Section 1: Major Goals and Initiatives

Student Publications provides professional and administrative support for the staff of The Shorthorn, UT Arlington’s award-winning student newspaper, and other publications. In doing so, it provides the main student-produced source of news and information for the University community, daily experiential learning and leadership opportunities for students, and a designated public forum for the University community. The department also produces the Maverick Housing Guide twice a year and houses a commercial, student-produced creative services agency on campus. All department initiatives engage the student in experiential learning that affords them academic and career placement success.

Major goals and initiatives this year included:

Addressing a projected 10 percent ($30,000) decline in advertising revenue while maintaining high-quality services.

- Increased percentage of digital ad sales by 100 percent. This fiscal year to date, digital sales make up half of our total ad sales; last year, they made up one quarter. This is a huge accomplishment made possible through a renovation of digital products and student training.
- Increased variety of Creative Services provided to on-campus departments, resulting in 61 percent increase in sales from projects.
  - Increase and stabilize staffing for additional skills in demand.
  - Provided training and added recognition of work.
  - Conducted first feedback survey.

Addressing The Shorthorn’s rapidly growing and increasingly fragmented audiences.

- Conducted ongoing feedback and readership analysis using real-time data from web, social media and print pickup rates. Data revealed The Shorthorn:
  - Increased open rate for the daily e-newsletter from 26 percent to 40 percent daily, meaning that more than 22,000 student subscribers open and read the newsletter each day Monday through Friday throughout the academic year. This, plus a new array of advertising options, increased total digital sales to 50 percent of our advertising revenue — surpassing the industry record in both readership and sales.
  - Assisted students with training and mentorship in developing social media strategies tied to Shorthorn content.
- Assisted students in developing and implementing new products that tie to specific reader populations. This included a daily news podcast geared toward Off-Campus Mavericks, as well as a Student Resource Guide magazine produced in summer for incoming Mavericks.
- Created student Street Team to increase brand awareness across platforms.

Expanding student opportunities in skill-specific areas currently in demand in journalism and communication fields.

- Used needs assessment to reorganize student positions and wages to match industry and department needs.
- Reallocated funding toward 10 new, skills-specific student positions throughout the department.
- Revamped training plans to emphasize key skills necessary of all future communication field employees.
Addressing recruitment and retention of qualified student staff throughout department.

- Implemented intentional recruitment programming and strategy to attract talented high school, community college and on-campus students to address retention rates.
- Hosted/coordinated Texas Community College Journalism Association state conference on campus.
- Implemented new strategy for in-class recruiting, open houses, and digital marketing.
- Exceeded goal of 50 percent staff retention from fall to spring semester by 25 percent (75 percent total).
- Increased number of applications from relevant majors.

Implementing initiatives that visibly reflect University priorities and student success.

- Introduced Cultural Competency training, required of all student and professional employees within the department. Our assessment of the training showed that 95 percent of staff successfully completed the training module, with their reflections showing a connection between the importance of cultural competency and their specific role in Student Publications.
- Created departmental “Academic Honors List” recognition, displaying the names of student employees with high academic achievement (3.5 GPA or higher).
- Expanded number (15) and retention (100 percent) of CommUnity Voices program participants. Work produced as part of the program, designed to increase the diversity of voices heard in The Shorthorn, netted national recognition from the Society of Professional Journalists.
- Conducted media literacy and The Shorthorn educational campaigns with on- and off-campus partners to strengthen relationships and importance of vibrant student media.
- Eliminated initiatives or programs that are out of date, over budget, or no longer fit our mission statement. This included the fall Press Fest, participation in the City of Arlington Fourth of July Parade, weekly summer printing of The Shorthorn, and others.

Section 2: Program/Service Areas and Subcomponents – Milestones and Major Accomplishments

In addition to those initiatives listed in Section 1, the department achieved the following major accomplishments:

- Hosted/coordinated the Texas Community College Journalism Association’s state conference on campus. More than 150 community college students and their advisors visited campus for 12 skills workshops, a live news demonstration linked to nine contests, and the association’s annual awards banquet. The organization’s members said the conference was the best TCCJA has had.
- Recruited more than 50 media and communication professionals who donated their time for skills training with student staff throughout the semester.
- Provided partial or full funding for more than 40 students to attend local and national conferences and conventions for skills development and networking.
- Assisted in placing 16 students in internships, part-time or full-time positions.
- For first time, presenting during New Maverick Orientation interest sessions for student media, highlighting media literacy and the need to use student media at UTA.

NEWSROOM

- The Shorthorn was named a Pacemaker among college newspapers in the U.S., the third consecutive year it has received this distinction from the Associated Collegiate Press. Each year, the Associated Collegiate Press presents collegiate journalism’s preeminent award, the
Pacemaker. There is a category for each type of publication – online, newspaper, yearbook and magazine. Entries are judged based on the following criteria: coverage and content, quality of writing and reporting, leadership, design, photography and graphics. In addition to its Pacemaker, The Shorthorn received 75 state, regional and national awards, including the best website and print edition in Texas.

