



BVK'S BRAND ACADEMY FOR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

In today's competitive higher education marketplace, colleges and universities increasingly recognize the need for strategic brand positioning. But spending the time and money to launch and fully leverage a brand campaign is often more than institutions are prepared to take on, especially if they need the expertise and talents of an outside partner.

BVK created its new Brand Academy to help. With more than twenty years' experience working with colleges and universities to uncover and position differentiating brands, BVK has developed a rigorous and reliable method of helping institutions stand out from the crowd through compelling messaging and authentic experiences. Typically, our team of creative marketing and higher education professionals strives to forge long-term partnerships with clients, working alongside them to uncover and position their identities through a process that requires six months to a year or longer. Now, if we can't share our talents with every client, we can make our method available in a more accessible format, sharing our expertise through a program of workshops designed to teach institutions how to develop, leverage, and maximize the impact of their brands on their own, in less time and at lower cost.

Through the Brand Academy, colleges and universities can develop their capabilities and learn required skills through a curriculum customized to your specific needs. Whether your institution is building a brand from scratch, integrating an existing brand into new units across campus, or looking to refresh a successful campaign for changing circumstances, the Brand Academy offers the step-by-step how-to guidance of an expert partner in a format tailored to suit your circumstances: in-person or virtual, big groups or small, as stand-alone workshops or in combination—all at a cost you can afford.

CURRICULUM

The Brand Academy workshops are organized into three series that explain BVK's approach to developing and leveraging a differentiating brand position:

- Brand 100 Series: Expression—The Basics of Brand Development
- Brand 200 Series: Experience—Living Your Brand
 - > STEP 1: Align Your Strategy
 - > STEP 2: Align Your People
 - > STEP 3: Align Your Communications
- Brand 300 Series: Impact—Differentiated Market Positioning

Central to BVK's approach is the rigorous use of data and a dedication to helping you authentically live your brand by delivering a brand experience to students and stakeholders that lives up to the promise of your brand messaging.

The workshops are available as described. However, they can also be modified or combined in ways that best meet the unique needs of your college or university. Costs listed are approximations and may vary depending on modifications to the workshop, the amount of pre-work and preparation required, and the travel entailed. Package discounts are also available for multiple workshops. Final workshop content and costs will be determined in consultation with clients regarding their specific needs.

**For more information or to schedule a
Brand Academy workshop, contact:**

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Brand 100 Series: Expression

The Basics of Brand Development

BVK's "Brand 100" workshop series teaches you the building blocks of a successful brand initiative, from gaining buy-in from campus leaders and stakeholders and ensuring you have the right organizational structure to the nuts-and-bolts data-gathering and analysis required to uncover and launch a differentiating brand identity. The workshops can be offered as stand-alone courses or in tandem as a series. They can help fill the gap in the absence of a full-service partner or better prepare your institution for a successful consulting engagement.

101: Why Your College or University Needs a Brand

DETAILS

Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Admissions, Marketing, Communications, and Alumni

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$10,000 plus travel

If key stakeholders and decision makers remain unconvinced that your institution could benefit from strategic brand positioning, this workshop will help build support by introducing participants to the importance of brand in higher education, highlighting opportunities specific to your institution. Every college and university has a brand, whether or not they do anything proactively to cultivate and manage it. Brand positioning, by contrast, creates a foundation for compelling external messaging, collaborative internal organizational cultures, and focused strategic planning.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will complete a SWOT analysis of their college or university, focused on the three potential areas of brand impact: differentiated market positioning (from recruitment through fundraising), improved internal culture, and more focused and successful strategic planning.

102: Organizing for a Brand Campaign

DETAILS

Audience: Staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$10,000 plus travel

Successfully implementing a brand campaign requires an organizational structure with the appropriate capacity and expertise to drive brand expression and experience among all internal and external stakeholder groups. This involves more than just the communications and marketing office. In addition, staff members from across campus must align behind a campaign to gather needed data and stories, drive messaging to achieve intended outcomes, and ensure that units from recruitment through alumni and advancement can participate effectively and deliver meaningful brand experiences. This workshop will give you the tools to evaluate your institution's organizational readiness for a brand campaign.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will complete a Brand Readiness Assessment for their institution, including an action plan for addressing identified shortcomings.



