We have the opportunity to build a memorable university.

Our position has been defined. Our tools and resources are ready to use. Now it is up to us to bring it all to life and stay true to the people, programs and services it represents.

As we strive to capture the essence of our university in our everyday work, it is important to stay true to our brand.

We did not choose the words in our university positioning statement by combing through a dictionary. Our language is a natural reflection of what we heard from our people when we asked them what was special and unique about the U of S.

We did not choose a smattering of green blocks in our designs based on our personal taste. Those who have soared over Saskatchewan have surely caught glimpse of the prairie patchwork of greens. Our signature graphic element is the product of our pride in where we come from and who we are.

Each and every piece of our brand has been crafted with care to reinforce our identity. We are responsible for using it consistently in our communications to support the goals of our university.

Our positioning statement says it best: We are a rising team that is building the future. We have a key role to play to ensure that the U of S is not just a leader of tomorrow, but in time, fulfilling its vision to be a leader of today.
INTRODUCTION

Our brand and verbal identity .................................................... 3
Our position ............................................................................. 4
Who should read this ............................................................... 5
Evolution .................................................................................. 5
Icons used throughout this guide ........................................... 5
A note on brand ........................................................................ 6
A note on verbal identity .......................................................... 8

VERBAL BRAND IDENTITY

1. Who .......................................................... 10
   1.1 External audiences ....................................................... 12
   1.2 Internal audiences ........................................................ 14
   1.3 Student audiences ........................................................ 16

2. What .................................................. 18
   2.1 Writing a key message ................................................... 20
   2.2 Proof points ................................................................. 22
   2.3 In Action: Sample proof points ..................................... 22
   2.4 Benefits: What’s in it for your audience? ....................... 23

3. How ........................................ 24
   3.1 Personality ................................................................. 26
   3.2 Word choice ............................................................... 26
   3.3 Style tips ................................................................. 27

4. Slogan ........................................ 28
   4.1 Using the slogan ........................................................... 30
   4.2 Approved list of words ................................................ 31

5. Embracing us ........................................ 32
   Real-life example: Winter University Affairs ad .................. 32

6. Extra tips ........................................ 34
   6.1 Test your work ........................................................... 35
   6.2 Technically perfect ...................................................... 35
   6.3 Have some fun ........................................................... 35
Our brand and verbal identity

At the University of Saskatchewan we have an ambitious goal—we want to be among the most distinguished universities in Canada and the world. To get there, we all have a role to play.

As marketing and communications professionals, our responsibility in achieving this goal is creating a consistent and professional brand and ensuring all of our materials align both verbally and visually. Everything we produce represents the university to our audience, and each piece either enhances or diminishes our brand.

The U of S Verbal Expression Guide clarifies and details the expectations related to our verbal identity. What we say and how we say it in both spoken and written communications shapes others’ perceptions and influences if or how they choose to interact with the university. By using this guide to inform your work, our marketing and communications materials will genuinely reflect our position.

This guide is just that—a guide. There is no one magic formula for every written or spoken communication. Rather, let the contents of this guide shape the spirit of what you say and how you say it, and help you focus more clearly on your audience.

By using such an approach, coupled with our commitment to visual consistency, we will create a unified brand. This brand will help us attract the best and brightest, from students, staff and faculty to partners, donors and supporters. However, our brand is only as strong as our collective commitment to make it great. We can stand apart from our competition only if we stand together.
Our position
In 2010, we created a positioning statement that is credible, relevant and differentiates us in the post-secondary market. Now it is up to us to bring this to life through our visual elements and verbal messaging.

For whom …
Dedicated visionaries who believe innovation is born of collaboration

What we offer …
- Support: we provide freedom and support to push the boundaries of knowledge
- Connections: we reach across disciplines, into our communities and around the globe to build life-changing connections and to think differently about the issues of our time
- Impact: we work together to experiment, to learn and to make ground-breaking discoveries that will change Saskatchewan, Canada and the world

Who we are …
We are a rising team that is building the future

Our personality …
Resourceful, Collaborative, Dynamic

Our ambition …
To be among the most distinguished universities in Canada and the world

We will get there using …
- Our determined spirit
- Our dedicated and flexible support
- Our diverse perspectives
- Our leading-edge understanding of human and other living systems
Who should read this
These guidelines are for anyone who represents the U of S through their written or verbal communications, including both internal staff and external suppliers. Managing and growing a brand is a big job, and we all have a responsibility to make sure everything we’re doing is contributing to our brand in a positive way. From a one-on-one conversation with a prospective student to a full-page ad in a national newspaper, each conversation with a stakeholder shapes the way they see us.

