



# Public Relations Campaign Plan

## Public Relations Campaigns Team

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## Situational Analysis

# Description of Client

## History

Hugh Hodgson, the founder of the School of Music, was a Georgia native who graduated from the University of Georgia in 1915. After his graduation from UGA, he studied at other Schools in Berlin and New York. Around 1929, he was hired as the first music professor at UGA, and proceeded to hire other professionals to create and strengthen the university's arts programs. Hodgson campaigned for the arts in general-- not just for music. He hosted monthly music appreciation lectures in the UGA Chapel. The whole community gathered for these lectures to hear him talk and perform. The School of Music was renamed for Hugh Hodgson in 2005.

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music was only beginning to take shape in the 1950s and 1960s, at which point almost all other major music programs in the country were well established, so the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music is considered a newcomer into the music school scene. In the 1970s and 1980s, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music increased its funding, giving it an opportunity to expand and develop its programs. During the 1990s, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music delved into a variety of major building projects, such as the creation of the music building and performance hall. Within the past 10 years, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has taken the stage as a nationally recognized institution.

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music is perceived by those who know it as one of the "best kept secrets" in the country. Although its programs, facilities, faculty and students can compete with the best-known music schools in the nation, the Hugh Hodgson School of Music falls short in popularity, since it is so new in comparison to other Schools. In the 1980s and 1990s, when the economy was booming, and people were giving money to the arts, established institutions dedicated to the arts grew. However, since the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music was a late bloomer, it did not benefit in the same way as those other Schools.

Still, the strengths of the School are obvious. Many graduate students have been attracted to the Hugh Hodgson School of Music because of the quality of its faculty, facilities and programs. Hence over 40 percent of the student body is comprised of graduate students.

# UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music Today

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has 73 faculty members and 600 students, of which 40 percent are graduate students and 60 percent are undergraduate students.

## Departments and Programs

- Band Conducting
- Brass
- Choral Conducting
- Conducting Studies
- Jazz Studies
- Keyboard
- Music Composition and Theory
- Music Education
- Music Therapy
- Musicology/Ethnomusicology
- Orchestral Conducting
- Percussion
- Resident Accompanists
- Strings
- Voice
- Woodwinds

## Outreach

### Community School Of Music

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music hires UGA professors and students to teach private music lessons to anyone in the community who is interested. This provides students with a strong teaching experience and members of the community with opportunities to learn. The program offers instruction in the Suzuki Method, which teaches music to children similar to the way they are taught a language. The Suzuki Method is rare and could be an advantage for the School.

## Redcoat Band

Membership to the Redcoat Band is highly sought after and competitive. It accepts members from all majors and has around a 99 percent retention rate. Many people come to UGA to participate in the Redcoat Band alone, and it is often the only aspect of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music that is known to external audiences.

## Middle School Outreach

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music hosts two festivals for high school students, JanFest and MidFest. These are events in which almost 1,000 high school students from over 100 high schools are selected to form ensembles and perform music over a four-day period. It also hosts an event called Choral Day every fall, in which high school singers from around Georgia join ranks with the UGA Men's Glee Club, Women's Glee Club and UGA Hodgson Singers to sing and perform, as well as see guest performances.

## Faculty Activities

The faculty at the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music wear multiple hats. They provide lectures, and breakout sessions for aspiring musicians. The faculty also provides private sessions to improve students' repertoires. Many faculty members perform in world-renowned symphonies, quartets and ensembles. The faculty also plays an instrumental role in recruiting prospective students through festivals and programs that they participate in during their vacation months from teaching, as well as through community outreach programs.

## Study Abroad Information

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music offers a music study abroad program that takes place in the cities of Alessandria, Parma and Torino in Italy. It is directed by the strings area chair and professor of double bass Dr. Milton Masciadri and his two assistants. This study abroad program takes place for three weeks in the month of May and gives students the opportunity to perform with Italian musicians in chamber and orchestral ensembles. The student musicians who are eligible to participate in this event study the bassoon, double bass, flute, jazz, percussion, piano, saxophone, trombone, trumpet, tuba, violin, violoncello, voice and conducting.

## Events Information

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music hosts a multitude of different types of events open to the public for free or a very low price. The price is generally discounted to 50 percent off for students. Event types include symphony orchestra performances, ensemble performances, 2nd Thursday concert series, faculty recital series, recitals of different music groups, guest performances, and performances by student groups such as the UGA Hodgson Singers and the UGA Glee Club.