- The Community Voices program celebrated two milestones: 100 percent retention of its record-high 15 volunteer writers from fall to spring, as well as a first-place regional award in from the Society of Professional Journalists. It was named a national finalist by the same group. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure The Shorthorn is representing a wide variety of voices in the community on its opinion pages while providing training for the general public on how to exercise their First Amendment right to the freedom of expression.
- Conceptualized and produced a daily podcast Monday through Friday that included audio clips and interviews with reporters and sources. The NPR-style, 15-minute podcast was designed to accommodate Shorthorn readers on the go, with an emphasis on the off-campus Maverick. In their first year producing this format, students published 143 episodes of The Shorthorn RoundUp and developed a marketing strategy for its promotion. The podcast gained an average daily audience of 50 listeners.
- Increased coverage of UTA Athletics, including funding coverage trips to conference championships beyond basketball. The coverage gave Shorthorn readers a glimpse behind the scenes and access to events they wouldn’t have otherwise.
- Two of student employees were elected to state office: Reese Oxner and Narda Perez are the parliamentarian and secretary, respectively, of the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association student leaders. Director of Student Publications Beth Francesco served her first full term as president of TIPA.

ADVERTISING
- Doubled percentage of sales tied to digital holdings to half of incoming ad revenue by creating a new set of truly digital packages and adding Facebook to digital offerings.
- Hosted the 10th Annual Housing Fair (RENT IS COMING), which drew more than 1,250 students to visit with apartment managers from the Arlington area. The event is our premier revenue-generator during the spring semester and is tied to The Shorthorn’s Housing Edition.
- Created and designed more than 240 print, online and e-news ads.
- Donated $396 for Emergency Assistance Fund through The Shorthorn’s spring charity edition.
- Students and strategies earned first-place national awards in best digital sales strategy and best special section sales strategy, among others.
- Reallocated resources and fostered new campus connections as part of a more assertive approach to recruiting/hiring that included class outreach, meeting students in their spaces on campus, and social media outreach.
- Implemented new digital classified ad sales and display strategy that emphasizes digital editions, increasing exposure and department revenue.

MARKETING
- Created and funded three-person Street Team to increase brand awareness across campus.
- Promoted The Shorthorn at more than 50 events through the year, including tabling for The Shorthorn Back to School issue, Maverick Housing Guide, Sun Belt Basketball tournament coverage, Presidential Inauguration coverage, State Legislature coverage, Health & Wellness issue, Kissed by The Shorthorn gallery, Open House recruitment, Community Voices series, Housing Fair, Round Up podcast, Shorthorn recruitment, Grad School Guide, Guide to
Downtown, News Engagement Day, Drink It Up, Homecoming issue & participation, Basketball Preview, Pic for Treat Halloween gallery and Dining Guide.

- Developed and implemented rack redistribution and clean-up plan.
- Shared more than 1,400 photos for 16 MavMoments galleries that drew almost 49,000 website page views.
- Used analytical data from theshorthorn.com, e-newsletter and social media accounts to create and distribute more than 70 news readership, advertising and management team analytics reports throughout the year.

CREATIVE SERVICES

- Completed 67 photography, videography and graphic design projects for on-campus departments to date (June) this academic year. More than half, or 39 projects, were completed for departments outside of Student Affairs, and 10 were long-term, multi-part projects.
- Expanded the Creative Services student team to include a student manager/assistant and three creative assistants to accommodate increased long-term project workload.
- Developed and implemented marketing strategies and sales pieces.

PRODUCTION/TECHNOLOGY

- Achieved 100 percent compliance in encryption, inventory and web modernization areas.
- Successfully purchased and implemented new color printer, saving department more than $2,000 in initial costs.

Section 3: Areas for Improvement in 2018-19

- Readership fragmentation among print and digital formats remains an industry issue. We must continue to assess how to meet reader needs and act swiftly to create or amend products to increase both readership and engagement.
- The national attitude and treatment of journalists and news organizations is having a chilling trickle-down effect at the state and local levels. Source treatment of journalists, including our own student journalists, is hostile and affecting our learning environment. We must find ways to educate our community on the importance of a free press and to strengthen relationships with university policy makers.
- Our revenue foundation is shaky, and creating new initiatives is imperative to our operating funds. With on-campus competition for sponsorships and revenue, we must seek collaborative partnerships and creative solutions to maintain status quo service to our students. Our goal is to remain an innovator in our field.
- Student staff management is a focal point going into 2018-19, as we welcome talented students and face a widening generation gap between the student staff and professional team. Accountability, task management and motivation among this generation of students will be key to our success.