Evolution
We don’t yet have all the answers, and the evolution of any brand continues over time. To keep it fresh, creative and relevant, we must continually reassess and look for solutions to challenges that come up. Please feel free to give us feedback and suggestions, or ask questions, by contacting us at communications@usask.ca or 306-966-6607.

Icons used throughout this guide

Check this out
Watch for “check this out” icons to point you to more information and to find who to contact.

Lingo
Definitions are provided to help you talk the talk.

Take their word for it
Throughout these guidelines are excerpts from experts. From published books to Wikipedia, you’ll find resources to help gain perspective on our choices.
Marketing is not limited to maximizing monetary outcomes; rather, it can be defined in broader terms as success that reflects the ability of the marketing exchange to create value for its participants by fulfilling their goals. Thus, in addition to defining value and success using financial benchmarks such as net income, return on investment, and market share, the goal of marketing can be defined by nonmonetary outcomes that include customer satisfaction, technology development, and social welfare.

Value is a strategic concept that captures the utility customers receive from the market exchange. The value of a company’s offering is conveyed through its tactics: its product and service attributes, its price and price incentives, its brand image, communication campaigns, and distribution channels. The goal of marketing, therefore, is to ensure that all tactical aspects of a company’s offering work together to create customer value in a way that benefits the company and its collaborators.

The view of marketing as a process of creating and managing value has important implications for how managers should think about marketing. Because the role of marketing is to create value for the key participants in the marketing exchange—customers, the company, and its collaborators—marketing plays a pivotal role in any organization. Consequently, marketing is not just an activity managed by a company’s marketing department; it spans all departments. As David Packard, the cofounder of Hewlett-Packard, succinctly put it, “Marketing is too important to be left to the marketing department.”

Brand: Name, term, design, symbol or any other feature of a good or service that is identified as distinct.

Positioning: How a good or service fits in the marketplace amongst its competition, as perceived by consumers, using brand attributes as the determining influence.
Here is a simple way to think about branding: Brands are like people. It can be helpful to think about the parallels between human beings and brands to understand what our brand encompasses.

The U of S brand was born in 1907 and we’ve nurtured its growth and development ever since, to become the world-class institution we are today.

The U of S brand has a distinctive identity. Our personality is resourceful, collaborative and dynamic. We strive to stay true to these traits and who we aspire to be in the future.

The U of S brand has a family of 13 colleges, three graduate schools, seven libraries, six affiliated and federated entities, 15 Huskie Athletics teams and many more. The nature of our relationships vary with our immediate and extended family across campus and beyond.

The U of S brand has a reputation—a powerful but equally fragile asset. Through our positioning work we have learned that we are perceived as a leader of tomorrow. We must continue to strengthen our reputation with care as we rise to be among the best.

Like every company or organization, the U of S has a personality. The positioning project helped us identify ours, highlighting the aspects that are credible (we can honestly say are true), differentiating (set us apart from others) and relevant (things our audiences care about). Staying true to our personality let us take pride in our work, knowing that we are contributing to the success of our university.
Consistent and credible verbal identity =
Who + What + How

am I speaking to?
Identify your key audience(s) for the piece you are working on.

am I saying?
Determine the key messages you want your audience to take away and what actions you want them to take.

am I saying it?
Use the personality and the tone of voice of the university to make it sound like us—this keeps all of our verbal connections credible and genuine.

am I saying it?
Use the personality and the tone of voice of the university to make it sound like us—this keeps all of our verbal connections credible and genuine.

am I saying it?
Use the personality and the tone of voice of the university to make it sound like us—this keeps all of our verbal connections credible and genuine.
“There is no such thing as a Mass Mind. The Mass Audience is made up of individuals, and good advertising is written always from one person to another. When it is aimed at millions it rarely moves anyone.”

