Northwestern Global Strategic Plan
White Paper Series

The Northwestern global strategic planning process builds upon important campus-wide planning conversations about Northwestern’s global direction over the last ten years. For the current process, over 200 Northwestern University stakeholders have been engaged in conversations that will form the basis of the strategic plan:

- **Global Mapping Project (Fall 2018)** – Northwestern Buffett staff conducted a thorough analysis of the University’s current global programming and collaborations, working with partners in each of the schools to understand Northwestern’s global footprint.

- **Northwestern Strategic Plan Contact Groups and White Paper Series (Spring 2019 – Ongoing)** – The planning process is structured around a set of priority areas, which are addressed by committees of faculty, administration, student and alumni leaders:
  
  - Impactful Global Research
  - Strategic Global Partnerships
  - Multilingualism
  - Global Learning
  - Role of Northwestern Buffett
  - Infrastructure and Logistics
  - International Faculty, Students and Scholars
  - Role of Information Technologies
  - Alumni Engagement
  - Data Analytics
  - Global Reputation

The findings of these groups are defined in white papers drafted by the groups’ co-conveners. Key ideas from these groups and the white papers they author will be further synthesized into the Northwestern Global Strategic Plan and its implementation.

The full strategic plan will be shared with the Board of Trustees at its March 2020 meeting.

*Please direct comments about the Northwestern Global Strategic Plan and the preliminary findings as described in the White Paper Series to Meghan Ozaroski at m-ozaroski@northwestern.edu.*
Northwestern Global Strategic Plan White Paper Series:  
Global Reputation  
Draft – December 20, 2019

Key Questions:
• How should the University improve its international recognition and global reputation?
• How can Northwestern best connect with global audiences?
• How can Northwestern get the results of our research into the hands of next users around the world?

Background
Many factors contribute to a university’s global reputation. For Northwestern, key drivers include:
  o the quality of our faculty’s research and teaching
  o the contributions of our students and alumni in the world
  o the quality and nature of our global collaborations and network
  o sharing the stories of our global collaborations and their impact

Under the auspices of the Northwestern Global Strategic Plan we will strategically amplify our strengths through a coordinated global reputation plan, while taking advantage of emerging opportunities to further elevate Northwestern globally. For example, we will leverage the Global Alliance (see Strategic Global Partnerships white paper) to connect with new audiences, and implement communication strategies that will amplify the exceptional work of Northwestern faculty, students, and alumni in the world. By fostering close working relationships across institutions and national borders, we will naturally increase awareness of Northwestern’s strengths, as well as develop new strengths in collaborations with new partners.

Additionally, key to improving both our ability to impact the world and our global reputation is the marketing and communication of the new knowledge created by our faculty, staff, students and alumni, and the impact of that work. Northwestern’s overall trajectory in domestic rankings is steadily improving, but our global rankings have not kept pace with our domestic rise (see Data Analytics white paper). While rankings comprise merely one part of global (and domestic) reputation, the data from the Office of Global Marketing and Communication’s (OGMC) multiple reputation studies, as well as consistent feedback from faculty, clearly shows a gap between performance and reputation as well as a name recognition challenge on both US coasts and internationally. Without concerted and coordinated efforts to raise our reputation both nationally and internationally, we will lose our momentum, and risk widening gaps or creating new gaps in awareness around the globe.

Global Reputation Plan
This white paper seeks to develop the foundation for a strategic marketing and communications plan, to be implemented in coordination with the development of the Global Alliance. Its purpose is to elevate the global academic reputation of Northwestern based on both our long-term commitment to be a premier, comprehensive research university and the output of the completed Northwestern Global Strategic Plan. As part of the global strategic plan, communications are necessary to inform and engage all stakeholders and partners. We will identify global opportunities that are currently underleveraged, and elevate our global reputation further as global strategic plan matures and presents new opportunities.

