially hurt BU Admissions' reputation.

On YouTube, there will be short video clips showing augmented reality at work. Through YouTube's 360 videos feature, prospective students will get an insight of campus culture and what life at Boston University is like. Some of the videos featured on YouTube will include:

Lobster Night at Boston University

- Featuring Lobster Night will showcase one of the most iconic traditions at Boston University. It will display the unity of the student body when it comes to long-honored traditions, and the uniqueness of every dining hall serving fresh lobster for one night.

Inside a Warren Towers Dorm at Boston University

- Going inside a dorm will allow prospective students, and admitted students, to see what a Boston University dorm looks like. By seeing the dorms, it may sway their decision to attend the University or assist them in choosing their housing for the academic year.

The Boston University Dog Pound Experience

- One of the biggest concerns when it comes to urban campuses is the lack of school spirit. By showing the experience of attending a BU Hockey game as part of the "Dog Pound", it will show that although it is an urban campus, BU is still full of school spirit. A main showcase of the video will be the fun students have in the Dog Pound. It will help ease the fear of international students, and those from underrepresented minority communities, that BU is a difficult place to make friends and that the student body is not united.

In addition, there will be a video series in multiple languages. It will follow the life of BU students from different majors. These students will come from a variety of geographic and

socioeconomic backgrounds to showcase how students juggle jobs and school, or how they adapted coming from outside of Massachusetts. A focus on diversity of all kinds will attract students who seek comfort in finding familiarity in people like them.

Platform: Instagram

Content: On BU Admissions’s Instagram account, their IGTV will post short videos of a sample augmented reality video. These videos will show how augmented reality can turn a blank room into the Boston University campus and other BU traditions. Videos will not be longer than two minutes and encourages students to experience augmented reality themselves. A photo series #MyBU will highlight students from every state, different countries, and different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Purpose and objective: It will encourage students that they can experience Boston University without having to come on campus for a tour. This will ensure international students that they can attend BU without having toured it first. By sharing the story of a diverse group of students, prospective students can find those with similar experiences who are thriving at BU.

Platform: Twitter

Content: On Twitter, all tweets will have translations in other languages. This will improve the reach of BU Admission tweets and be inclusive and mindful of the international student population. Every Thursday, BU Admissions will tweet a #TerrierTip, tips on navigating the college application process.

Purpose and objective: Having tweets in multiple languages will raise global awareness of the university, as it is shared by native speakers in their home counties. These Terrier Tips, also in multiple languages, will be especially useful to first-generation college students. First-gen

students are figuring out the college process for themselves and having BU admissions there to lend a helping hand will be an invaluable resource. First-gen students make up a significant amount of the underrepresented communities that make up our objective.



Platform: Snapchat

Content: On Snapchat, a sponsored BU filter will appear in targeted areas. These targeted areas, will be communities with a large number of underrepresented minorities as well as overseas. The filter will put BU apparel on the person using it and change their surroundings to the BU campus.

Purpose and objective: The filter will be available worldwide and will increase global awareness of the university as people share photos of them using the filter. Underrepresented

minority communities as well and those from low-income communities, can see themselves in BU apparel without having to physically purchase it.

Once the AR experience is launched, it will be featured on every social media platform with an overarching objective of increasing the diversity of the BU student population. In addition, videos featuring BU traditions will have actual BU students, not paid actors or staged appearances. By featuring actual Boston University students, the AR experience allows current students to watch the videos hoping to see themselves, friends, or relive a nice memory. The exposure gained from these current students sharing it can reach a wide pool of prospective students and families. All videos will have accurate closed captioning for those who are hearing impaired.

The audience is the same across all platforms. It's a combination of prospective students as well as their parents, and current students who are still followers of BU admissions and can influence prospective students. Prospective students will be able to easily view and share different parts of campus. For BU Admissions, recruitment season is year-around which makes the AR experience especially beneficial for the target audience of prospective students who can not visit campus because of monetary concerns or great distance. When the time comes for admitted students accept their acceptance letters, current students can use the AR experience to help choose a dorm or part of campus to live in and become acquainted with BU traditions before even stepping on campus.

