



Annual Report of the Laurier Chair in Brand Communication
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Dr. Brad Davis
Associate Professor, Marketing
Laurier Chair in Brand Communication
Wilfrid Laurier University, [7](#)
Waterloo, Ontario

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BUILDING CANADA'S BEST BUSINESS SCHOOL

Message from the Laurier Chair in Brand Communication Dr. Brad Davis



Laurier's Marketing and Brand Communication programs are among Canada's leading providers of talent to the management teams of established brands across the country. Our success in developing these programs at Laurier has resulted in outstanding student enrolment and alumni success.

Brand Communication Management and Marketing Communication courses are the most popular electives in Laurier's Marketing Area. This year, for the fourth consecutive year, over 200 students took the core courses for the Brand Communication concentration – 90 percent of all marketing students.

We are looking forward to our move into the Global Innovation Exchange. When this new home for Laurier's School of Business & Economics (SBE) and Department of Mathematics opens in the fall of 2015, it will provide a welcome relief to our space limitations and will greatly increase our ability to expand the delivery of key courses in the Brand Communication program.

In addition to its beautiful, functional style, the Global Innovation Exchange will also offer many opportunities for engagement with Waterloo Region's businesses and high tech community. Its new design, teaching methods and technology will position Laurier to support Waterloo Region's innovative community with pioneering work in brand communications.

In preparation for the opening of the new business school, I had the pleasure of working with Andy Macaulay, a Laurier alumnus and Canadian advertising icon, to develop a new brand strategy for the School of Business & Economics. After several weeks of consultation with faculty, administrators, alumni and students, Andy developed a new brand definition for the School:

The Laurier School of Business & Economics provides ...

An immersive education that produces adaptive graduates primed to succeed in a world of ever-increasing complexity.

The brand definition has been very well received by faculty members. The definition has three key pillars. The description of Laurier's programs as "**immersive**" captures the importance we place on experiential learning. We provide an exceptional number of curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for our students to apply their knowledge, including live-case studies, competitions, collaborations, co-op placements and club activities. Through their active engagement, Laurier students continually increase their skills in solving problems, taking risks and creating new opportunities.

As a result of our efforts, Laurier business students are the most engaged university students in Canada. About 80 percent of our students take part in extra-curricular activities – that's twice the national average – and no other business school has more student-run clubs and associations. Through this immersive education our students develop both personal and professional strengths.

The second pillar of the definition is the development of "**adaptive**" graduates. In a business environment characterized by rapid paradigm levels of change, flexibility and adaptability are critical. These skills are not found in any textbook or PowerPoint slide deck. Our students become more flexible and adaptive to change as they take part in the many practical learning experiences built into Laurier's immersive approach. They develop stronger emotional intelligence, including the ability to accept the new norm of continuous change and unstructured environments. The students also gain the social intelligence to work effectively in teams and in a diverse workplace.

Finally, we chose the phrase "**primed to succeed**" to stress the responsibility that still falls upon the students and alumni to make the most of their education.

The new brand definition for the School of Business & Economics is both descriptive and aspirational. SBE faculty applauded the definition as an accurate articulation of the unique aspects of the Laurier educational experience. It has also become the criteria we use to evaluate current programs and new course proposals.

A key aspect of our teaching is to have our students hear from frontline industry leaders on the ever-changing and increasingly complex marketplace. We welcomed Lindsay Duffield (BBA '79), President of Jaguar Land Rover Canada, as SBE's fifth "CEO In-Residence." Mr. Duffield began his residency with a keynote address on the revival of the Jaguar Land Rover brand in North America.

We also sponsored 10 students to attend the high-profile Tech Leadership Conference held in Kitchener in May 2014. At this sold-out event, Laurier students were exposed to a variety of industry speakers, including keynote speakers Kristine Stewart, President of Twitter Canada, and Scott Bedbury, a branding icon and the architect behind the growth of Nike and Starbucks.

Brand Communication faculty are continually supporting and influencing Laurier's Marketing Area, ensuring that the role of brand development and communications is well represented within the course content. For example, in the fall of 2013, Brand Communications helped develop and launch Canada's first-ever MBA specializing in Golf and Resort Industry Management. Founded with the support of the Golf Management Institute of Canada, the program represents a shift away from the traditional view of the MBA as a generalist degree to one that can build industry-specific skills. The Golf and Resort Industry Management MBA, beginning in September 2014, is now supported by a variety of leading sports equipment, resort and golf equipment brands and features many opportunities for Laurier's trademark internships and co-op placements.



Among our many student successes this year, an MBA student team captured a first-place finish in the prestigious Aspen International Case Competition in New York City (left). Laurier's winning team defeated 24 other teams, including representatives from the Schulich School of Business at York University, the London School of Economics and the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. This competition stresses solutions to business cases that emphasize the importance of addressing social, environmental and ethical issues in contemporary business growth. It was a second show of excellence for Laurier; we also took home the top prize in 2011.

