

**DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A BRANDING STRATEGY FOR THE
ONLINE M.S. IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION AND ONLINE
M.S. IN NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION DEGREE
PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-STEVENSON POINT**

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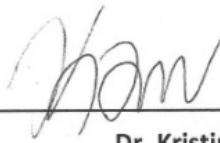
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ABSTRACT

In order to compete in the marketplace for the best students, qualified faculty and staff, as well as donors, higher education institutions should have a strong organizational brand. A university is no longer just an institution of higher learning, but also a business. There are currently two online M.S. degree programs in the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources (M.S. in Environmental Education and Interpretation and M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration). Currently, the two online programs are marketed and managed separately.

The goal of this Master's thesis was to develop, implement, and evaluate the initial branding plan for two of the online M.S. degree programs offered by the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. As non-subsidized programs, tuition revenue supports wholly the activity costs and compensation for the programs. In order to promote retention and recruitment of students, it was necessary to develop a branding strategy that encompassed both programs, while still maintaining their individual identity.

The aim of branding is to develop an identity for an organization that appears desirable and appealing to the target audience and stakeholders. The goal of this project was to facilitate effective branding of the online M.S. graduate degree programs utilizing the results of branding planning activities to develop a comprehensive branding strategy for the program. Branding planning activities completed to achieve project goals included a brainstorming session and review of previous research. Branding tactics were developed in three central categories; marketing, advertising, and public relations. Based on the branding planning activities, four categories were developed that represented the online degree programs; convenience, quality instruction, career relevance, and networking. After development and implementation of the branding strategy, a formative evaluation was conducted utilizing a consumer research survey.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

I. Goal

The goal of this Master's thesis is to develop, implement, and evaluate the initial branding plan for two of the online M.S. degree programs (M.S. in Environmental Education and Interpretation and M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration) offered by the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

II. Sub-goals

1. Conduct branding planning activities, including holding focus groups with faculty and staff prior to branding strategies being implemented.
2. Define branding goals, strategies, and tactics for the online M.S. programs based on the results of branding planning activities.
3. Develop a brand specification, design, objectives, and message for the programs.
4. Launch and promote the brand through marketing, advertising, and public relations.
5. Determine the extent to which the branding has succeeded by surveying current and potential M.S. graduate students and reviewing the change in the number of applications received for the program.

III. Significance of Project

The aim of branding is to develop an identity for an organization that appears desirable and appealing to the target audience and stakeholders. The goal of this project is to facilitate effective branding of the online M.S. graduate degree programs in the College of Natural Resources by utilizing the results of branding planning activities to develop a comprehensive branding strategy for the

program. The branding strategy will serve as a guide for program faculty and staff in implementing branding activities.

Increased demand for educational opportunities other than traditional on-campus formats is generating interest in the creation and/or expansion of online education programs (Paden & Sell, 2006). Universities are considering the distance format as a means of serving professional development needs, increasing enrollments, as well as being a necessity to compete with other educational institutions.

It has been argued that image and reputation of universities are more important factors to potential students than actual teaching quality. Institutions with well-known brands, a good reputation, and easily accessible comprehensive information will have better chances of recruiting students as well as faculty and staff. Potential student's decisions are affected by the quality and quantity of available information about the institution (Curtis, Abratt, & Minor, 2009). Therefore, communicating a positive image through branding is a necessity for higher education organizations (Chapleo, 2010).

In a growing online education market, conventional marketing strategies for online education are ineffective for recruiting students who have the option of choosing similar programs. In 2006-07, 52% of public 4-year colleges offered options to complete graduate level degree programs through totally online education (Parsad & Lewis, 2008). Higher education institutions need to shift from traditional and narrow marketing strategies to more comprehensive and unique branding strategies. Since online education is becoming commonplace, it is important for organizations to distinguish themselves from similar programs. Increasing competition and market acceptance of online education programs creates a need to promote brand recognition and reputation.

The data gathered for this project and summarized in the branding strategy provides a basis for the program to distinguish itself from similar institutions and programs. Developing a branding identity should result in increased enrollment numbers in the College of Natural Resources online graduate programs, as well as increase the number of highly and properly trained environmental educators worldwide.

IV. Limitations:

1. The researcher used a convenience sample for the consumer research survey. Use of this sampling strategy does not provide a representative sample of the population and the results of the survey cannot be generalized to any other population. A web based survey does not provide a random sample. The survey used to conduct research was a purposive sample and non-random. Non-random samples cannot be viewed as representative of the entire population.

V. Definitions:

Branding: A customer experience represented by a collection of images and ideas, which are created by the accumulation of experiences with the specific service, both directly relating to its use, and through the influence of advertising, design, and media commentary. Branding often includes an explicit logo, slogan, and design scheme, which may be developed to represent implicit values, ideas, and personality. (American Marketing Association, 2007)

Brand Audit: A review of an organization's brand, which provides the organization with a baseline for how clearly its brand is defined, how well it is promoted, and what policies or systems are in place to protect it, as well as identifying direction from key stakeholders. (Curtis, et al. 2009)

Environmental Education: A learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action. (UNESCO, 1978)

Identity: An organization's unique characteristics, which are rooted in the behavior of members of the organization and have strategic importance. (Curtis, et al. 2009)

Interpretation: A mission-based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and meanings inherent in the resources. (National Association for Interpretation, 2007)

Online Education: Educational model in which instructors and learners are separated by time and place and course materials are delivered via the internet. (Sheridan, 2010)

Online Master of Science in Environmental Education and Interpretation (OMSEEI): A completely online master's degree program offered by the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point focusing on environmental education and interpretation.