The social media metrics, calculated using the social media managing software Sprout, will focus on calculating how much awareness of BU admissions we create through the impressions, views, and reach of social media posts. Because of federal protections such as the

FERPA Act, the college application process is inherently private one. Prospective students may choose not to advertise what school they are applying to out of fear of being denied and setting hopes too high. Therefore, these are a better option than measuring utilizing engagements because although a prospective student views a video and enjoys it, they may not want it on their timeline or social media feed. However, they may save the video and watch it many times garnering multiple impressions. Reach will allow us to see how far the awareness of Boston University Admissions AR channel is being spread.

Owned Media

Within the realm of Boston University Admissions' owned media, the website, information sessions, and tour guides are pre-existing sources of information that allow prospective students to engage with the institution. In particular, these media sources give students a better understanding of the dynamics of campus events, student and staff, and other traditions, giving them leverage in deciding whether the campus would meet their expectations in the college admissions process. The pre-existing media's give students a thorough understanding of the before mentioned, and aids in the outwardly positive perspective of the institution.

Existing Owned Media Channels:

- *Website* - The current BU Admissions website, bu.edu/admissions, highlights four important aspects for the college decision process: why attend Boston University, cost of attendance, details for the application, and how to visit campus. The website provides a positive experience by utilizing clean formatting and red, the official color of the university. When first looking through the website, one does not struggle to find the necessary information. In addition, the website provides personal stories about the current

student experience; however, these stories are mostly written narrative. It is recommended that Admissions expand to more personalized content in terms of videos and photographs in the discussion to bring students on-to campus and engage with them for an extended time when visiting the website.

- *Target Audience:* prospective students ages 16-19
- *Objective:* To create a more personalized content to ensure their engagement on the website longer and to materialize the concept of “see yourself in others already on campus.”
- *Message/Content:* Personal stories in relation to the BU experience
 - Under the content of “Terrier Traditions”: Beanpot Tournament: go beyond just a short copy, include videos that Boston University has done in the past covering the event, include filming from the stadium
- *Timing:* Boston University Admissions have other primary sources of communication with the prospective student population; therefore, this is not at the forefront of their initiatives. However, the website is the most accessible for all prospective students and should be completed before the next admissions cycle in August 2020.
- *Campus Visits – Information Sessions:* Boston University Admissions holds Information Sessions at the Sherry and Leventhal Admissions Center and throughout the world. According to their website, students are able to sign up either online for an on-campus information sessions or on one near their area. The information sessions are structured to contain an Assistant Director familiar with the application process and a current student

to detail their current experience to the audience. During the campus visits around the country and the world, students are generally not interacting with a current student. Campus visits are usually more frequent in affluent areas or in more popular areas. For example, Boston University Admission will hold more information sessions in New York than in Alabama which is in accordance with their application numbers. Additionally, there is a disadvantage of the off-campus Information Sessions as students are not able to actually come on to campus and visit. It is recommended that Boston University implement initiatives that would bring students on campus virtually. A big emphasis of the information session is that it is followed by a tour, which is a big selling point of the institution due to its location. By creating a more extensive virtual program, students will be able to get a better feel of the campus. Although students do have access to some of locations around campus through the website, it is not accessible to everyone and not convenient on the mobile setting. It is recommended that the company include an extension of the virtual campus on an application which will be discussed later. To do so, Boston University Admissions will have to hire students and professionals to video on campus locations and also hire an app developer.