Fairfax Cone (businessperson, advertising executive and former director of the American Association of Advertising Agencies)

“The following is an excerpt from:

*Memo from the Field* by David A. Narsavage; *Public Relations: A Value Driven Approach (Fourth Edition)* written by David W. Guth and Charles Marsh 2009; Pearson Education, Inc.

“Know the room. Whether you call them a public or a target audience, know who those people are. Know what will move them: the hot buttons that can either bring them closer to your point of view or push them out of sight.

Remember that they’ll have some selfish, self-interest issues, because that’s how we humans are. But mostly it will come down to emotions.

...

Who cares about your message? Who doesn’t care now, and what will it take to rouse them?

...

You build those relationships by treating audiences with respect and by communicating with them in the same clear and direct way you would in a letter to a friend. Wait, you don’t know what a letter is. In an email to a friend, OK? But with capitalization and punctuation.”
We speak to a wide variety of audiences and each audience looks for different messages and information. Although people within each stakeholder group vary, the following profiles provide general outlines of the typical member of that audience to help you better understand the people to whom you are speaking.
1.1 Our external audiences include: top academics, key funders, prospective out-of-province or international graduate students and prospective undergraduate engaged A+ out-of-province students.

**Top academics**

**DEMONEGRATICS**
- 35+
- Doctoral degree
- Resides locally, nationally or internationally
- Expertise in one of U of S areas of research strength
- Canada Research Chair or tri-council recipient

**SITUATION**
- I am highly motivated and determined within my field of study
- I am looking to advance professionally by working for an institution with a greater national and international reputation
- I want to advance my research and need access to greater resources, funding and opportunities
- I am considering UBC, U of A and U of T because of their strong academic community and excellent facilities
- The U of S is not at the top of my consideration set because I do not consider it among the world-class institutions and its reputation for research is not among the industry leaders

**Key funders**

**DEMONEGRATICS**
- 50+
- Resides in Western Canada
- Senior executive and/or significant personal wealth

**SITUATION**
- I am looking to make a difference and be an agent of change and progress
- I am looking to contribute to an institution with a strong focus and reputation in an industry related to my line of business or my personal interests
- I am drawn towards a proven track record of innovation, strong leadership, a solid reputation and something that connects me with my peers
- I am considering local charities and foundations because of their prestige, credibility and devotion to areas which I am passionate about
- I am concerned about bureaucracy and the length of time it will take for the projects I contribute towards to be realized
Prospective graduate students, out-of-province or international

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- 23-30
- Master’s or PhD candidate
- Received previous degree outside of Saskatchewan
- Resides outside of Saskatchewan

**SITUATION**
- I am currently deciding between several top universities for post-graduate education, including UBC, U of T and Guelph
- I am looking for a school where the supervisors are easy to work with, I am treated with respect and research funding is readily available
- One of my biggest concerns in choosing a school is that I will not get to work with a good supervisor
- I want a welcoming environment that will allow for discovery and growth (personal and scholastic)
- I am concerned the U of S does not provide opportunity for international collaboration and that they do not graduate top-quality students

Prospective undergraduate students, engaged, A+ out-of-province

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- 17-19
- High school diploma
- 80%+ academic performance and engaged in extra-curricular activities
- Resides outside of Saskatchewan

**SITUATION**
- I am looking for a school with a strong reputation in my particular field of study and that also has robust professional programs
- I am searching for a welcoming community and seek an opportunity to develop quality, lasting friendships
- I am drawn towards the U of S because I think it is a great community, I will be valued as a student and there are opportunities for me to develop strong relationships
- I am considering UBC, U of A, McMaster and Queen’s because of their excellent campus facilities and strong reputations

The external profiles were created in 2008 based on research done during the institutional positioning project. These profiles are intended to provide a guideline only and in no way are meant to represent every single individual that falls into a given group. However, it will give you a starting point from which to work as you create products for a specific audience.
1.2 Our **internal audiences** include: current students (undergraduate or graduate), current faculty, current staff members and senior administrative leaders.