To succeed, a multi-faceted approach will be required:

Increase global awareness of faculty accomplishments, research output, and collaborations, and research activities through the Global Alliance (see Impactful Global Research white paper)
• Identify and engage faculty with global networks
• Collaborate around major foreign prizes and recognition (Nobel, Yidan)
• Create advanced awareness of faculty’s international travel (e.g. database?) to coordinate events and opportunities with key stakeholders (collaborators, alumni, donors, media, et al.)
• Develop opportunities for increased intellectual engagement with Northwestern’s global alumni
• Connect “Faculty Pathways Initiative” to provide international travel opportunities for Assistant and Associate-level faculty
• Leverage relevant faculty influencers to amplify University messages, research, etc on social media

Utilize international events to increase exposure and collaboration among all Northwestern constituencies with global peers (see Intl Students, Faculty and Scholars white paper)
• Enable Northwestern’s ability to host world-class international conferences
• Host workshops and events in Evanston and Chicago that bring in international researchers and practitioners
• Develop and/or enhance signature international conference(s), fellowship(s), etc

Leverage alumni to increase international engagement and extend the reach of the Northwestern network (see Alumni white paper)
• Connect with alumni who are journalists in key international markets
• Connect with alumni teaching in universities abroad
• Host alumni events in key international cities/regions (Asia, Western Europe, etc)
  o Enlist international alumni to help spread the word
  o Provide international alumni with talking points on the University’s key global messages
• Employ alumni influencers to amplify University messages on social media

Develop key global marketing and communications platform(s) for internal and external purposes
• Develop multifaceted, integrated marketing and communications strategy to support key messages
• Work with key marketing and communications partners across all schools and units to develop strategies and tactics that elevate the University’s global rankings (see Data Analytics white paper and Impactful Global Research white paper)

Develop public relations strategy for global storytelling and media opportunities
• Create and implement a calendar of international and globally-oriented communications, including international media advisories, press releases, stories, emails, announcements, conferences, presentations, et al.
• Develop and execute a media relations strategy that drives consistent messaging and spurs reputation lift across the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA), and the Asia Pacific (APAC)
• Leverage relevant international work (e.g. research, programs, partnerships, etc) across all Northwestern constituencies (e.g. faculty, staff, students, alumni), with particular emphasis on Global Alliance activities
• Amplify the voice of the University in international communications, whether preparing appropriate subject matter experts, writing on global topics for diverse audiences, and/or providing an international spokesperson
• Foster international thought leadership opportunities for University faculty, securing high-profile speaking opportunities at prestigious conferences and industry events

Revamp online global presence to ensure that all digital properties uniformly reflect Northwestern’s role as a leading global research university
• Review and consolidate existing global sites to organize content by prioritizing the needs of external users and audiences rather than internal University organization
• Develop strategy for Northwestern’s global social media channels and work in collaboration with schools and units to coordinate digital & social media efforts across the University
• Ensure that internal websites provide global staff access to marketing tools and content
• Focus on multilingual accessibility (see Multilingualism whitepaper)

Execute a targeted reputation investment strategy
This strategy takes into consideration the limited resources across the University at the current moment by focusing our immediate efforts in one location, but with the potential to scale over time.
We recommend multiple schools and units rally together to consolidate efforts, leveraging collective strengths on one key geographic market. This initial location could be associated with a partner location within the Global Alliance. We would support that location with a strategically targeted marketing and communications plan with incremental paid, earned, and owned channel efforts. For instance, in one market, we would combine efforts from the following units:

- OGMC leads publicity and press coverage with input from all schools
- Northwestern Buffett and the Office for International Relations leverage global partnerships
- Alumni Relations and Development mobilizes alumni events
- Admissions hosts information sessions
- The Office of the Provost coordinates faculty, seminars, forums and honors

Criteria for selecting test market (as well as expected outcomes to measure):
1. Greatest opportunity to increase our name recognition and define our impact
2. Depth and breadth of research strength and/or gap in awareness
3. World and domestic reputation/rankings influence (our opportunity compared to our peers)
4. Opportunistic alumni support
5. Admissions opportunities/needs
6. Most meaningful and impactful content/stories that will resonate with audiences in market
7. Connection via Global Alliance

Once the test market is selected, based on above criteria, we will create a tactical plan with the following phases:

- Phase One: Baseline quantitative and qualitative research to help validate market selection and establish benchmarks
- Phase Two: Create comprehensive University-wide plan including owned, earned, and paid media
- Phase Three: Implementation
- Phase Four: Measure the results, gain insights
- Phase Five: Adapt and scale