- *Target Audience:* prospective students ages 16-19 and parents of the prospective students
- *Objectives:* Increasing the selling point of the campus, its location in the center of Boston

- *Message/content*: An extension of their current virtual presence by allowing students to tour campus through the app, including videos of inside dorms, labs, and classrooms.
- *Timing*: to be implemented in the next two years due to the extensive work needed to gather material and test a mobile app
- *Tours/Tour Guide* - After the information session, prospective families have the option to go on a tour of the campus, usually spanning from the Sherry and Leventhal Center to the Center for Student Services to the George Sherman Union. The tour is led by current Boston University volunteers who share their personal experiences on campus for about an hour to the visitors. This provides personalized face to face interactions with students. The tours are currently only provided in English which may be a disadvantage as 25% of matriculated students are international. It is recommended that Boston University Admission begin providing tours in different languages in order to allow complete understanding of the application process for not only the students, but also the parents who are the primary funders of their higher education.
 - *Target Audience*: prospective students ages 16-19 and parents of the prospective students
 - *Objectives*: Increasing the extent of understanding of on campus experience to students of an international background whose primary language may not be English.
 - *Message/content*: tours provided in different language, beginning with Mandarin, Spanish, and French

- *Timing:* to be implemented in the next admissions cycle, August 2020

New Owned Media Channels:

- *BU Admissions Mobile Application* - Boston University Admissions currently does not have an application that conveniently combines all of the necessary information for prospective students of all backgrounds. As mentioned earlier, websites at times can be inconvenient as webpages do not appropriately transfer to a mobile version on all phones. Additionally, the application will allow for implementation of an extended augmented reality for students to engage better with the on-campus experience and opportunity.
 - *Target Audience:* prospective students ages 16-19
 - *Objectives:* provide new resources to find all information found on website, and additional virtual videos and photos to better inform future applicants
 - *Message/content:* the application would include the sections on the website, such as how to apply, cost of attendance, and how to visit campus. Additionally, it will have more extensive virtual content.
 - *Timing:* to be implemented in the next two years



○

- *Launch Event at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, a local Boston School that focuses on STEM* - In the college application process, and in the owned media initiatives, there seem to be gaps in students who are not able to have access to resources to be able to attend on campus visits, or tune in to Information Sessions. By collaborating with the Augmented Reality application, students who are not able to come on to campus will have an additional resource to learn more about the campus experience. The event would consist of Assistant Directors coming onto the high school, giving a brief information session, and then allowing students to utilize Boston University iPads to look at the extended virtual campus tour, and launch the collaboration with the Hoverlay app for the augmented view of the entire campus.

- *Target Audience:* students at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science
- *Objectives:* gain coverage of new resource available to prospective students around the world who are interested in Boston University
- *Message/content:* a brief information session and breakdown of the collaboration with Hoverlay Application
- *Timing:* to be implemented in the next two years

Crisis Management:

Our team suggests that we continuously monitor social media platforms, specifically Twitter. Twitter is a popular social media platform among students, and it is a great platform to quickly voice annoyances or praise. In monitoring Twitter, we will receive a constant influx of students' thoughts, opinions, and feelings towards a plethora of issues surrounding Boston University. Boston University's news presence should also be monitored alongside the comments and tags on the BU Instagram and Facebook account. It must be noted what percentage of comments on these platforms are positive and negative. Not every issue is a crisis, once negative comments, for example, reach over sixty percent of overall comments the issue should be considered a crisis and proper steps must be taken to handle it. While this threshold may vary over time and under different circumstances, it is important to have a threshold that defines crisis from an issue. While we monitor Boston University's internet presence so that issues can be caught before they develop into crises; it is imperative that we follow trends so that we may be able to predict an issue before it becomes one.

Trends of college applicant demographics and the diversity of competing universities must be followed so that Boston University Admissions can make predictions and potentially change approaches. As political unrest in the United States increases, specifically in regards to immigration, foreign students are shying away from applying to US schools. These trends are identified and must continually be monitored. “Trump Slump”⁴¹ for example, has caused a significant decline in the number of international visitors to the US. A potential crisis may arise from large political or economical forces will affect people’s perception towards US schools and colleges. With this in mind, priorities will be devoted to the student body as well as the university’s reputation during a crisis. We must thoroughly evaluate the consequences our stakeholders— the BU community, board of trustees, students, professors, administration, other Bostonians— might suffer. These consequences will be taken into careful consideration and analyzed in a method where we would pinpoint the root cause of the crisis. From pinpointing the root cause, the execution of tasks will be allocated in accordance with its respective field of relevance. A strategic plan of five different scenarios has been put together in order to help alleviate potential risks that may be caused by any potential crisis.