In the following pages I've expanded on many of the activities surrounding the Brand Communication program during the 2013 – 2014 academic year. As always, I will be happy to elaborate on the overview and would welcome any ideas or input from our practitioner partners.

With many thanks for your continued support,

Dr. Brad Davis, Associate Professor, Marketing
Laurier Chair in Brand Communication
Wilfrid Laurier University, School of Business & Economics

1. Developing the Curriculum

MAKING COURSE CHANGES

Marketing at Laurier is undergoing a significant re-design, which will involve major changes in two or three core courses, the addition of new sections to existing courses and the introduction of some innovative, new courses. In preparation for these changes, the Brand Communication Area spent much of the past year redesigning and modifying key existing courses. Currently our courses include:

BU432 - Consumer Behaviour

BU470 - Brand Communication

BU472 - Marketing Communications

And any one (1) of:

BU412 - Services Marketing Management

BU422 - Marketing Research

BU452 - Marketing Strategy

BU462 - Business-to-Business Marketing

BU469 - Global Marketing Management

BU479 - High-Tech Marketing

BU482 - Sales Management

BU492 - Seminar in Marketing

BU492K - Social Networks and Marketing

Our course re-design will ensure that Laurier students will receive an advanced education in Brand Communication, delivered with innovative teaching methods. One example is our *Marketing Research* course, which went through a thorough review and will be re-branded as *Consumer Insights*, featuring the presentation of more contemporary research methods.

We also have tested BrandPro, a computer simulation that allows students to experience decision-making in brand management within a competitive environment. Next year, the simulation will be incorporated into a course to provide another experience of workforce decisions.

Brand Communication's *Social Networks and Marketing* course has been so successful at the undergraduate level that we are now developing an equivalent course for the MBA program.

DEVELOPING THE DATA ANALYTICS PROGRAM INITIATIVE

BU495Q, a new course in *Business Analytics*, is undergoing the administrative approval process in preparation for its introduction in the winter 2015 term. The course is another step in Brand Comm's development of a program in "Big Data". *Business Analytics* will be cross-disciplinary. The Operations Management group will deliver courses on the more technical elements of data analysis and the Marketing Area will focus on customer relationship management applications.

To support the focus on business analytics, Laurier's Marketing Area has added two faculty members, Dr. Ping Zhao from Cornell University and Dr. Zhenfeng Ma from the University of the Ontario Institute of Technology. Both specialize in data analytics and will work closely with our faculty's branding specialists to ensure students understand the role of data analytics and "Big Data" in brand building.

We are also exploring the possibility of building data analytics into Laurier's popular Math/BBA double-degree program. This unique Laurier program allows students to specialize in both mathematics and business. The math skills of these students make them ideal candidates to learn the applications of data analytics to customer relationship marketing and brand building.

GROWING OUR ROLE IN LAURIER LAUNCHPAD

All entrepreneurial activities at Laurier funnel into a senior-level course and program called LaunchPad, designed to help students and alumni from all faculties create a real enterprise. Before enrolling in the course, each student or team (from the Waterloo, Toronto or Brantford campuses) must submit their new venture idea, which is reviewed for its viability and scalability. Once admitted, the students are personally guided through the creation of their enterprise by experienced staff that teach, coach and mentor each student. After completing the program, they can continue to access Laurier LaunchPad's resources.

Students in the LaunchPad course have a strategic connection and direct pathway into the Waterloo innovation and entrepreneurship community, in addition to numerous connections with government and business. They also have access to Waterloo Region's rich environment for business development, including exposure to new technology, established partnerships, support services and connections to capital, research and development support, and commercialization expertise.

After providing significant informal assistance to LaunchPad students, faculty members in Brand Communication are now working toward establishing a more formal role in the program. Our goal is to ensure LaunchPad students understand and appreciate the importance of building a brand into the earliest stages of an entrepreneurial venture.



By increasing our presence in LaunchPad and Laurier's other successful entrepreneurship programs, our team will assist in the founding of powerful new Canadian brands. The Brand Communication Area is energized and prepared for this important work ahead.

PARTNERING WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO'S DIGITAL ARTS PROGRAM

In an exciting partnership effort, Laurier's Marketing instructors are bringing expertise to the University of Waterloo's digital arts programs at its Stratford campus. Our faculty is teaching courses at both the undergraduate and graduate programs in digital technology, including the Master of Digital Experience Innovation degree.

To expand our involvement in this partnership, discussions are underway on the possibility of joint courses, workshops and other approaches to bring brand communication and strategy more formally into the University of Waterloo's Digital Arts curriculum. Adding a deeper understanding of brand and marketing communication strategy will produce much stronger Digital Arts graduates, capable of making a significant immediate impact in new ventures and established corporations.

