Bullhorn to Help Develop New Brand Strategy

A partner has been selected to provide expert guidance in the development of a new brand strategy for EKU.

Scott Cason, vice president for communications and marketing at EKU, said Bullhorn Creative, a Lexington-based branding and creative services firm, was chosen as the “direct result of the challenge President Benson has made to ‘Make No Little Plans.’ Bullhorn’s work and vision reflects a level of boldness we need to advance this great institution at this important point in our history.”

Benson said the University is “very excited to work with Bullhorn, given their ties to this part of the state and that some of their employees attended EKU and know the institution very well. While they understand our target audience, we will push them to broaden our base and expand our reach and reputation. Great things are ahead for Eastern.”

A new brand platform and subsequent integrated strategic marketing plan “will serve as the foundation for our effort to define and advance the University brand,” Cason said. “We also expect the focus and energy we generate via this campaign will enhance our recruitment and retention efforts and inspire the University community to rally around the values and personality that are distinctly ‘Eastern.’”

Brad Flowers, a partner in the firm, said one reason he started Bullhorn “was to change the way people think about Kentucky. Working with EKU is a great opportunity to do this in a very practical way. The work we will do together will not only benefit our organizations, but will continue to raise the bar for everyone in the state.”

Center for Student Life at Heart of Renewal Plans

A proposed Center for Student Life at EKU is aimed at transforming the student experience by revitalizing the core of the Richmond campus.

University officials believe a combination of renovations and new facilities in close proximity in the historic center of campus, holistically serving Eastern students, will make the campus a more compelling and welcoming place that will result in greater and more meaningful interactions and engage students more in the life of the University, even on weekends.

The Center, or CSL, is the signature element of a broad and ambitious campus revitalization plan, which can now be tracked at ekubuilds.eku.edu. The site includes a Q-and-A section about a recently approved student fee (ratified by the EKU Student Senate on March 17) and a Twitter feed that monitors the progress of numerous campus projects.

The Student Senate approved the $150-per-semester student fee, which will remain in place for the next 20 years, for “student-centric” facilities. Two items of particular interest to the Senators are a new or renovated student union facility and much larger recreation center. The CSL will also encompass other facilities and landscaping features to be built or renovated in the heart of the Richmond campus.

As they participate in a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the campus landscape and transform the “Eastern Experience,” students will play an active role in deciding the features of both the recreation center and student union. Initial design work and project cost estimates for the CSL are expected to be completed by October. EKU officials anticipate the final agency bond amount will be submitted to the CPE and Finance Cabinet this December for inclusion in the 2016 budget request and will then seek General Assembly approval next year to begin the project.

Other components of the Center for Student Life, to be funded by a combination of public-private partnerships, private funds and the University, are expected to include:

- new residence halls
- a new dining-only facility
- a multi-level parking garage
- the Noel Reading Porch on the south side of Crabbe Library and an adjacent pedestrian plaza between the Library and the Weaver Building
- Carlottiis Garden (at the former site of the Martin Hall tennis courts)
- a Lancaster Avenue pedestrian gateway at the former site of the Combs residence hall.

Changes on the Richmond campus are hardly limited to the CSL. Many other ongoing and planned projects are addressing facilities in need of renovation and enhancing the curb appeal of Eastern.
“Colonels at the Capitol” Day Big Hit with Lawmakers

EKU continued to show its commitment to engaging in the legislative process by hosting another Colonels at the Capitol Day in Frankfort on Feb. 25.

For the second consecutive year, EKU not only brought the members of its Board of Regents, but also extended the event invitation to the President’s Council and the President’s Leaders in Action Academy.

“This was a wonderful opportunity for our campus leaders to interact with our state leaders,” said EKU President Michael Benson. “We were also able to express our gratitude for their help in obtaining key resources to further enhance our University.”

Senate President Robert Stivers said: “We are witnessing how quickly technology is advancing and how important it is for our higher education institutions to remain on the cutting edge for our students. We worked very hard to ensure funding for your University to complete the next phase of your New Science Building and to help further advance your unique aviation program.”

Several legislators also spoke about how proud they are of the new leadership, guided by Benson, which has given a sense of renewal and excitement to the University that is now visible at the Capitol.

“You can feel the energy that the president has brought to the campus,” said State Rep. Rita Smart. “When I was first elected, people would say, ‘Where is EKU?’ and now they say, ‘We see EKU every day.’”

Roark Named Eastern’s Second President

As its acting president 1909-10, Mary C. Roark led what was then Eastern Kentucky State Normal School at a time when women couldn’t even vote in state or federal elections.

Because of her trailblazing achievements, the EKU Board of Regents voted at its regular meeting in February to remove the word “acting” from her title and officially designate her as the institution’s second president.

Mrs. Roark succeeded her husband and Eastern’s first president, Rufus Nevel Roark (1906-09), when he became ill in February 1909. After he died two months later, she continued to serve in the position until April 1910, when John Grant Crabbe was named president. She was the first female to serve as president, albeit acting, of a public higher education institution in Kentucky history.

Lochmueller Named Athletics Director

Steve Lochmueller, already a familiar name to many Kentuckians, brings an entrepreneurial vision, business savvy and proven leadership skills in diverse settings as the next Director of Athletics at EKU.

In announcing the decision, EKU President Michael Benson said Lochmueller’s “unique skill set” makes him ideally suited for the position.

“Steve is the son of a former student-athlete and coach and teacher, played college basketball at the highest level under legendary coaches, and has served on various athletics-affiliated boards,” Benson noted. “He has been around athletics his entire life in many different roles and understands the broad spectrum that is intercollegiate athletics. Add to that his extensive business experience and his vast array of contacts within the Commonwealth and beyond, and I believe we have in Steve Lochmueller a leader who can imbue our athletics operation with a business mindset focused on resource and revenue generation.”

Partnerships Grow Aviation Program

EKU’s Aviation Program now boasts the nation’s first FAA-approved 1,000-hour power, 2+2 degree pathway, and it is easily accessible, thanks to the University’s partnerships with KCTCS institutions in Ashland, Owensboro, Hazard and Middlesboro.

Those four community and technical colleges were selected because of their proximity to airports. The bottom line is that graduates of the program now have a quicker, more convenient and less expensive path to become licensed pilots, with a four-year college degree to enhance their career opportunities.

Students participating in the 2+2 partnership will earn an associate degree at a partnering community and technical colleges, where they complete lower-division college courses taught by community college faculty. Simultaneously, they will take lower-division aviation courses taught by local instructors hired through EKU. Ultimately, they will complete the upper-division baccalaureate degree courses by taking entirely online courses through Eastern.