Climate change is a pressing issue. As the weather becomes more and more unpredictable, we must consider new issues, previously unheard of. In the case that the Charles River floods, much of Boston University could flood and develop into a crisis. Firstly, emergency alerts be issued through the alert system to ensure student and staff safety. This crisis would not only affect Boston University students and staff, but also other people that live in the

⁴¹ Lane, Lea. “The 'Trump Slump' Continues: Number Of International Visitors To U.S. Drops In First Half Of 2019.” Forbes. Forbes Magazine, September 9, 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lealane/2019/09/09/the-trump-slumplecontinues-number-of-international-visitors-to-us-drops-in-first-half-of--2019/#501bd6836ea6>.

areas affected by flooding. An evacuation plan must be in place and students in flooded dorm buildings must be notified of a dry space to relocate. As classes are halted, students and staff are moved, and buildings are drained, stakeholders should be constantly alerted to new developments on local news channels, the BU website, and social media streams. The administration and board of trustees should be kept in the loop as well. It is essential that Boston University prioritizes the safety of students and staff and that recovery of flooded buildings is thorough so that future problems with mold and mildew do not arise. In ensuring that building recovery is done properly, and health and safety is prioritized, positive news articles could be written about Boston University's recovery and admissions could actually increase from this earned media.

Thousands of students are on a meal plan at Boston University and frequent the major dining halls. Should there be any food contamination that results in a student getting sick, such as from E. Coli in the vegetables served, all dining halls must immediately close and an investigation must begin. Students should immediately be offered an alternative to the dining hall. This could be a partnership where BU pays local restaurants to accept meal swipes or provides compensation to students for meal costs while the dining halls are closed. Boston University must be upfront with this issue and be active on social media and news updates, providing developments and assurance that the problem will be solved. This is a major threat to students' health and safety and dining halls should not reopen until the contamination is cleared. Even once this problem is solved, the food safety rules and dining hall protocol should be reevaluated so that contamination does not happen again. Boston University students are a large stakeholder affected by this case, as well as their parents and BU board of trustees.

Leaked information to the public through hacking is a potential crisis for Boston University. The institution has access to a lot of students' confidential information, and this data breach would majorly violate students' privacy. The release of information not meant to be publicly known could damage the prestigious reputation BU holds around the world. Should this happen, first a team must be hired to secure the data and contain the breach. Students, parents, staff, administration, and the board of trustees are all stakeholders in this case and it is imperative that the data breach be as minimal as possible. Boston University must promptly email all affected by the breach apologizing and giving the status of the investigation. Everyone affected must be regularly updated by email. Once the problem is solved, BU should offer a statement to the general public through shared media channels outlining what actually happened and how the digital information was secured so that it cannot be leaked again.

The Me Too movement has taken the world by storm. Women are empowered and more and more men are brought to justice for their actions. A potential crisis for Boston University would be if a BU professor was accused of sexual misconduct. If this happens, an email would first be sent to all students and faculty apologizing to the victim, defining the issue, claiming that the university is investigating the professor, and inviting anyone with information about the case to speak to an investigator. On BU social media accounts it would be made clear that Boston University does not stand for the wrongful behavior and will do everything possible to provide justice and compensation to victims. As the case goes to trial, BU will update social media and news outlets periodically and stakeholders such as students, students' parents, the board of trustees and other professors will know how the situation is handled. It is essential that BU is upfront and transparent with such volatile, emotionally sensitive issues. Moving forward, BU

could create more sexual misconduct seminars for staff, offer students extended resources through the Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Center (SARP), and publicize the actions taken to ensure this crisis is not repeated.