103: Uncovering Your “Why”: The Art and Science of Values-Based Branding

DETAILS

- Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Admissions, Marketing, Communications, and Alumni
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 6-hour workshop
- Cost: \$30,000 plus travel

Most colleges and universities create brands based on their attributes, what they do and how they do it, which is why so many institutions look and sound alike. In contrast, BVK helps organizations position themselves based on why they exist and who they serve, an approach we call values-based branding. Our unique method is rooted in evidence-based marketing, including a strong grounding in the scholarship of consumer behavior and a rigorous data-informed approach to brand development and positioning. In this workshop, we'll teach you the three-step process required to uncover and clarify your own values-based identity. If we can't do the work for you, we can teach you how it's done.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will receive a workbook with templates for completing the three-step process of uncovering their brand identity:
 1. Conducting research to evaluate the institution's current place in the market, including an internal audit of existing information; an external audit of competitive communications; discussion guides for stakeholder interviews and focus groups; and survey questions for the required quantitative market research.
 2. Defining the institution's core value and positioning statement.
 3. Creating a Brand Framework, including tagline and creative platform, defining traits of the brand personality, key principles, and messaging pillars, and the “reasons to believe” that support the brand position.

104: The Brand Refresh

DETAILS

- Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 3-hour workshop
- Cost: \$20,000 plus travel

In a rapidly changing marketplace, even the best brands need to be adjusted routinely, with updated messaging, revised outcomes, and strategies adapted for new circumstances, including shifting cultural realities and audience expectations. This workshop offers guidance on how best to refresh an existing brand, whether you are looking to identify and improve positioning you know isn't resonating or simply updating a long-established and successful campaign. We can teach you how to evaluate your brand's success, identify needed refinements, and execute changes in ways that maximize the impact of a fresh look and message while minimizing operational disruptions.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will complete templates for conducting a Brand Health Study, including an internal audit of existing information; an external audit of competitive communications; discussion guides for stakeholder interviews and focus groups; and survey questions for the required quantitative market research.
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Brand 200 Series: Experience

Living Your Brand

A brand is a promise. An authentic brand is a promise kept. What a college or university does—how it teaches and supports students, how it engages alumni and stakeholders, and how it solves community and societal problems—communicates its true brand more powerfully and with greater impact than any tagline or marketing campaign. Hence, it's vital for colleges and universities to truly live their brands by integrating them into all aspects of their daily operations and culture, from student recruitment through teaching and learning to commencement and beyond. The “Brand 200” workshop series teaches you the fundamentals of delivering an authentic brand experience to your stakeholders by aligning your strategy, your people, and your communications with your brand promise.

Step 1: Align Your Strategy

Few colleges and universities integrate brand into their strategic planning, and if they do, it's typically a task focused on messaging only and assigned to a marketing and communications office. This is a missed opportunity, and the reason that most strategic plans in higher education look so much alike and so often fail to yield results. If a strategic plan describes what a university wants to accomplish, a brand should function as a lens helping you focus on how to achieve these goals in a manner that best fulfills your brand promise. Aligning brand and strategy in this way is the best path to achieving genuine differentiation.



201: Creating a Brand Experience Roadmap

DETAILS

Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$20,000 plus travel

Living your brand by integrating it with your strategic planning begins with a Brand-Strategy Gap Analysis, a systematic review of each operational area of your institution to identify where your brand is being effectively cultivated and communicated—through your actions as well as your words—and where there is room to do better. By locating gaps between your institution’s brand promise and the lived experience of your stakeholders, you create a detailed list of opportunities for improvement, what we call a Brand Experience Roadmap for focused strategic change and authentic differentiation. This workshop will teach you how to conduct your own gap analysis to create a Brand Experience Roadmap for your institution.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will complete a Brand-Strategy Crosswalk linking key goals from your institution’s strategic plan to core aspects of your brand promise. The outcome will be a list of institutional functions, units, and issues that would most benefit from the use of a Gap Analysis to create a Brand Experience Roadmap.

202: Designing and Measuring Brand KPIs

DETAILS

- Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 2-hour workshop
- Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

Like any strategic initiative, your brand should function as a rigorous process of continuous improvement in which you hold yourself measurably accountable. This workshop teaches you how to monitor and improve the effectiveness of your brand by creating a set of brand value key performance indicators (KPIs). When brand-aligned metrics are tailored to your most important institutional outcomes, they help you assess both how well you are advancing your brand promise and how your brand is contributing to your institution's success.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will create a set of institutional brand value KPIs focused both on brand messaging and brand experience, and a plan for collecting the data required to measure and improve performance.



Step 2: Align Your People

A brand is a promise a university makes to its students, donors, and external stakeholders, but it should apply equally to the faculty and staff members whose responsibility it is to deliver on that promise. If this isn't the case, then most brand positioning campaigns will be hobbled from the beginning, and they will feel inauthentic to those you are hoping to influence. Worse, key student success goals including student retention and graduation rates could be undermined. This workshop series offers guidance on how best to leverage your brand internally to improve organizational culture and engage the faculty and staff members most responsible for teaching and supporting students.