## Facilities

The UGA Hugh Hodgson Music has three performance halls. The Hodgson Concert Hall is for very large performances, while the Edge Recital Hall and Ramsey Concert Hall are used for chamber ensembles and solo recitals. It also has the Dancz Hall which is an innovative black-box, multimedia, new-music performance space.

Within the music building, the School has soundproof practice rooms, chamber and large-ensemble rehearsal areas, technology classrooms, computer labs, a music library, a percussion suite, three electronic music studios and two state-of-the-art digital piano labs with individual digital/MIDI workstations.

# Research

Two surveys were conducted to learn about awareness and opinion of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music among the UGA student body, and current UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music students. We analyzed the results of an exit survey issued by the Hugh Hodgson School of Music to previous students. Thirteen faculty members were interviewed in depth about the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music. Three focus groups were conducted, two with eight undergraduate students total, and one with five graduate students. We completed a communications audit comprising the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music's social media, website and print communications. We also researched peer and aspirational institutions' communications and completed a competitive analysis. A list of communication-related trends and issues were identified based on all of this research.

## Reputation Issue

Our research efforts led us to discover that the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has developed a reputation problem in the Southeast. There are two factors that have contributed to this reputation.

The first is an issue with lack of funding, which results in scholarships at the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music being small in size, and designed for in-state students who are receiving the HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarship as well. Both smaller Schools in the state of Georgia and Schools in different states have an advantage in terms of recruitment because they have the money to offer students scholarships. Lack of funding and its effect on recruitment and teaching was a common theme among many of the professors in the Hugh Hodgson School of Music. They felt this was inhibiting the potential progress of the Hugh Hodgson School of Music.

The other factor going into the reputation issue of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music is the fact that to be admitted into the music program, potential UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music students must perform at the same academic level as all other UGA students. At other reputable music schools, such as the University of Michigan, the academic requirements are waived for music students and exceptions are made for the purpose of music. The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music cannot compete with its aspirational institutions in this respect. This issue is also particularly relevant for in-state students who have much more rigorous standards for admission than out-of-state students.

Undergraduate students in our focus groups informed us that many high school students have become discouraged from applying to the University of Georgia in

general because of its rigid academic requirements and lack of scholarship, signaling that maybe the University of Georgia is not very dedicated to the arts or music. This fact that potential students are looking to other Schools due to their perception that UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has an elitist attitude was reiterated in our faculty interviews. This problem is particularly relevant for in-state students, who are held to the highest standards for admission to UGA because of the high demand created by the HOPE and Zell B. Miller Scholarships. Better marketing that hones in on the positives of the School and counteracts any messages that other music schools are putting out would be beneficial to the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music.

## Marketing Issue

One facet of the marketing issue is that, although there is improvement, programs are poorly marketed. There is a disconnect between the marketing materials of different departments, which results in inconsistencies in the logos, fonts and messages that are being conveyed. This disconnect also leads to some events and programs not being marketed at all since no protocol is in place for marketing them. In our interviews, faculty members expressed that a plan is lacking in terms of marketing and advertising. Faculty members think that increasing promotion of current community outreach programs could help widen the audience for the School.

The general UGA student body is typically unaware of events going on at the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music, and the type of marketing that occurs leads to an audience of primarily music students and the music lovers of the Athens community, who tend to be an older group. Seventy-seven percent of respondents from our UGA student body survey said that lack of knowledge was the reason why they had never attended an event. In order to increase awareness amongst students, faculty members have asserted that the value of YouTube as a social media channel cannot be understated. From our surveys, social media and word of mouth were the most frequently used methods for how respondents found out about events. Marketing should really focus on these two methods to get the word out.

## Recruitment Issue

A vital part of gaining awareness for the School is making conscious communication efforts to recruit students. However, for the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music, many graduate and undergraduate students in our focus groups felt that there is not much of a recruitment process in place. They suggested more high school tours and inviting high schools to the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music's performances. In the communications audit, it became evident that the School lacks specific guidelines for recruiting students, such as sending posters, brochures and other various print communications to high schools in order to obtain recognition.

It is important to note that the School would benefit from having recruitment packets to be sent to high schools. Sending these out could boost the awareness and reputation of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music by making potential students understand the programs and resources that the School has to offer. It is imperative that we create recruitment packets to be sent out to Georgia residents in order to establish and maintain a positive reputation among Georgia high school students.