Global Research and Measurement (see Data Analytics white paper and Multilingualism white paper)
- Research our reputation with non-US, non-Northwestern audiences
- Research top media outlets, English and non-English, to better target them successfully
- Research patterns of what international strategies other universities have successfully employed
- Perform audit of internal translation capabilities currently in use (e.g. machine and human translations utilized by Meridian 180, Kellogg’s contractor, Office for International Relations’ faculty assistance)
- Perform audit of Master’s programs across campus to better understand their current international outreach and activities, and how they could a) be better coordinated and b) elevate reputation

Measures of Global Success
We would set annual benchmarks over a five-year period, with specific goals to track:

- Improved global rankings
- Increased international social media followers and engagement
- Improvements in Brand Reputation Study replication measures
- Increased Share of Voice
- Improved awareness of international engagement by highlighting:
  - Collaborative research initiatives
  - Collaborative educational initiatives
  - New global partnerships
  - Increased international fundraising
  - Increased international alumni engagement

Budgetary implications
There are many global activities occurring across the University. A unified mission from the Northwestern Global Strategic Plan, as well as better internal coordination, will lead to increased efficiencies.
Additionally, an investment will be needed to communicate and amplify the innovative global work Northwestern will increasingly be generating. With a new Global Strategic Plan, and a new Global Alliance, there will be incremental opportunities that we are not currently staffed or budgeted to support. We want to ensure that going forward we reap sufficient reputational benefits for all our efforts in this time of increased global emphasis.

We therefore recommend additional investment, including, but not limited to:

- Hiring senior-level, university-wide marketing/communications staff member in OGMC dedicated to global
- Hiring an external agency, PR firm, and/or independent contractor(s) with relationships focused on global markets or located abroad
- Funding test market strategy, including but limited to:
  - Baseline quantitative and qualitative research
  - Out of Home promotional materials and placements
  - Multimedia production
  - Paid digital media placements
  - Social media promotion
  - Print production and mailings
- Replicating brand reputation study, bolstered with additional global sample
- Increased alumni engagement in international markets
- Enabling Northwestern to host more international conferences

Timeline
Many of the strategies in this plan could begin to be implemented in the next 1-3 years with the proper investment, staffing, and coordination.

Conclusion
Northwestern is continuing to grow globally, bolstering both our international relationships and our aspirations. This global reputation plan harnesses those aspirations by bringing an increased strategic focus to our collective efforts, employing an efficient and targeted approach (see “targeted reputation investment strategy” above), and redoubling concerted efforts to communicate all our global initiatives effectively. This white paper lays out a clear plan to support the Northwestern Global Strategic Plan to ensure that the University elevates its global reputation to the maximum extent possible.

Global Reputation Contact Group Information:

- Conveners:
  - Annelise Riles – Exec Dir, Buffett Institute for Global Affairs & Associate Provost for Global Affairs
  - Jeri Ward – Vice President, Office of Global Marketing and Communications
- Staff Leads:
  - Meghan Ozaroski – Associate Director, Strategic Initiatives, Buffett
  - Martin Wilson – Director, Creative Production, OGMC
- Contact Group Participants:
  - Coleen Coleman – Associate Dean, School of Education and Social Policy
  - Kyle Delaney – Executive Director, Strategic Initiatives and Marketing, McCormick
  - Natasha DiPrima – AVP, Marketing and Communications, Alumni Relations and Development
  - Marni Futterman – Executive Director of External Relations and Chief Communications Officer, Kellogg
  - Edward Gibson – Associate Dean, Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences
  - Matthew Grayson – Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Engineering, McCormick
  - Andy Madorsky – Assistant Vice President, Chief Creative Officer, Global Marketing and Communications
  - Janka Pieper – Director of Communications, Office of International Relations
  - Fran Petty – Chief of Staff, Weinberg Dean’s Office
  - Amit Prachand – Assistant Vice President, Information and Analytics, Administration and Planning
  - Bob Rowley – AVP, Media Relations, Global Marketing and Communications
  - Lois Trautvetter – Director, MS in Higher Education Administration and Policy Program, SESP