



# Making UCI More Visible Locally

## Promoting UCI's Connections In Our Communities

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# UCI's Visibility & Local Reputation

- UCI has a strong national and global reputation
- High rankings (Cool Schools, First-Generation, Sustainability, etc.)
- Ranked in the top 5 nationwide in undergraduate applications
- A majority of Irvine and OC residents surveyed in 2022 reported not having heard, seen, or read anything recently about UCI
- One third of Irvine residents stated in 2022 that they did not think UCI had any impact on them or their family
- UCI needs to improve its reputation locally



## The Group Objective

What can we do to improve UCI's visibility and reputation in Southern California?

# Three Major Areas of Concern

1. Lack of *visibility* in the community
2. Lack of *connections* to the community
3. Incorrect or *outdated views* of UCI among members of the community

Our team discovery process included:

- Informal interviews with community members
- Meeting with Sherry Main, Vice Chancellor of Strategic Communications
- We emphasize that more systematic discovery should be done to identify community groups' value propositions

# Solution 1: Enhance Alumni Relations

## Alumni stay in Orange County: They could be our best ambassadors

### Short-term actions

- Send alumni “swag” to promote UCI (e.g., license plate holders, car stickers)
- Make sure units include alumni in their mailing lists about events and conferences
- Give alumni a permanent UCI email address

### Long-term actions

- Boost UCI alumni network and seek their help to mentor students.
- Create opportunities / events to bring alumni to campus (e.g., raffle free tickets for alums).
- Add to school websites an alumni network tab. Include professional info for all alumni (e.g., LinkedIn) and placement info for PhD graduates (e.g., links to their faculty webpages).

# Solution 2: Improve Media Communication

## No easy way for community to find information about UCI

### Short-term actions

- UCI social media accounts should strive to engage local communities, not just current students
  - e.g., follow important local organizations, tag them in relevant events, and create content that can lead to collaborations
  - e.g., hire dedicated social media marketing experts to place paid ads for various UCI events
- Encourage departments to publish and disseminate newsletters that reflect current activities
- Ensure that local media highlight UCI research, events, and community-based initiatives

### Long-term actions

- Campus websites are a major liability; extremely difficult to find what you are looking for
  - Create a one stop shop featured on the main page of the UCI website where people can “Find an Expert” and include a picture and areas of expertise of the experts (faculty).
  - Create an “Events” page that includes all public talks, art events, and sports events on campus
  - Create a “Community Connection” page that highlights all of the UCI community engagement programs
  - See University of Michigan and UCSF health sciences for good examples
- Support UCI faculty in creating multilingual podcasts likely to be of interest to the local communities



# Solution 3: Facilitate Community Connections

Community members look elsewhere for expertise and partnerships

## Short-term actions

- Help faculty and student organizations build modern web pages
- Identify specific faculty and students to invite to UCI promotional events
  - We learned that community members want to speak *directly* with faculty and students

## Long-term actions

- Reward faculty who spend substantial time on community engagement via Merit and Promotions
- Foster and encourage a culture of engagement for faculty and students

# Solution 4: Bring the Community to UCI

## Not enough reasons for community members to visit campus

### Long-term actions

- Make UCI a destination for OC residents of all generations by creating more frequent events on campus
  - e.g., student research presentations, sports, e-sports, arts, and/or performances
  - Affordable tickets and free parking are crucial
- Create a physical space for community members to obtain services/support
  - e.g., tutoring, translation services, legal aid, educational activities
  - Consider incorporating these spaces into existing UCI satellites
    - e.g., UCI Health Family Center in Santa Ana



# Implementation Strategy

- Define metrics to evaluate the effectiveness of proposed solutions, such as:
  - Number of faculty with a website
  - Newsletters and their circulation
  - Social media presence and engagement metrics
  - On-campus events and attendance
- Annually survey local communities to understand how UCI's image evolves
- Create a small permanent task force to analyze data and advise the administration on the success of engagement efforts
  - e.g., Strat Comm Vice Chancellor/staff, Deans' office representatives, faculty, students, and community members.



# Questions and Comments?