## Curriculum Issue

While conversing with faculty members, we learned that since the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music was established later than other Schools of music, the curriculum that it maintains now reflects that of other music schools a few decades ago. While other Schools are moving to more progressive and entrepreneurial music programs, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music's curriculum is becoming outdated and less practical. For instance, many of the students who go through music school hope to open up their own businesses to teach music or to sell instruments. The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music students are not learning tax law, marketing or other modern business methods, which are courses proven to prepare students for a more business style approach to the music industry.

These same faculty expressed that due to the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music's focus on classical methods and a traditional curriculum, external interest groups perceive the School to be "snobby." The small changes in curriculum occurring within the School are largely unnoticed by these parties. New initiatives, such as the exploration into bluegrass occurring at the School and the music business program, are not marketed or talked about.

## Faculty Division

Many faculty members are frustrated with the lack of communication between each music department. The departments currently have their own way of operating and have been allowed to work under their own regulation. One interviewee voiced that, “There needs to be more transparency between faculty and administration. Everyone should be aware of what other members of the faculty are doing.” The School needs to centralize its departments, its mission, and its way of operating in order to better promote themselves and become a cohesive unit.

There seems to be a tension between certain faculty members who travel to perform and attend festivals, and those who focus primarily on teaching instead of recruitment or performance. The faculty members who are touring feel like the teaching-focused faculty aren’t spreading the name of the School as much as they are, and are letting their departments slack as a result. However, the professors who focus primarily on teaching feel like they have an equal level of importance since they are educators first and foremost, and feel that the performance-focused faculty members are elitist. It is important while promoting the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music through faculty members to stress the importance of the faculty members who tour, as well as those who do not.

These departmental issues need to be discussed and objectives need to be unified for the music school to be more effective and proactive as a whole.

# Public Relations Activity

To find information about the public relations activity of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music and its effectiveness, research was done into the types of print and online communications the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music possessed, as well as the online presence of some of the School's aspirational and peer institutions. The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music's website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and SoundCloud were analyzed, in addition to its print materials, so the same was done for aspirational and peer institutions. Aspirational institutions audited include the University of Illinois- Urbana-Champaign, University of Michigan, Ohio State University, University of Texas- Austin and Florida State University. Peer institutions looked at include the University of South Carolina, Louisiana State University, Florida State University and University of Miami. A comprehensive analysis was created due to the information taken from these audits.

Upon studying and analyzing these peer institutions, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music appears to be doing better than them in several areas. First, UGA's website is simple, making it easy to navigate and eliminating any issues viewers may have when searching for specific information. Some of their peer institutions have busy and non-systematic website designs, such as Louisiana State University. Also, the Hugh Hodgson School of Music has a variety of social media platforms, unlike several of the Schools. Although most of the peer institutions have at least one platform, the University of Miami does not have a Twitter account and the University of Florida does not have a YouTube account. Social media is an essential communication tool nowadays, which makes it especially significant that UGA is already using social media as part of their communication strategy.

## Key Messages

After closely analyzing the key messages of aspirational and peer institutions, we recognized some important information that the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music is neglecting. It would benefit the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music to add information of the sort that The University of Michigan has, informing viewers about the School's relationship with the university that allows it to provide students with dual-degrees in music and other areas of study. A statement of diversity such as the one that Ohio State University and Florida State University possess would also be advantageous and worth adding. Lastly, the University of Texas highlights its "1:7 Faculty-to-Student Ratio" as one of its key messages. Since the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music also has this advantage, the School should clearly display its class

ratio for its audience to see on its website. With these small changes implemented, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music website will better serve its purpose and more effectively attract potential students.

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has its mission statement listed online, which is important for the sake of unifying their many programs and opportunities available to students. The School strives to provide students a comprehensive program by encouraging activities other than just performance. The peer institutions value the same perspective on education; however, some Schools offer a more detailed explanation for why they believe what they do. For example, the University of Florida School of Music has a link to the entire College of the Arts mission statement, which is a statement for all areas of education within the college. Under the statement, the School explicitly states their goals for the students, faculty, program, facilities, etc. By having each of these goals and strategies laid out one-by-one, the entire college can be unified through their joint mission for improvement.

## **Online Materials**

Like many of its aspirational institutions, the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has a section of its website dedicated to news and events that is updated regularly. One area that the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music can work on is to include PDF downloads and handouts, much like Ohio State offers to its students and faculty. Louisiana State University does not have a mission statement and lacks several things that the Hugh Hodgson School of Music does well, but they do have several downloadable PDFs and guidebooks available. By making handouts and brochures available online, people will not only have an easier way to access information but it eliminates an additional step for people who would normally have to request particular information from the School. Also, online handouts and brochures could potentially benefit the recruiting process, which is already very important for the Hugh Hodgson School of Music. A more organized look for the website is needed, as well, to make things more appealing.