Section 4: Community Partnerships & Academic Collaborations

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Hosted and coordinated all aspects of the Texas Community College Journalism Association state conference at UTA on Oct. 6. The event drew 158 conference participants from community colleges around the state for a day of live news contests, 12 skills workshops and an awards banquet. This partnership was an important recruitment opportunity.
• Co-sponsored the Society of Professional Journalists Fort Worth Chapter’s Career Conference on Feb. 10, as well as several journalism panel discussions.
• Worked with the Texas Intercollegiate Press Association, whose annual state convention was in Dallas this March, to arrange that the live sports contest be held at UTA in conjunction with our colleagues on the Movin’ Mavs. Doug Garner and the team held a media day and two exhibition games, which were covered by TIPA participants. TIPA donated $300 to the Movin’ Mavs scholarship fund.
• Co-sponsored the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas’ Open Government DFW-area training session on campus on April 17.

ACADEMIC/UNIVERSITY COLLABORATIONS
• Presented educational workshops about student journalism and The Shorthorn to the Staff Advisory Council, Transfer Orientation Leaders and Freshman Orientation Leaders.
• Co-sponsored Google News Lab on campus on Feb. 24.
• Introduced during New Maverick Orientation interest sessions focused on student media, highlighting media literacy and the need to use student media at UTA.

Section 5: Awards and Accolades

Student Publications and The Shorthorn brought 76 awards to UTA during 2017-18. They include:

Associated Collegiate Press
Newspaper Pacemaker
3rd place, Multimedia Story
8th place, Weekly Newspaper

College Media Association Pinnacle Awards
First place, Best Ad Supplement/Special Section
First place, Best Social Media Strategy
Second place, Best Online Ad
Second place, Best Newspaper Front Page
Second place, Best Feature Photo
Third place, Best Social Media Main Page

Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence finalists (Region 8)
Best Affiliated Website: Staff
Best Use of Multimedia: Staff
Sports writing: Arianna Vedia
Editorial writing: Staff
Sports photography: Alexis Austin
Online news reporting: Madelyn Edwards
Online sports reporting: Arianna Vedia
Online Opinion & Commentary: CommUNITY Voices Staff
Online/Digital Feature Videography: Shay Cohen

Society of Professional Journalists Mark of Excellence national finalist
Best Affiliated Website: Staff
Texas Intercollegiate Press Association
Jeff Henderson Memorial Scholarship: Arianna Vedia
Photojournalist of the Year: Duy Vu

Live contest
Best of Show: The Shorthorn

1st place
Copy Editing: Caitlin Sherrill
Spanish TV Announcing: Narda Perez

2nd place
TV Announcing (English): Nick Tarrant

3rd place
Editorial Writing: Shay Cohen
Headlines: Emily Hayden
TV News Writing: Nick Tarrant
Radio Advertising: Rebekah Morr

Honorable Mention
Print News Writing: Sorayah Zahir
TV Sports Writing: Arianna Vedia

Previously published categories
1st place
Breaking News Multimedia Story: Madelyn Edwards, Anthony Gomez, Duy Vu (Protest)
Breaking News Video Story: Mara Lopez, Narda Perez, Dylan Bradley (Executive order)
General News Multimedia Story: Staff (Thousands rally)
Feature Story: Samantha Douty (Police corporal)
Short Feature Story: Shay Cohen (Cricket)
Ad Design Interactive: Erin Aley (McDonalds)
Advertising Campaign: Tadiana Martinez (Housing)
Editorial Page Design: Cody Bahn (Dallas)
Overall Design/Newspaper: Staff (Homecoming edition)
Program Production Audio: Nick Tarrant (Ep 65)
Special Edition Design Online: Staff (Healthy Living)
Use of Data: Staff (Crime map)
Breaking News Photo: Duy Vu (Yelling)
Feature Photo: Alexis Austin (Homecoming)

2nd place
Breaking News Video Story: Sergio Recio, Shay Cohen, Bridget Craig (Inauguration protest)
Sports Column: Arianna Vedia (LGBTQ)
Ad Design Interactive: Tadiana Martinez (Housing)
Ad Design Static: Andrea Ocampo (J. Gilligan’s)
Overall Design/Website: Staff
Sports Action Photo: Daniel Carde (Little Rock)
Section 6: Feature Story

In its second full year, The Shorthorn’s CommUNITY Voices program gave UTA students the training, confidence and space to exercise their First Amendment right to free expression. In doing so, they developed real-world work samples, practical pitching and editing experience, and earned national acclaim for their work. Students began the program after a content audit revealed a need for greater variety in the student voices represented in The Shorthorn.

Community Voices columnists are selected by The Shorthorn editors at the start of each semester to be regular contributors for that semester. Columnists write a minimum of two opinion columns per semester and are encouraged to actively participate in social media conversations. They also participate in writing and
issue-driven workshops. The program had 100 percent retention of writers from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018.

Editors and writers this year planned several opinion series tied to topics of importance to the campus community: mental health, diversity, women’s issues, and more. They published approximately 30 columns each this fall and spring, with 15 contributors. Their work was recognized by the Society of Professional Journalists as the best (first place) in Region 8 (Texas and Oklahoma) and the top three in the country.