Boston University is constantly improving the campus: renovating buildings, repaving sidewalks, adding new buildings and structures. This construction often intrudes on students' daily walks to class and poses as a potential safety hazard. In the case that a construction accident happens and severely injures or kills a student, Boston University should first halt all construction and investigate the source of the accident. The BU board of trustees, administration, students and professors are all stakeholders in this case and should be notified by email and social media immediately. Boston University should offer compensation to the victim and their family, and a memorial should be held in the case that the accident is fatal. Moving forward, Boston University should rethink the construction companies hired and safety protocol. It would be made clear through shared media channels that this was a horrible accident and there was no foul play.

Budget:

1	BU ADMISSION'S 3 YEAR BUDGET	
2	Expenses	Budgeted Amount
3	<i>Shared:</i>	
4	Sprout Software	5,724
5	<i>Paid:</i>	
6	Social Boosting	500,000
7	SEO	500,000
8	Sponsored Alumni and Students	1,000,000
9	<i>Owned:</i>	
10	Launch BU Admission Mobile Application(with AR capabilities)	1,500,000
11	Press Conferences	750,000
12	Implementing AR experience	5,000,000
13	Hoverlay Partnership	1,000,000
14	<i>Crisis:</i>	
15	Crisis Management	5,000,000
16	<i>Research:</i>	
17	Conducting Survey	20,000
18	Conducting Focus Groups	30,000
19	<i>Monitoring and Measuring:</i>	
20	Conducting Questionnaires	15,000
21	Meltwater Software	10,000
22	Salesforce Software	10,000
23	Google Analytics	20,000
24	Google Adsense	15,000
25	Total:	15,375,724

Timeline

Spring (January- Early May) 2020

- The Howard Thurman Center for Common Ground relocates to 808 Commonwealth.
- Pay more in social boosting in social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

Summer (Mid May to August) 2020

- On Twitter, all tweets will have translations in other languages.
- Advertise online by using methods like utilizing banners, optimizing keywords and improving the SEO to the BU Admissions website.
- College Packing tips in BU Today as native advertising.

Fall (September to early December) 2020

- Beginning with the incoming class of 2024 freshman, BU will now meet 100% of financial need for all students who qualify with AffordableBU. AffordableBU financial aid package will roll out December 8th, 2019.

- Influential alumni from the university will show prospective students and interested parents where a BU education can take them and detailing each alumni's BU journey and current careers via photo essays, personal profiles, and video formats.

Winter (Mid December to Early January) 2020

- 10 things BU kids love to do in the beginning of December
- Common app insider tips from current BU students throughout December into January

Spring (January- Early May) 2021

- Press conference for Center for Computing and Data Sciences in January
- Guest visits from BU Alumni beginning of each month during the spring semester

Summer (Mid May to August) 2021

- U.S.A. Diversity and Provost Communications Director position will be created to aid in direct outreach in underrepresented regions in the U.S and outside the country
- Hiring process of new Admission Representatives to cover ground in underrepresented countries will begin in mid-May

Fall (September to early December) 2021

- On Snapchat, a sponsored BU AR filter will appear in targeted areas
- A photo series #MyBU will highlight students from every state, different countries, and different socioeconomic backgrounds during winter break

Winter (Mid December to Early January) 2021

- YouTube videos by BU Admissions: tours of Lobster Night, Warren Towers, Dog Pound
- BU Admissions's Instagram account, their IGTV will post short videos of a sample augmented reality video

Spring (January- Early May) 2022

- BU's Center for Gender and Sexuality will be doing a spring-semester long food bank. Donations will be collected at the end of the spring term.
- Guest visits from BU Alumni beginning of each month during the spring semester

Summer (Mid May to August) 2022

- Restoring historic buildings such as the HER House on 191 Bay State rd.