### Current student

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- 17-30
- Satisfactory academic performance
- Lives in Saskatoon
- Engaged in campus life

**SITUATION**
- I am on campus for 30-40 hours per week
- I have a full course load—I am enrolled in five university classes per semester
- I use PAWS as my primary means of communication with the U of S
- Doing well in my classes while maintaining a social life are among my top priorities

### Current faculty

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- 35+
- Doctoral degree
- Lives in Saskatoon
- Secured tenure/working towards tenure
- Expertise in one or more of U of S 100 areas of study
- Research funding recipient

**SITUATION**
- I spend an average of 20 hours a week on my research
- I teach one to four classes per week
- Securing research funding and publishing my work are among my top priorities
- I have office space in my college/school
- I meet with my dean approximately twice a month
1. WHO: OUR AUDIENCES

The internal profiles are based on research gathered during the strategic enrolment management project, as well as informal knowledge from the experience of the marketing and communications team. As with the external profiles, these profiles are intended to provide a guideline only and in no way are meant to represent every single individual that falls into a given group. However, it will give you a starting point from which to work as you create products for a specific audience.

Current staff member

DEMOGRAPHICS
- 25+
- Lives in Saskatoon
- Education (degree, diploma or certificate) and/or experience in respective field
- ASPA or CUPE union employee

SITUATION
- I work approximately 40 hours per week
- I receive at least 20 emails per day and attend an average of five meetings per week
- I want the materials, equipment, information and/or resources I need to do my work well
- I prefer to hear news or receive information that may affect my job from a trusted source, such as a supervisor

Senior administrative leader

DEMOGRAPHICS
- 45+
- Lives in Saskatoon
- University degree in relevant field of study
- 10+ years of experience in academia/private sector

SITUATION
- I manage a team of at least 15 employees
- I work 50-80 hours per week
- Leading and advancing university-level projects and initiatives are among my top priorities
- I receive at least 80 emails per day and attend at least 10 meetings per week
- I have an administrative/executive assistant to help manage my calendar, files, logistics, etc.
1.3 Our **student audiences** include: Aboriginal students, mature students, international students, students direct from high school and graduate students.

**Aboriginal student**
- **DEMOGRAPHICS**
  - Majority 19-24, but more likely to be older than non-Aboriginal students
  - Métis or Status Indian
  - From Saskatchewan
- **SITUATION**
  - Because I have to self-declare, my demographic can be trickier to pinpoint than other groups
  - I am more likely to have children
  - The College of Arts and Science is where I am most likely enrolled, and I may be undeclared or undecided about my major
  - I am less likely to be retained from first to second year than non-Aboriginal students

**Mature student**
- **DEMOGRAPHICS**
  - 25-44
  - Female
  - Majority from Saskatchewan, although less likely to be so than total undergraduate population
- **SITUATION**
  - My motivation for going to university is to get an interesting and satisfying career
  - I am more likely to face challenges once enrolled, including family-related crisis, financial barriers and employment-related crisis
  - I, along with one-quarter of my peers, am undecided on my major
The student profiles are based on research gathered during the strategic enrolment management project, as well as informal knowledge from the experience of the marketing and communications team. As with the external profiles, these profiles are intended to provide a guideline only and in no way are meant to represent every single individual that falls into a given group. However, it will give you a starting point from which to work as you create products for a specific audience.

International student

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- 19-24
- Majority from China
- Most likely enrolled in Bachelor of Commerce, Bachelor of Science or bachelor’s degree (undecided)

**SITUATION**
- I most likely plan to apply for or already have applied for a postgraduate work permit
- The website was a key tool in getting me to come to the University of Saskatchewan
- The consistency with which the university is retaining me from my first year to my second has dropped over the last three years

Student direct from high school

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- Began studies at the U of S when under 20 years old
- From Saskatchewan (generally Regina, Saskatoon, North Battleford, Prince Albert or Yorkton)
- Less likely to be international or identify as Aboriginal or as a visible minority

**SITUATION**
- Although I know I want to go to university, I haven’t yet settled on a career or educational path
- I chose the U of S mainly because of its location and proximity to home
- I am challenged by university grading and my parents’ academic expectations

Graduate student

**DEMOGRAPHICS**
- 26-30
- Canadian
- Female
- Enrolled full-time

**SITUATION**
- I am more likely to be married and have children
- The most important support for me is access to quality academic resources
- I use email as my preferred source of communication with the university, and also get information from the website
“If you know what changes a heart, you know what changes the world.”