203: Brand, Employee Morale, and Organizational Culture

DETAILS

- Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Human Resources, Marketing, and Communications
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 2-hour workshop
- Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

On many campuses, years of budget and enrollment pressures, rising competition, and strained resources for salaries, research, and program development have harmed campus morale and organizational culture, fostering skepticism of strategic initiatives and undermining employee hiring and retention. Consequently, launching a new brand campaign might first require addressing these cultural barriers, with both improved internal communication and substantive changes to your employees' brand experience. This workshop offers practical guidance for utilizing a brand position internally to strengthen morale, improve employee hiring and retention, and build a collaborative campus culture.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will utilize a workbook to craft the intended outcomes, lists of required resources and data, and stakeholder discussion guides needed to identify gaps and create a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to improving institutional culture.

204: Engaging Faculty in a Brand Campaign

DETAILS

- Audience: Deans, department chairs, and key faculty members including shared governance leaders
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 2-hour workshop
- Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

Faculty are the heart of any college campus. Ensuring that teaching and learning delivers on a university's brand promise is the only path to genuine differentiation in today's higher education marketplace. Unfortunately, as vital as faculty members are to achieving this alignment, they are also the most likely campus stakeholders to view the topic of brand and marketing with inherent skepticism. Overcoming this hesitancy depends on a careful approach that prioritizes student and faculty success and promotes the expansion of their programs, scholarship, and community engagement. This workshop is intended to engage faculty members directly, helping them link brand experience to their own teaching and scholarly goals and improving the university's ability to deliver authentic differentiation in its core curricular units: its departments, schools, and colleges.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will complete a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to their own (individual/department's/college's) teaching, scholarship, and community engagement.



205: Brand, Academic Staff, and Student Retention

DETAILS

Audience: Deans and directors from key student support units, faculty, and staff members

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

Student retention is among the most complicated challenges in higher education because so many factors impact the decision of students to leave college, from finances and family health to campus culture and academic success. This workshop teaches you how to conduct a Brand-Strategy Gap Analysis focused specifically on helping those staff members most responsible for supporting and retaining students. By evaluating the brand experiences associated with academic support, student life, financial aid, and campus climate, you can create a Brand Experience Roadmap of strategic improvements with the best chance of helping to support, retain, and graduate your current students.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will utilize a workbook to craft the intended outcomes, lists of required resources and data, and stakeholder discussion guides needed to identify gaps and create a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to improving student retention.

Step 3: Align Your Communications

Strategic brand positioning should never be the job of the communications and marketing office alone. Instead, it's vital that each unit on campus develops messaging tailored to each unique audience that communicates its programs, services, and achievements to stakeholders in ways that align with and reinforce the institution's overall brand promise and values. These workshops can teach you how to be as strategic with your communications as you are with other aspects of your operations.

206: Brand Activation— Aligning Messaging Across Campus

DETAILS

- Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Admissions, Marketing, Communications, and Alumni
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 3-hour workshop
- Cost: \$20,000 plus travel

At BVK, we call the process of aligning campuswide messaging brand activation. It involves engaging units across campus to identify their unique audiences, the messaging objectives for each, and the communications strategies they will use to achieve those outcomes. This workshop provides colleges and universities with a customized Brand Activation Toolkit to ensure that each college, department, and unit is communicating in ways that most effectively position the institution.

- **Deliverable:** The Brand Activation Toolkit consists of two components. First, participants will learn how to create a Student/Stakeholder Journey Map, highlighting key touchpoints where brand communication plays critical strategic roles. Second, based on these journey maps, participants will learn to create Brand Messaging Frameworks for each unit across campus, to develop unit-specific communication strategies and talking points aligned with overall brand positioning.

207: Generations– How to Communicate with Today’s Students

DETAILS

- Audience: Staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 2-hour workshop
- Cost: \$10,000 plus travel

Colleges and universities often struggle to adjust their communications to today’s varied students, from members of Gen Z whose values have been shaped by circumstances markedly different than those of most communication professionals to older Millennials and Gen Xers, whose needs as adult students can be difficult to meet on campuses accustomed to serving recent high school graduates. Using a generational lens and the latest research on consumer behavior, this workshop provides practical guidance on tailoring your brand message to your unique prospective student demographics.

- **Deliverable:** Beginning with existing campus communications, participants will evaluate and revise key brand messaging to resonate with unique generational values and expectations.



Brand 300 Series: Impact

Differentiated Market Positioning

Most colleges and universities are accustomed to using brand as a framework to shape communications with external stakeholders, especially prospective students and donors. This kind of marketing can be effective, but at BVK we have learned that true differentiation in a crowded higher education marketplace requires going a step further: aligning brand messaging with authentic brand experiences to ensure that you are communicating as much with actions as you are with words. The “Brand 300” workshop series teaches you how to maximize the impact of brand as a market positioning tool for each of your key audiences: prospective students and donors, community and employer partners, alumni, and higher education peers.