- BU Today's native advertising article: Do's and Don'ts of Freshman Year

Fall (September to early December) 2022

- More advertising online by using methods like utilizing banners, optimizing keywords and improving the SEO to the BU Admissions website. Also monitoring SEO.
- Pay more in social boosting in social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Also monitoring social media likes and impressions.

Winter (Mid December to Early January) 2022

- Guest visits from BU Alumni on the last day of classes

Spring (January- Early May) 2023

- BU's Center for Gender and Sexuality will be doing another spring-semester long food bank. Donations will be collected at the end of the spring term.

Summer (Mid May to August) 2023

- Countdown begins on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and Snapchat for the AR experience
- BU launches AR at school in late August

Fall (September to early December) 2023

- We implement the Augmented Reality (AR) experience on the BU Admissions website on the first week of September

Winter (Mid December to Early January) 2023

- BU Admissions will calculate effectiveness using social media managing software Sprout over winter break

MONITORING

Paid Media

Boston University Admissions will continue to track the effectiveness of its paid media by using monitoring platforms such as Google Analytics and Google AdSense to track the clicks each ad placement gets, and monitor the usage of the Hoverlay App by tracking new email sign-in. While monitoring our paid media, we will ask essential questions such as “which ad is getting the most clicks on what platform, and why?” This will help us evaluate where our money is being best spent and how we can better allocate our resources to improve our paid outreach.

Promoted/paid social media will also be monitoring in a similar manner to the overall social media monitoring plan. We will evaluate the effectiveness of Facebook post paid boosts to reach more Facebook users in our targeted demographic, and as well as record and track the impression of promoted tweets by the number of likes and retweets. Paid social media will determine how far BU Admissions is making an impression and how much further we can go.

A huge key performance indicator (KPI) for all of these monitoring platforms will be the location of each unique visitor. Apart of BU Admissions object is to increase applicants in underrepresented countries and regions such as the Middle East and Africa, so tracking referrals and number of clicks from each user and where they’re coming from will immensely help BU Admissions guide their progress to creating a more diverse applicant cohort.

Earned Media

In order to track earned media, we will actively track and monitor the content put out by media outlets that mention Boston University. We want to know if the media is covering stories about Boston University and whether our soft-news stories are garnering views and attention.

Through this, we can evaluate the public's stance on Boston University through shares and comments. After large stories drop to the public, we will monitor not only the comments on the article, but also social media content posted by the public that mentions Boston University. Over the course of the campaign we will have a bi-monthly measure of the number of media mentions the university receives. In addition to this, we will track visits to Boston University Admissions' media kit, allowing us to measure web traffic and press' interest in the university.

One of the most enlightening portions of the earned media monitoring plan will be feedback from prospective students and families on their experience in dealing with Boston University Admissions, either through mail-ins, website content, on-campus programming, mobile applications, or off-campus programming.

Similarly, we would like to track how prospective students hear about BU. We can track this through a question that already exists on the Common Application and the Coalition Application that ask, "How did you hear about Boston University?" This will reveal what channels are most successful in disseminating information to target audiences.

Shared Media

We will use social media mentions and social media engagement to measure the progress of our PR plan. This strategy will measure the online conversations about Boston University admissions, and the reach of these conversations. It will allow us to see a steady increase in social media mentions, and buzz after the AR campaign launch.

The main things we will monitor, using social media management software, are impressions, reach, and engagements. In addition, we will also have qualitative measurements

and gather information on the positive or negative discussion of the brand, how these conversations compare to our competitors, and the influence of those holding these conversations.

We will begin the campaign with a baseline measurement of BU Admission's social media numbers. Every Monday, we will reflect on the numbers of the week prior to evaluate the short-term effects of the campaign. We will use Meltwater, Salesforce, and Sprout on a weekly basis to monitor the campaign's progress. Having the baseline measurement in addition to a weekly analysis will allow us to see the growth of the campaign. If the growth is stagnant, or not happening as quickly as we would like, we will adjust our social media strategies to correlate with the feedback we receive.