## Branding

The Hugh Hodgson School of Music's website's color scheme is related to UGA's colors, which is good for keeping a consistent brand image, unlike the University of Illinois School of Music's website, which strays from the overall university colors.

The Hugh Hodgson School of Music does not have a consistent logo throughout their website, online communications and print materials. Many other institutions have a logo that includes part of the overall university logo. The home page is also extremely cluttered with a multitude of information that is overwhelming. Other aspirational institutions' websites have a significant amount of color and are more aesthetically pleasing. Since each department at the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of music is responsible for creating their own print materials, and no branding standards exist, there is a lack of consistency in products that are produced.

The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music could greatly benefit from a more creative website, such as the University of Florida School of Music's website, which uses photos to showcase the School. The University of South Carolina School of Music website homepage includes a large video that introduces viewers to their School. The Hugh Hodgson School of Music should find creative ways to engage viewers on their website, instead of simply posting links to articles. In its current state, the Hugh Hodgson School of Music website does not compel the viewer to explore. There are too many words and not enough photos and videos, which are two important things to have when trying to showcase the fine arts.

Another area in which the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music could improve upon is keeping its viewers informed by posting news releases that discuss upcoming performances and events, but also news about facility renovations or faculty changes. The University of Miami School of Music has a "Media" tab on its website page, which is a good way to organize and list updates and news articles about the School.

## Social Media Presence

Some of the institutions that have more Facebook engagement than UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music, such as the music schools of Florida State University and the University of South Carolina, post more regularly on Facebook. Most of these aspirational institutions also post more frequently on Twitter, which shows in their follower base, especially at Schools like the University of Illinois- Urbana Champaign, University of Texas- Austin and Ohio State University. These Schools not only post consistently, but they also vary their posts by changing the topics and making them more interesting to the viewers. They also frequently post about their marching band, which could be something the Hugh Hodgson School of Music needs to consider to

attract more followers. Another very innovative feature is Florida State University's usage of a branded hashtag #musicFSU.

None of the aspirational institutions are making better use of YouTube than the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music, so there is an opportunity for the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music to use YouTube in a more organized and consistent manner, giving it an advantage on its competitors. This is the same situation with SoundCloud, where if the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music can keep all of its sub-groups under one umbrella SoundCloud, and post consistent tracks, this could vastly strengthen its social media presence.

## Print Media

Since access to the print media of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music's peer and aspirational institutions was not achievable, we conducted unilateral analysis of the School's print media to see what the strengths and weaknesses are.

Currently, print communications exist in brochure, posters and folder format for every department, for performances and events. Different subjects such as jazz studies, orchestra, voice, opera and Outreach Teaching Opportunities have their own informational brochures. While there are pamphlets for visiting potential new students, there is currently no form of print media sent to high schools for recruiting purposes. Many of the students interviewed said they received no form of print communication through the mail, which is a common mode of contact for other music schools. This puts the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music at a recruiting disadvantage. Another student mentioned that many other music schools place ads in popular music bulletins, geared towards high school students. The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music has yet to take advantage of any of these media outlets. Improvements in these aspects, along with refining the School's logo and formatting will better serve their future public relations activity.

# SWOT Analysis

*NOTE: The UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music will be referred to as HHSOM.*

## STRENGTHS

The HHSOM has premier concert halls, at which it hosts renowned groups for performances. These concert halls are open for public reservation, which attracts the local community.

The faculty and staff are world-renowned.

Students have the option to receive private one-on-one instruction by faculty, making instruction more qualitative and effective.

There are a wide variety of academic programs offered, giving students ample choices on what they want to study.

Courses are available to students outside of the HHSOM, who are, which allows non-music major students to be able to pursue music, even if they cannot dedicate their entire course of study to it.

The Redcoat Band is highly rated and brings awareness to the HHSOM.

The credibility of the newly hired and returning faculty increase the reputation of the School.

Opportunities available to students are based on their skill levels, not their year of study.

Many social media channels exist and have a strong following already, showing that social media has been a focus in the communications plan of the HHSOM.

Events are photographed and recorded, so a multimedia library does not have to be built from scratch for future promotional materials and social media campaigns.

