The Power of University-Community Storytelling

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University-community partnerships fit the public mission of a university.

- Show public mission in action
- Address challenges facing communities
- Create relationships in communities
- Learn from the community’s expertise
- Share and create new knowledge
- Increase positive perceptions of the university
Impact

CU Boulder faculty, staff and students serve nearly 500,000 Coloradans each year through 260+ programs that partner with communities.
Office for Outreach and Engagement

- Started in 2001
- Campuswide resource
- Funding
- Program development
- Network building
- Lectures
- Program database
- Strategic communications
These partnerships and programs can shape public discourse.

- Create community dialogue
- Shape feelings and values
- Lead to social change or legislative action
- Build connections with new stakeholders
Why do we tell stories?

- Share the “good news” of your work
- Share value of higher ed to public
- Draw people, donors to events or a cause
- Connect with campus and community partners
- Connect with general public
Communicators can help frame stories.

- Describe research and outreach impact
- Describe mutual benefit
- Include the community partner’s knowledge
- Discuss the value of the partnership
Elements of a compelling story

- Call to action
- Targeted audiences
- Newsworthy
- Timely (it’s news, not “olds”)
- Relevant stats
- Start with a protagonist (show, don’t tell)
- Strong visuals
How we put it all together

• Strategic communication planning
• Communicator expertise
• Timing
• Collaboration
Communications Tools

- Owned
- Social
- Paid
- Earned
Measuring Communications Impact

**Qualitative**
- Did it lead to some action?
- Did it strengthen relationship?
- Did it create new partnerships?

**Quantitative**
- Open and click rates
- Impressions and views
- Donations
Communications Case Studies
Rocky Mountain National Park Exhibits
Homelessness Partnership
Group activity

Discuss the following questions with a partner. (10 mins)

• What are some possible stories?
• What are some timing considerations?
• Who are your partners?
• Who’s your audience?
• What are the tools you can use?

Share ideas with the group. (10 mins)
Connect with us!

CU Boulder program website: outreach.colorado.edu/programs

Office website: colorado.edu/outreach/ooe

School of Education website: colorado.edu/education

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