Platform: Youtube

Measurement tactic: On Youtube, we will measure the number of likes, dislikes, views, and average watch time each BU experience video gets. From this, we hope to get an understanding of the type of content, and the length, that our audience reacts to best.

Platform: Snapchat

Measurement tactic: On Snapchat, we will monitor the usage of our BU filter, and how much it is shared. If we notice an uptick in filter usage from certain areas, moving forward we know to target those areas more.

Platform: Twitter

Measurement tactic: On Twitter, we will measure our likes, retweets, and our reach and impressions. By measuring reach and impressions, we gain a better knowledge of how far the message of BU admissions is reaching.

Platforms: Facebook, Instagram

Measurement tactic: On Facebook and Instagram, we will measure: shares, clicks, comments, likes, and mentions. The measurement of shares, clicks, comments, likes, and mentions will allow us to see what type of content the audience engages with the most and allow us to respond to direct mentions when it is necessary to engage.

In addition, on all platforms we will track keywords and hashtags pertaining to BU Admissions such as Boston colleges, best Boston colleges, BU Admissions and BU augmented reality, #BostonUniversityAdmissions, #BUAdmissions, #BUExperience. This allows us to understand how often people search for, and indirectly tweet about BU admissions.

If our impact on social media doesn't meet the goals we've set, then we will change aspects of our campaign to fix the issues pertaining to our social media platforms and ensure our success. It's important to monitor social media to stay up to date with real-time information about how our audiences are reacting. In addition, we will also monitor social media to keep on top of a potential crisis occurring.

Owned Media

The main objective throughout all of Boston University's Admissions media is to provide content and structure to promote the number of applications, specifically within minority groups. To increase applications, there needs to be a growth of engagement with the content and facilitate access to that improved content throughout a diverse group of prospective students both efficiently and cohesively.

In relation to the website, it was previously mentioned that BU Admissions is recommended to upload more personalized, visual content to prolongate the attention span of prospective students and families. To gauge the impact of implementing this change, it is imperative to monitor the bounce rate on the website. It is expected that with media that engages and peaks the attention of visitors, the bounce rate would decrease leading to further attraction for other areas of the website like financial aid information or application details. Additionally, it is of high importance to understand how prospective visitors are being led to the website bu.edu/admissions, whether by clicking on paid media advertisements, searches on google, or unique web address. This will indicate what other media sources in conjunction with increased personalization of owned media will increase the number of applicants.

In terms of more face to face interactions with the BU Admissions teams and volunteers found in the owned media sources of Information Sessions and Tours, the best way to monitor engagement would be by strictly tracking attendance. The Sherry and Leventhal Center currently holds Information Sessions year-round with some small breaks during the very end of the academic spring semester, and during the winter break. They measure high attendance during

major school breaks in the New England school systems. This provides a great opportunity to interact with visitors and learn more about their experiences.

With the implementation of the new BU Admissions Mobile Application, the agency will have ample firsthand experiences to gather digital information in regard to what feature application users prefer based on clicks and engagement. The snapshot shown in the Action Plan indicates that there would be videos imbedded in the application, giving the opportunity to track how many clicks and views those owned media channels and notice patterns, or trends that indicate what periods prospective applicants of BU Admissions are actively seeking out content.