The Community Music School gives students the opportunity to spread goodwill in the community, and increases the community's awareness of the HHSOM.

Discounted admission to concerts are available to students, which can boost student attendance and incentivizes attendance at these events.

There is an Italy study abroad program that gives HHSOM international status and students the opportunity to become versed in another culture.

## WEAKNESS

There is a lack of communication between the HHSOM and the rest of the university, which leads to a low level of awareness of the HHSOM's programs at the university.

There is a lack of organization within the HHSOM in terms of communication, responsibilities and curriculum. This miscommunication can lead to a collapse in consistency and structure.

Many students do not consider applying for HHSOM because they feel they do not match the academic standards set by UGA. This limits the possibility of attracting the top musical talent.

Not every faculty member represents and recruits for the HHSOM as strongly as the others do, resulting in "pockets of weakness" in certain programs.

The growing size of the HHSOM's students, but lack of funding has resulted in outgrowth of facilities.

Those outside HHSOM are generally unaware of the strength of the School and the diversity of its programs and opportunities.

The curriculum is seen as outdated since it focuses mainly on classical music and methods.

Lack of funding and limited scholarships available for potential students limits promotion and recruitment.

There are many disconnected promotional print materials, all of which are inconsistent in their messaging, use of logos, and layouts. This can illustrate the inconsistencies found between the departments to the public and weaken the brand of the HHSOM.

There is no regular recruitment material sent out to high schools or handed out at events. This decreases the likelihood of students applying to UGA and limits the potential of word-of-mouth marketing among high school students.

The use of mailed promotional materials by the HHSOM is an outdated method of recruitment, and focusing more on digital platforms would help reach the target market in a better way.

The Redcoat Band, Redcoat Clarinets, Wind Ensemble and other groups have separate social media accounts, taking away audience members and consistency from the HHSOM.

## OPPORTUNITIES

A curriculum integrating more relevant genres of music to the current times, such as the existing jazz, bluegrass and music business programs that the HHSOM has already, will attract more students.

All students are welcome to participate in bands and music groups regardless of major, giving non-students the opportunity to still be involved in the School.

HOPE and Zell Miller scholarships cut costs for in-state students, making the HHSOM more attractive to in-state residents.

Dual enrollment programs allow high school students to begin taking classes within the HHSOM, sparking early interest in high school students.

HHSOM is part of a tier-one research university. Students have the ability to simultaneously pursue interests outside of the School of music and achieve a more well-rounded education.

Athens is well-known for being a music destination in the Southeast, giving the HHSOM a platform from which to attract interested parties to the School.

Development of new digital technologies give the HHSOM an enhanced ability to share its performances and concerts on multimedia online platforms.

## THREATS

Other institutions treat their music departments as separate conservatories that value music talent as much as academics and therefore waive strict academic requirements for student admissions in favor of musical talent. Since the HHSOM doesn't do this, it makes the School look like it does not value music as much as these other institutions.

Other music schools have more of a cohesive brand identity, which makes them more memorable and well-marketed.

The HHSOM is misperceived as elitist in the Southeast.

Peer and aspirational Schools of music are able to provide better funding for students which renders the HHSOM less competitive in this regard.

When compared to comprehensive education programs such as HHSOM, conservatories' sole focus on music education gives them an advantage regarding public attention and awareness.

There is a current national perception that music graduates will be entering into an unstable and unprofitable job market after they achieve their degrees.

There is a national shift in education focusing more on STEM subjects and less on music and the arts. This shift in education can be seen in grades as early as elementary School, which can have long term negative effects on not just the HHSOM, but music and art Schools across the country.

# Conclusion

## Key Publics

*Primary Publics:* Potential music students, which include high school students across the nation and their music teachers, as well as music students with their undergraduate degree looking to pursue a graduate degree. This could include UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music undergraduates. Another primary public is the general UGA student body. An internal primary public would be the faculty of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music, who need to believe collectively in the strength of their school.

*Secondary Publics:* Parents of high school music students are a secondary public, since they hold influence over high school music students' School decisions. The Athens community is also a secondary public.

## Client's Public Relations Needs

*Consistency across all communications materials:* Some departments don't know when other departments are promoting events or recruitment, leading to confusion within the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music. There is also inconsistency within brand representation in digital media and print materials.

*Low awareness of the UGA Hugh Hodgson School of Music among all primary and secondary publics:* Key publics need to be targeted through creative communications materials. Awareness to all key publics needs to be increased.