301: Brand Experience in Admissions and Recruitment (Part 1)–Aligning Recruitment Communications with Brand

DETAILS

Audience: Staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications, and others involved in student recruitment

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

No issue in higher education is more important than student recruitment. In theory, recruitment and admissions offices should be among the most eager stakeholders to adopt university brands. Unfortunately, intense competitive pressures and the frenetic pace of work often prevent these critical staff members from fully leveraging institutional brands. This workshop gives you the tools to create a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to recruitment to ensure that each prospective student’s experience aligns well with the brand promise and reinforces the institution’s core identity and values.

The first step in fully leveraging your brand in student recruitment is to make certain you align your communications with your institution's brand promise. This includes all messaging channels such as websites, social media, emails, acceptance letters, and financial aid packages; all stages of the admissions funnel, from prospect through application to enrollment; and all potential campus representatives such as admissions counselors, faculty members, coaches, and third-party vendors. The goal is to ensure your institution speaks with one voice, articulating the brand promise at every touchpoint along the recruitment journey.

- **Deliverable:** Using existing communications as a starting point, participants will create a Messaging Matrix with brand-aligned templates for use by all campus representatives involved in recruitment.

302: Brand Experience in Admissions and Recruitment (Part 2)–Delivering a Brand Experience to Prospective Students

DETAILS

Audience: Staff members from Admissions, Marketing, and Communications

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

The campus visit is among the most important and highest yielding moments in a college student's recruitment journey. Yet too many institutions offer campus tours and presentations that are so formulaic and generic that they are indistinguishable from their competitors'. This workshop will guide you through a reexamination of your prospective student events—from walk-in campus tours and day-long visits through admitted student events to summer orientations. The more these recruitment events deliver an *experience* that reinforces your recruitment *messaging*, the more authentic and differentiating your brand promise will feel to your prospective students.

- **Deliverable:** Using existing recruitment events as a starting point, participants will create a Strategic Plan for delivering an improved brand experience to prospective students at each stage of the recruitment journey.



303: Brand as a Foundation for Fundraising

DETAILS

Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Advancement, Alumni, Marketing, and Communications

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

Nearly every college and university relies increasingly on external fundraising for long-term fiscal sustainability. An institutional brand should provide a foundation for the kinds of messaging, storytelling, and donor engagement that sustains both annual giving and longer-term capital campaigns. This workshop offers guidance on the unique challenges associated with creating a differentiating brand message and experience for prospective donors.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will utilize a workbook to craft the intended outcomes, lists of required resources and data, and stakeholder discussion guides needed to identify gaps and create a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to improving engagement with prospective donors for both annual giving and capital campaigns.

304: Brand and Community/Employer Partnerships

DETAILS

- Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Marketing, Communications, and key outreach offices
- Format: In person or virtual
- Timing: 2-hour workshop
- Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

The town-gown relationship is a vital but often overlooked area in which strategic brand positioning can play a role in institutional success, impacting academic program development, fundraising, campus grounds and facilities, and curricular and post-graduate opportunities for your students. This workshop offers guidance on using a Brand-Strategy Gap Analysis to identify ways to improve the experience of local and regional stakeholders—including businesses and employers, educational partners, and politicians—in ways that reinforce your institution’s values and differentiating identity.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will utilize a workbook to craft the intended outcomes, lists of required resources and data, and stakeholder discussion guides needed to identify gaps and create a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to improving community engagement.



305: The Alumni Brand Experience

DETAILS

Audience: Staff members from Alumni, Marketing, and Communications

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$15,000 plus travel

Alumni are among the most important stakeholders for colleges and universities, and their experience of your brand can be crucial to institutional outcomes related to fundraising, community engagement, and high-impact academic metrics such as internships and graduate placement. This workshop teaches you how to evaluate your alumni engagement in ways that help you extend your differentiating brand experience beyond the boundaries of your institution and across generations.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will utilize a workbook to craft the intended outcomes, lists of required resources and data, and stakeholder discussion guides needed to identify gaps and create a Brand Experience Roadmap specific to improving alumni engagement.

306: Brand and Peer Perception

DETAILS

Audience: University leadership, deans and directors, staff members from Marketing and Communications

Format: In person or virtual

Timing: 2-hour workshop

Cost: \$10,000 plus travel

Despite mounting criticism of college rankings, peer perception in higher education continues to play a substantial role in shaping institutional success. This workshop covers the what, why, and how of influencing perceptions in higher education, showcasing proprietary research findings that BVK conducted among more than 600 college and university leaders, in partnership with *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. By reviewing the science of perception, the role of orderings and rankings, we offer a data-based approach to utilizing your brand as a strategic platform for strengthening your perception among higher education peers.

- **Deliverable:** Participants will create a strategic communications plan, with timeline and tactics, for leveraging an institutional brand to influence peer perceptions among key higher education stakeholders.
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