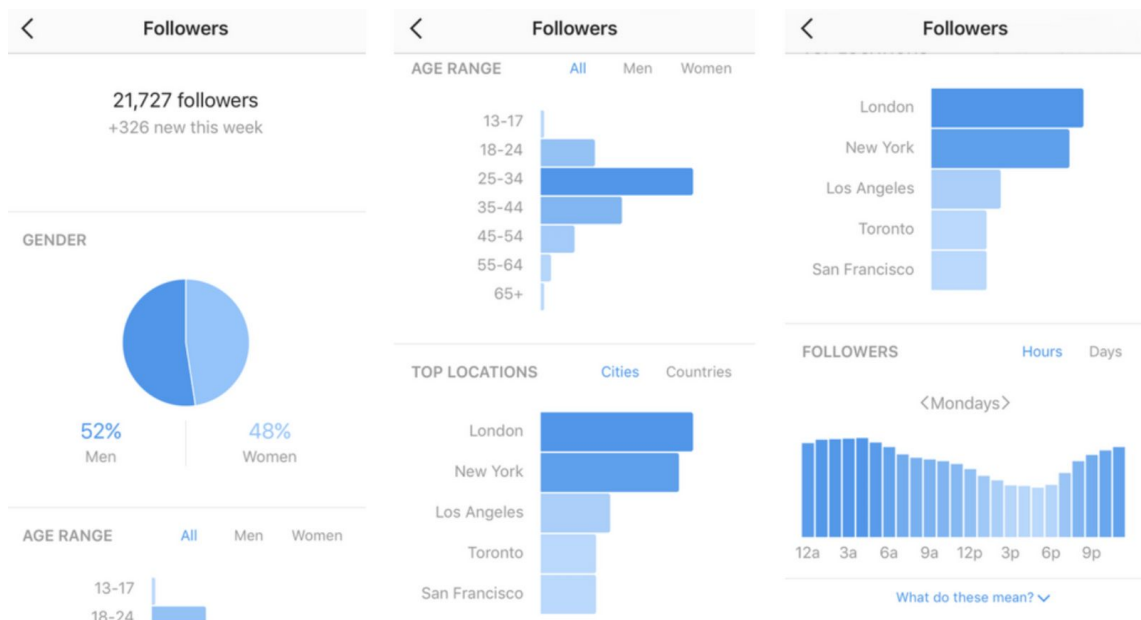
In a step away from the visitors' experience, the Hoverlay app launch event at the John D. O'Bryant School of Mathematics and Science, a local Boston School, will provide BU Admissions with the ability to monitor media response. This provides feedback in a more general perspective of the implementation of virtual reality into the application process. Within the media, media mentions, comments, and articles can be tracked more thoroughly through earned media. However, the event also provides shared media, like social media, and more specific to this section, the website, with content to further uniquely engage prospective students.

MEASUREMENT:

We will know that we are changing opinions concerning BU's financial inaccessibility through publishing paid advertisements by tracking the interactions with specific places of lower socioeconomic standing through data mining. Once Barnum can track roughly 15% more activity from black and hispanic ethnic groups in South American and African countries across various apps and Hoverlay, then we will know that our objective to diversify BU's application

pool will be successfully achieved. Tracking awareness of the university itself will be through “how did you hear about us?” questionnaires, making the process distinctly quantitative.

Barnum will measure our objectives mainly through social platforms, with the help of the business feature for Boston University’s social accounts and the social media managing software Sprout. Boston University’s Instagram profile, for instance, displays information on the activity and demographics of followers-an essential tool that shows the trends of our target audience.



⁴²*Instagram business profile information provision for Barnum*

The success of our communication objectives will be measured by the increase in user generated content and activity through various social media platforms. We are able to determine the type of content that are favored by our target audience through the number of likes,

⁴² “4 Benefits of an Instagram Business Profile [And How to Switch Over].” Influencer Marketing Hub, October 24, 2018. <https://influencermarketinghub.com/benefits-of-an-instagram-business-profile-and-how-to-switch-over/>.

comments, shares, or mentions of Boston University. Thus, a diverse growing engagement through Boston University's social platforms will signalize stepping stones towards our overarching goals in increasing applications to the university. Seeing a shift in demographics of engaged social media users from national to a more international ratio of prospective students will account for a successful measurement tool in increasing diversity in the pool of university applicants. The incorporation of technology in our augmented reality and virtual reality provision will likely boost the rate in which we will achieve our main overarching goal: increasing college applications to Boston University.

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