Marianne Williamson (spiritual activist, author, lecturer and founder of The Peace Alliance)

Messaging is what we say to stakeholders. In other words, it’s the content. While staring at a blank page can be daunting, thinking about your **key messages** will help you craft your piece.

What messages are the most important for your audience to know? What do you want them to remember or what action do you want them to take when they are done reading or listening to your piece?

**Key messages**
Short, concise statements that you want your audience to remember
2. WHAT: OUR MESSAGING
2.1 Writing a **key message**

When you’re drafting your key messages, consider the following:

1. **What do you want your audience to do?**
2. **What is the most important information you are trying to get across?**
3. **Have you used the shortest, clearest words possible?**

**In action**

Some examples of key messages that we’ve used to speak to our four key external audiences identified through the positioning project are:

- **REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: TOP ACADEMICS**
  
  “The U of S isn’t just any university. It is a special place for people like you—people who think they can change the world and truly have the ability to do so.”
  
  *(U of S careers page on LinkedIn)*

- **REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: KEY FUNDERS**
  
  “It was an exciting year, thanks to you.”
  
  *(Report to Donors 2011)*
2. WHAT: OUR MESSAGING

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: PROSPECTIVE GRADUATE STUDENTS

“Discover the edge of innovation.”

(College of Graduate Studies and Research website)

REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: PROSPECTIVE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

“Higher education is about making your dreams come true, and no one knows that better than the University of Saskatchewan.”

(Print advertisement for Newsweek)

World-class facilities.

Our Toxicology Centre, Canadian Light Source synchrotron, Global Institute for Water Security and new health sciences project are just a few of the places our researchers and students are working together toward the next great innovation.

World-class scholarships.

We offer a number of scholarships in various amounts up to $20,000, specifically created for international students.

World-class education.

Higher education is about making your dreams come true, and no one knows that better than the University of Saskatchewan. We’re welcoming more students from around the world than ever before, and helping more students achieve their goals.

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada
2.2 Proof points

To support your key messages and really show people what you mean, use proof points. Each point should contain factual evidence that backs up the message you’re trying to convey.

Proof points may include but aren’t limited to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University offerings such as programs, degrees, student services, etc.</th>
<th>Specific initiatives such as fundraising campaigns, new service offerings, etc.</th>
<th>Events such as milestones, celebrations, etc.</th>
<th>Facts or figures such as dollar amounts, timelines, research findings, etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Innovative features/technology in use such as specialized labs, research methods, etc.</td>
<td>Partnerships, contracts and/or agreements such as international, provincial or local partnerships, etc.</td>
<td>Publications such as foundational documents, annual reports, Achievement Record, etc.</td>
<td>Unique facilities such as the Canadian Light Source synchrotron, VIDO-InterVac, the Toxicology Centre, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.3 In action

For example, to expand on the examples in the previous section, proof points for the key messages may include:

Top academics

**Key message:** “The U of S isn’t just any university. It is a special place for people like you—people who think they can change the world and truly have the ability to do so.”

**Proof point:** “We are among the top Canadian medical-doctoral research universities, and are home to cutting-edge facilities, including the Canadian Light Source synchrotron and VIDO-InterVac.”

Key funders

**Key message:** “It was an exciting year, thanks to you.”

**Proof point:** “Plans for the Gordon Oakes-Red Bear Student Centre were unveiled, thanks in part to the support of donors like SaskEnergy, Nexen and Shell Canada.”

Prospective undergraduate students

**Key message:** “Higher education is about making your dreams come true, and no one knows that better than the University of Saskatchewan.”

**Proof point:** “We’re welcoming more students from around the world than ever before, and helping more students achieve their goals.”

