

TomKat Communications Capstone Project

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Project Goal

Develop communication strategy that will effectively engage students to help the UC reach carbon neutrality by 2025



Background

What is the Carbon Neutrality Initiative (CNI)?

- Set by President Janet Napolitano in 2013
- Net zero greenhouse gases from buildings and vehicles by 2025
- Issues:
 - Top-down
 - No budget
 - Feasible?





Target Audience

Broad student
support

Specific
technical asks



UC student body

Student leaders

UC administration

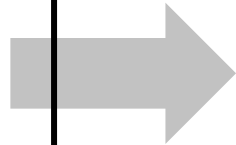


Target Audience



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Research Questions

1. What are UC student values?
2. What motivates students to become engaged?
3. How aware are students of the CNI?
4. Are students willing to accept trade-offs to achieve CNI?
5. How do students feel about purchasing offsets to achieve CNI?
6. What messaging frames might be most effective at engaging students in CNI?



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1. What are UC student values?
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6. What messaging frames might be most effective at engaging students in CNI?



Frames & Messaging

"We Can't Wait"

"The UC Carbon Challenge"

"Be a UC Climate Solutionary"

"UC Carbon Responsibility"

"Climate Justice is Social Justice"



Focus Group Findings

1. "We can't wait" or " _____ can't wait."

Renewable Energy CAN'T WAIT.

Energy Efficiency CAN'T WAIT.

Divestment CAN'T WAIT.

Melting Glaciers CAN'T WAIT.

Social Justice CAN'T WAIT.

WE CAN'T WAIT.

Introduction

Target Audience

Research Questions

Message Testing

Next Steps



Focus Group Findings

1. "We can't wait" or " _____ can't wait"

- Sense of urgency good (to extent)
- But not actionable
 - What can I do? How does it apply to me?
- May be unclear
 - Can't wait for what?
- May discourage students rather than inspire



Focus Group Findings

2. "The UC Carbon Challenge"

- Lack of strong inter-campus competition
 - No UC-wide identity
- Competition may work within a campus
 - E.g. between residence halls or buildings
- Cool Campus Challenge was unsuccessful



Focus Group Findings



3. "Be a UC Climate Solutionary"






Focus Group Findings



3. "Be a UC Climate Solutionary"




**Put your foot down
to reduce emissions.**



It's the #UCThingToDo



**When we compost,
we spread the love.**



It's the #UCThingToDo



**Increase your miles
to reduce your impact.**



It's the #UCThingToDo



Focus Group Findings

3. "Be a UC Climate Solutionary"

- Good to focus on personal agency
- Like the use of #hashtag
- May translate this into institutional pressure
- Don't like the word "solutionary"



Focus Group Findings

4. “UC Carbon Responsibility”

- Responsibility is a good frame
- But not actionable for individuals

“Ownership is good, but how does this translate to buildings? Students don’t have ownership over buildings and those decisions”



Focus Group Findings

5. “Climate Justice is Social Justice”

- Strongest positive reaction from students
 - Humanizes the issue
 - Opportunity for coalition-building
 - UCLA has a big push for social justice
- Possibly too ambiguous
 - Connection may not be clear to everyone



Key takeaways

Messages should be:

- Actionable
- Relatable (human component)
- Easy understood
- Inspiring
- Campus-specific
- Be transparent in shortcomings & progress

Recommendations/Next Steps

1. Continue conducting focus groups
2. Analyze results of student survey
3. Reach out to Social Justice community



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Questions?