2. Engaging the Brand Communication Community

REACHING OUT WITH A DEDICATED BLOG

One of the top graduates of our marketing program, Mike Leon, has been teaching in the Brand Communication program for the past four years. Mike is also a graduate of the LaunchPad program and founder of *Brand Heroes*, a marketing and brand communication agency specializing in social network tools. To help build a stronger brand communication community in Canada, Mike has launched a blog on brand communication and management (www.brandsmartie.com).

The site is currently building up its content and will feature contributions from Laurier faculty and industry leaders. We are also exploring ways to build the site into our brand courses and will be promoting it to a wider audience during July and August. We intend the blog to become a powerful platform for the exchange of ideas and expertise, serving academics, students and industry professionals.

THE LAURIER ADVERTISING CLUB

With the support of the Brand Communication team, Laurier students will soon launch Canada's first university student club focused on advertising and marketing communications. The AdHawks Laurier Advertising Club will coordinate activities with the existing Laurier Marketing Association but focus on the field of advertising. The Brand Communication faculty will assist the AdHawks by arranging tours of advertising agencies, sending students to the industry's leading award shows and events, hosting guest speakers from the advertising industry and staging other events to bring the students and industry together. The AdHawks Laurier Advertising Club's website is currently under construction (www.adhawk Laurier.com) and is expected to launch this fall.

The creation of the Club is another positive indication of the interest and excitement the Brand Communication program has developed within Laurier's School of Business & Economics. By offering more immersive experiences, the Club will also help to attract more students into the marketing communications program and profession.

3. Developing Teaching Materials

This year, the Brand Communication program invited many practitioners into the classroom to work with students on real brand marketing issues during our 20 live-case exercises. These live-case studies provide a strong immersive experience for our students. They also often evolve into published cases that can support brand education across the country. For example, this fall the Brand Communication program will publish a brand case study based on a successful live-case session for *Awake Chocolate*.

As Laurier's Chair of Brand Communication, Dr. Brad Davis attended the North American Case Research (NACRA) conference in Victoria, British Columbia and presented a branding case called "Graf Hockey". He was named Best New Case Writer at the conference.

As a result of the great success with branding case studies, our faculty goal is to submit at least one branding case every year to the NACRA conference and the Administrative Sciences Association of Canada (ASAC) conference. This will ensure that Laurier's branding cases receive peer feedback to ensure quality. Most importantly, our cases can then reach instructors from across the country who are seeking Canadian brand cases for their courses.

Although today's students live in a world of mobile communications, on-demand video and digital downloads, case studies are still usually presented in a printed format. The Brand Communication faculty is exploring the benefits, costs and logistics of using new technologies. We are considering the production of brand cases that feature digital downloads of interviews with the central characters, as well as delivering case information by video and other new media to bring greater realism and energy to brand case exercises.

4. Creating an Advisory Council

Over the past two years, Brand Communications at Laurier has recruited a wide range of advisors with experience and expertise in academics and key industries. This year, a number of our Advisory Council members served as guest lecturers and provided advice in our course content. In the upcoming months, Advisory Council members will also be asked to engage with our students and branding community through our new blog site and the activities of the AdHawks Laurier Advertising Club.

To expand our circle of advisors, meetings will take place throughout the year with other experienced brand marketing and marketing communications professionals. We will be requesting their involvement in both the delivery and promotion of Brand Communications at Laurier. Plans are also underway to create of a symposium series that will bring together the industry's leading academics and professionals to discuss key issues facing Canadian marketing.

Current Advisory Council membership includes:

- Dr. Lindsay McShane (Associate Professor, University of Carlton University)
- Dr. Tim Dewhirst (Associate Professor, University of Guelph)
- Dr. Sara Wilner (Associate Professor, Laurier)
- Andy Macaulay (Rethink)
- Richard Burjaw (Vice President, Brand, Category Marketing and Food Services, Starbucks)
- Bruce Brown (Vice-President, Marketing, Unitron Canada)
- Ian MacKellar (Creative Director, Ogilvy Mathers)
- Lindsay Duffield (President, Jaguar Landrover Canada)
- David Bigioni (Vice-President, Marketing, Molson Coors)

5. Conclusion

This year, the Brand Communication faculty members have focused on course development and content in preparation for the upcoming curriculum re-design in Marketing. We have continued to see great results in our student levels of enrolment, engagement and excellence.

In the coming months, our team will be discussing ways to celebrate the role of Brand Communication in 2015, when Laurier launches Canada's Best Business School within the new Global Innovation Exchange.

We will be pleased to share these plans as they become available.

The faculty members remain deeply committed to ensuring that Laurier's business students receive an outstanding education in Brand Communications. We sincerely appreciate the support and encouragement we have been given by Marketing Communications Education Trust as we carry out this important mission.