Prospective graduate students

**Key message:** “Discover the edge of innovation.”

**Proof point:** “Work alongside 36 Canada Research Chairs, 26 Fellows of the Royal Canadian Society, six 3M National Teaching Fellows and many other internationally acclaimed faculty.”
The matrix above was used during the positioning project to help us think more strategically about the information we are promoting to our audiences.

The bottom two boxes represent the information that matters only to the university (institution-centric), and the information that makes us different from our peers but that our audiences don’t find relevant to them (“sizzle,” no substance). We want to steer clear of relying on information that falls into these two boxes.

The top two boxes, however, represent the information that does matter to our audiences. The top left-hand box is information about the things that we do well but that our competition also does well (tablestakes), so this information doesn’t differentiate us from other universities. However, it is still important that our audiences know we have the foundational benefits that our peers also offer.

The top right-hand box includes information about the things that we do well that truly make us stand out from our competition. These are the things that we can claim that no one else credibly can, so we should use this to our advantage wherever possible.

Think about the benefits of the U of S for your audience. What’s in it for them? Once you have determined why someone would choose the U of S over another university, explain it.

This means you understand the competition and know what will motivate your audience to take the action you need them to take.
“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”
Leonardo da Vinci (painter, sculptor, architect, musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor, anatomist, geologist, cartographer, botanist and writer)

Knowing who you are speaking to and what you want to say are key ingredients in successful verbal communication. However, how you say what you’re saying might be the most important piece in aligning your work with our position and our personality.
Universities traditionally tend to lean towards more formal language, which is a natural result of an academic environment. But does that match with who we are? No, not always.

There are ways to use our personality in how we speak to our audience, but we do want to consider where it is appropriate to push the envelope on our verbal brand and where it is not.

For example, advertising copy geared at prospective students is a place we can have a little more fun, but a formal communication with a key donor might use our verbal brand more subtly.

### 3.1 Personality

We know from our positioning work that the University of Saskatchewan has a welcoming, unpretentious personality. We are humble but we take a quiet pride in what we do.

We believe in the power of teamwork to get the job done, and know that working hard is the difference between ideas and results. In other words, we are resourceful, collaborative and dynamic—but levelheaded enough to mind our manners.

### 3.2 Word choice

Writing with the university’s personality in mind doesn’t mean you have to use the same words every time for every audience. In fact, don’t do that. Instead of being dynamic, our work would get boring. And that’s no way to inspire our audiences or ourselves.

While the number of words you can use under the umbrella of our verbal personality is astronomical, we have some suggestions here to get you started:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To say resourceful…</th>
<th>To say collaborative…</th>
<th>To say dynamic…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>use words like co-operate, community, open, group, cross-disciplinary, trust, participate, share, team, together, mutual, interactive.</td>
<td>use words like helpful, options, support, solutions, determined, experienced, commitment, caring, honest, choices, insight, dedicated, assist, understand, us, persevering, hard-working.</td>
<td>use words like cutting-edge, exciting, new, change, growth, future, ambition, progress, determination, momentum, action, rising, achievement, opportunity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 **Style tips**

Here are some more tips that can be incorporated subtly, or less so, depending on the audience:

### Use the active voice

- “It is the mission of the College of Graduate Studies and Research to define and support excellence in graduate education...”
- **✓** “At the College of Graduate Studies and Research, our mission is...”

### Be engaging

- “The University of Saskatchewan has many programs for prospective students to choose from. It is the perfect place for students to learn in order to find success in the future.”
- **✓** “We will help you choose from our variety of programs to find the perfect path for you.”

### Be concise

- “Alumni, donors and friends of the University of Saskatchewan provide the support that students need to be successful: rewarding excellence, fostering growth and allowing the university to respond to changing needs. By making a gift to the University of Saskatchewan, you allow our students the opportunity to experience a lifetime of success, of discovery and of learning.”
- **✓** “Donors like you change the lives of our students every year. Your support helps them succeed today and into their future.”

