Telling the Story of Graduate Education at North Dakota State University

Brandy A. Randall, Ph.D.
Associate Dean, College of Graduate & Interdisciplinary Studies
North Dakota State University

- Land-grant university in Fargo, ND
- 14,000 students (2,000 graduate)
- Doctoral-higher research
- State higher education system comprised of 11 institutions.
- College of Graduate & Interdisciplinary Studies oversees all graduate education in conjunction with the academic colleges.
On Campus Meetings

- Sharing program success stories at meetings
  - Deans Council (includes Provost)
  - Graduate Council
  - Graduate Program Leaders
Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT™)

• 4th annual campus-wide competition
• Single day competition—morning preliminary rounds; afternoon championship round + nice reception
• Corporate sponsors (awareness building opportunity)—entry into giving for graduate education (one level of funding allows for a company rep to speak at the event)
3MT™—Judging Panels

- At least one external judge on every panel
- Strategic invites of external judges
  - Editor of local paper championship round judge every year
  - Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs from university system office
  - Vice President for Research of a major employer in our region
- Foundation heads, CEOs, Alumni
3MT™--Invite Everyone!

- Postcards & hand-written invitations
- Legislature—note competitors from their district
- Mayors & city commissioners; school boards; governor & lt governor; local businesses; university board of trustees; development foundation staff
- Emails to entire campus (all employees + all students)
- News stories (before and after)
3MT™--Making it Bigger

• This year—adding Graduate Student Showcase – posters, demonstrations, displays, and listening/viewing stations
• Considering radio ads, radio remote, etc.
• Inviting middle school and high school classes, monitoring attendance for UG extra credit, etc.
3MT™--Using Finalists in Other Ways

- Championship Round videos on university Youtube channel
- Attend Legislative Showcase
- Present to Board of Trustees
- Showcase at EPSCOR conference
Six Word Stories

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8cp2JB1p_qw&feature=youtu.be

- Giving Day Fundraiser Promo
- Developing a collection featuring students, alumni, faculty, staff
Doctoral Dissertation Videos

• 3 Minute General Audience Videos like 3MT™
  Open Access Institutional Repository
  https://library.ndsu.edu/ir/handle/10365/26051

• Will be featuring a new video on our GS
  home page every 1-2 weeks
Social Media

- Committee meets 2 X month and includes a staff member from University Relations
- Schedule FB posts, tweets
- Graduate student focused banner stories on main university page
Print Media

- Monthly Graduate Student Focused Stories in Area Woman magazine
- Press Releases
Next Steps

• Next term will begin using Constant Contact to send out newsletters to different audiences

• Form an external advisory board which will both give us information & let us have people outside the university to help “tell the story”
Challenges

- Need a mechanism to more easily get the stories about student & alumni successes
- Need a mechanism to identify good dissertation videos
- Need to work with programs to get them to use their students videos to tell their individual program stories
Takeaways

• Multiple Audiences & Multiple Strategies
• Consider--What is the Goal/Purpose for Each Strategy
• Ongoing Process
• Must be part of people’s job responsibilities
• Time consuming and can take time to “pay off”, but it is WORTH IT!