

# Using Student and Alumni Success to Tell Your Graduate School's Story

Steven W. Matson

Dean, The Graduate School  
University of North Carolina  
at Chapel Hill



UNC  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

# UNC-Chapel Hill

- Research intensive; flagship
- 30,000 students
  - 8500 graduate students
  - 2500 professional students
- The Graduate School
  - 27 full time staff
  - 19 graduate student interns
- Communication team
  - 3 staff; 4 graduate student interns

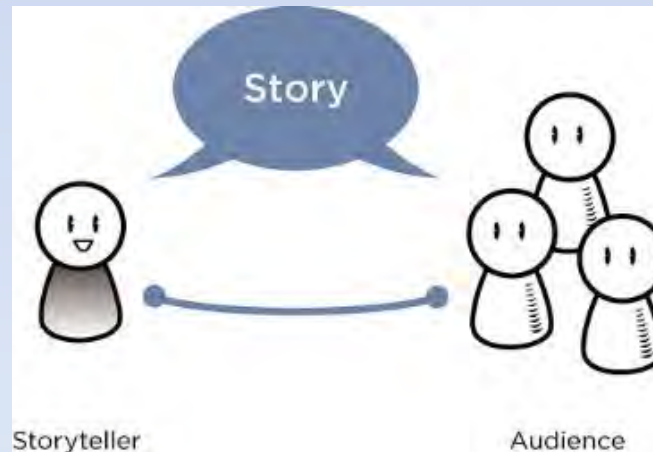


Hooding Ceremony



# Identifying Good Stories

- Strategies for identifying and shaping stories
  - Impact/Horizon Awards
  - Annual 3MT competition
  - Newsletters
  - Reception for Summer Research Fellows



# Impact & Horizon Awards

- Recognize research with impact in NC
- Students nominated by graduate program
- Selected by faculty committee
- Profiled by Graduate School



# Annual 3MT Competition

- Open to all students
- Fairly easy to implement
- Surfaces incredible stories that are ready to share



UNC  
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL



# Newsletters

- Newsletters – an opportunity to profile students and alumni
- Monthly Diversity and Student Success stories
- Quarterly alumni communications
- Metrics



# Summer Research Fellows

- Graduate school awards summer fellowships
- Fall reception for fellows
- Each fellow speaks for 1 min
- Trove of stories



# Using Stories to Promote Graduate Education

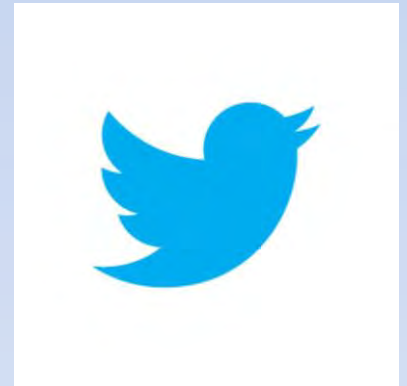
- Integration into communication channels
  - Social media – Facebook and twitter
  - Publications (print and electronic)
  - Online gallery of impact
- Influencing stakeholders
  - Graduate Education Day at the Capitol
  - Celebrating graduate student accomplishments





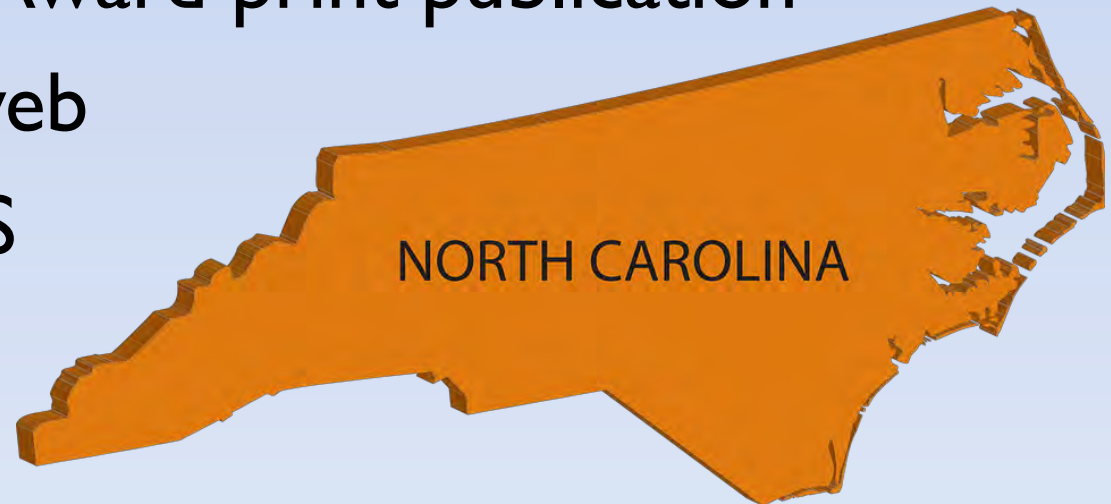
# Social Media

- The twitter account reaches students
- The Facebook account reaches alumni
- Both of these accounts are managed by a graduate intern
- Communication manager; on point
- Contact with other units
  - They share our stories with their constituents



# Publications

- Three newsletters each year
  - Two electronic and one print
    - Reach over 40,000 students and alumni
- Impact/Horizon Award print publication
- Gallery on the web
- Shared with CGS



# Summer Research Fellows

- Annual reception for fellows and donors
- Opportunity to share success stories
- Broad invitation list
  - Internal communication
  - External communication
- Fundraising



# Graduate Education Day

- A North Carolina event involving all graduate students
- Posters and meetings with legislators
- Promote graduate education
- Educate legislators
- Share success stories



# Quick Takeaways

- 1) Develop a communication plan
- 2) Provide an opportunity for faculty and students to identify compelling stories
- 3) Use electronic and social media to integrate into communication channels
- 4) Use graduate student interns for social media