### Be clear (and limit jargon)

- “Our students optimize all educational opportunities to pursue their goals, thus realizing their full potential through a mix of classroom learning and experiential learning.”
- **✓** “Our students take every opportunity to succeed and take part in new ways of learning, including hands-on practical experience.”

### Use personal language

- “Over the next decade, the University of Saskatchewan will establish itself as one of the top 10 medical-doctoral universities in Canada and one of a select few internationally in key areas.”
- **✓** “With your help, we will establish ourselves as one of the top 10 medical-doctoral universities in Canada and proudly be among the best in the world.”
Advertising slogans are short, often memorable phrases used in advertising campaigns. They are claimed to be the most effective means of drawing attention to one or more aspects of a product. Its purpose is to emphasize a phrase that the company wishes to be remembered by, particularly for marketing a specific corporate image or connection to a product or consumer base.¹

Some slogans are created just for specific campaigns for a limited time; some are intended as corporate slogans, to be used for an extended period; some slogans start out as the former, and find themselves converted to the latter because they take hold with the public, and some are memorable many years after their use is discontinued.

**Well-known slogans:**

- Allstate - *You're in good hands.*
- De Beers - *A diamond is forever.*
- Disneyland - *The happiest place on earth*
- Kellogg's Frosted Flakes - *They're gr-r-reat!*
- L'Oreal - *Because you're worth it*
- New York State - *I ♥ NY*
- Nike - *Just do it.*
- Raid - *Kills bugs dead*
- Skittles - *Taste the rainbow*

The us slogan is well-aligned with our positioning strategy, particularly our personality traits:

Resourceful
Instead of having a standard slogan that everyone on campus is required to use, our slogan is flexible. The multiple word approach allows our diverse stakeholders across campus to choose words that apply most directly to their work.

Collaborative
The highlighted letters not only represent the U of S, but they also say “us” which represents our commitment to working together.

Dynamic
The rotating sequence is dynamic in nature and the meaning of each word relates to pushing the boundaries of knowledge. The slogan has proven to be particularly memorable and is unlike anything that any other university is using.

Ultimately, the us campaign strengthens our position by showcasing the U of S to our external audiences in a clear and consistent way and by differentiating our university in the post-secondary market.
4.1 Using the **slogan**

The slogan currently consists of seven distinct words that end with “us.” The words can be used individually or together in sequence. This flexibility allows communicators to choose appropriate word(s) for their tactical pieces and tailor their messages for their target audiences as needed.

![REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: THE “US WORDS” SLOGAN](image)

Maclean’s Guide to Universities ad
These specific words have tested positively with all of our target audiences through internal surveys and external focus groups. Senior leadership has approved both the slogan concept and word list.

Communicators may only use words that appear on the list; however, the approved word list may expand as more words are tested and approved.
“We are what we repeatedly do.”
Aristotle (philosopher)

We know the University of Saskatchewan is not for everyone, and that’s okay. No university is perfect for every type of student, faculty or staff member, or researcher. Being genuine helps us reach those who we do appeal to, and those with the greatest chance of success if they choose to invest their time and money at our institution.

The whole purpose of the positioning project was to really get to know ourselves in the context of the post-secondary landscape. Although there are things we know about ourselves that some may see as limitations, there is no point in hiding them—let’s celebrate them!

Being real and true to ourselves really helps us stand out from others.

Our warm prairie spirit is attracting the world.

Even in the middle of a Saskatoon winter, the warmth and hospitality that Saskatchewan is famous for welcomes students from around the world. Growing numbers of international, First Nations and Métis students are discovering what makes the University of Saskatchewan so special—even when it’s covered with snow. Visit www.usask.ca to see for yourself.
We know the University of Saskatchewan is not for everyone, and that’s okay. No university is perfect for every type of student, faculty or staff member, or researcher. Being genuine helps us reach those who we do appeal to, and those with the greatest chance of success if they choose to invest their time and money at our institution.

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**REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE: WINTER UA AD**

In this example, we talk about our cold winters—something others know about us and often perceive as a negative—but we turn it on its head. This ad’s language is really true to who we are, invoking emotion while still relying on proof points to drive our key messages home.
Ernest Hemingway’s advice need not be taken literally to accomplish its goal. Think of it this way instead: when you’re stuck staring at that blank piece of paper or blank screen, don’t overthink it. **Write something down**—anything at all. It doesn’t have to be award-winning work. It doesn’t even have to make sense at this point. You will have time to go back afterwards and craft it into something usable, and something that aligns with everything we’ve talked about in this guide. That’s the sober second thought.
6.1 Test your work

“All worthy work is open to interpretations the author did not intend. Art isn’t your pet...it’s your kid. It grows up and talks back to you.”

Joss Whedon (screenwriter, producer, director, comic book author, composer and actor)

Testing your work isn’t as scary as it sounds. It might be as easy as sharing it with those around you. Although you should always take pride in your work, always be open to suggestions and comments from your peers. Having trouble thinking of the perfect word? It might come easily to someone else. Need help saying exactly what you want to say? Give others the chance to clarify your point. In the end, what really matters is the audience. No matter how well written the piece is, it’s not doing what it needs to if it doesn’t resonate with the audience.

You can also test your work with the intended demographic when possible. From formal focus groups to more casual conversations, any opportunity you have to get the piece in front of the type of person for which it’s intended can only make your work more effective.

6.2 Technically perfect

“Let’s eat Grandpa. Let’s eat, Grandpa. Correct punctuation can save a person’s life.”

You can use all the right words and say the right thing to the right audience in exactly the right way, but if there are spelling and grammar errors your reader might get distracted from the message, and rightfully so. Although any professional communicator has an obligation to ensure their work is technically sound, the responsibility is even greater for those of us working at a post-secondary institution. Luckily, we have great resources at our disposal to help us with this task. The University of Saskatchewan Editorial Style Guide gives you a great overview helpful for any piece, and specifically details the appropriate style for writing about U of S-specific items, including the Huskies, departments and programs, and degrees. You can find a copy online at communications.usask.ca.

The U of S Editorial Style Guide is based on the Canadian Press Stylebook, which is used by journalists across Canada.

Related to the previous point of sharing your work with others, it’s a good idea to have someone else proofread your work for technical mistakes whenever possible. A fresh set of eyes will catch mistakes you may have missed—and no, your computer’s spell check doesn’t count.

6.3 Have some fun

“Be fearful of mediocrity.”

Jonathan Ellery (artist and co-founder of design agency Browns)

Writing lets you take your audience to a place of new understanding. Although it’s important to make sure your work resonates with the university’s position, it is equally as important to continue finding new ways to do it. Don’t be afraid to try something we’ve never done before. Remember, you always have the opportunity to edit it later, or make changes based on the feedback of others. But if you never share your ideas with your colleagues, they will never go anywhere.
Many of the icons in this guide have been provided by The Noun Project at thenounproject.com, a website empowering the community to build a global visual language that everyone can understand. Artists used throughout this guide are Anna Weiss and Sergi Delgado, with other icons under Creative Commons licensing with no rights reserved.
Institutional Positioning Statement

for whom

dedicated visionaries who believe innovation is born of collaboration

what we offer

support
we provide freedom and support to push the boundaries of knowledge

connections
we reach across disciplines, into our communities and around the globe to build life-changing connections and to think differently about the issues of our time

impact
we work together to experiment, to learn and to make ground-breaking discoveries that will change Saskatchewan, Canada and the world

who we are

we are a rising team that is building the future

our personality
resourceful
collaborative
dynamic

our ambition

to be among the most distinguished universities in Canada and the world

we will get there using
our determined spirit
our dedicated and flexible support
our diverse perspectives
our leading-edge understanding of human and other living systems

Approved June, 2010 by the President’s Executive Committee
The Verbal Expression Guide has been developed for those responsible in the creation of communication materials at the University of Saskatchewan. The responsibility of Marketing and Communications is to assist individuals and departments to ensure their communications are on-strategy, utilizing the correct communication medium, and ensuring high quality and professional standards.

For enquiries, please contact:

Advancement and Community Engagement
University of Saskatchewan
501-121 Research Drive
Saskatoon SK  S7N 1K2

306-966-6607
communications.usask.ca