Online Master of Science in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration (NRLA): A completely online master's degree program offered by the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, focusing on courses for experienced natural resource professionals.

VI. Abbreviations:

CNR: College of Natural Resources

EE/I: Environmental Education/Interpretation

M.S.: Master of Science Degree

NRLA: Online Master of Science in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration

OMSEEI: Online Master of Science in Environmental Education and Interpretation

UWSP: University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

VII. Assumptions:

1. A branding strategy for UWSP CNR online M.S. degree programs will contribute to the success of the program.
2. Participants in all research activities will provide honest responses.
3. Those surveyed have the knowledge and equipment to complete an online survey.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Online education is seeing a boom in enrollments thanks to convenience and low cost, but universities need to begin implementing strategies that differentiate themselves from similar programs. Branding creates a unique identity for an organization, which, when developed and implemented correctly, can increase enrollments and bolster the positive image of the university. The online programs of the College of Natural Resources should benefit from the implementation of a branding strategy. The literature review will address the following areas pertinent to the study: the benefits of online education, branding, the branding strategy, considerations for branding, and the need for a branding strategy.

I. Benefits of Online Education

Online education is becoming a well-established mode of higher learning that, although a relatively new concept to modern educational practices, is gaining greater popularity based on its many benefits for institutions and students. This web based form of education allows instructors to reach a much larger audience than the traditional on-campus learning environment and encourages more flexibility for the student's schedule.

Distance learning is changing the role of higher education institutions and their faculty. It is forcing faculty to develop the skills needed to instruct in an online environment. Moving from classroom education to a web based approach changes how educators and institutions form their programs and courses (Lei & Govra, 2010, 623).

The pace at which online education has grown has surpassed many predictions (Doyle, 2009). Total student enrollment in online education courses went from 754,000 in 1995 to 1.6 million in 1998 and over 3 million students enrolled in distance education courses in the 2000-2001 academic year. In fall of 2009, nearly 12 million students were taking at least one online course (Ambien Insight, 2009). By 2011, over 6 million students were currently taking at least one class online. This number indicates that almost one-third of higher-education students in the U.S. are now taking at least one course over the internet, over 560,000 more than in 2010 (Allen & Seaman, 2011).

The report also demonstrates a significant shift in the way teachers and school administrators feel about online programs. In 2011, 67 percent of academic professionals polled were of the opinion that online classes can be equally as effective as face-to-face classes. In 2003, only 50 percent responded this way (Allen & Seaman, 2011). The current online education target audience comprises a large and diverse group of students. Compared to traditional on-campus students, online learners vary greatly in their demographic backgrounds (Lei & Govra, 2010, 617).

Much has been touted about the advantages of convenience and flexibility for the online learner, but online learning offers many additional benefits to students who choose online courses and programs.

From an institutional perspective, there are some major benefits that are provided from offering online education programs. DeNeui and Dodge (2006) state that the most significant online technological development is the way that the former constraint of time and space has largely been removed by networking capabilities. Online courses allow institutions to maximize their available resources to meet the educational needs of their students (Gould, 2003). Online courses are able to break down the geographical distance barrier that may isolate students from traditional learning environments.

On a resources level, online education decreases overcrowded classrooms and decreases the cost of paper and photocopying costs (Lei & Govra, 2010, 618). Regular electronic communications are one way to save money at the university level, by providing course documents online, as well as saving on the cost of printed bulletins, advertisements, etc. (Gould, 2003).

Online learning provides an opportunity for interaction between instructors and learners and interaction among peers through online discussions, which could promote deeper learning, critical thinking skills, and networking experience. Through the use of virtual team building and online forums, students are able to develop knowledge sharing skills and in some cases, build international connections. Instructors have reported that electronic communication allows students to participate more than in a typical classroom setting. Many students feel more comfortable expressing their opinions and ideas when posting them online (Lei & Govra, 2010, 623). Online courses also increase computer literacy and application skills, a highly valued trait in the modern workforce, regardless of profession (Lei & Govra, 2010, 623).

A final benefit for students taking online courses is the development of practical skills. In order to succeed in an online learning environment, students need to develop or enhance time management skills crucial to academic and professional success (Gould, 2003).

II. Branding

Branding is the creation and development of a specific identity for an organization or program, which will be appealing to the public and a long-term representation of that organization or program. Branding often includes an explicit logo, slogan, and design scheme, which may be developed to represent implicit values, ideas, and personality (American Marketing Association, 2007).

Online branding is a necessity for organizations seeking to develop solid customer relationships and to revolutionize themselves in the vastly popular online sector. As budgets tighten and competition for philanthropic dollars increases, raising awareness and visibility are more important than ever (Naddaff, 2004, 18). According to Rowley (2004, 132), there are three aspects of a successful brand:

1. A brand is dependent on customer perception;
2. Perception is influenced by the added-value characteristics of a product or service; and
3. The added value characteristics need to be sustainable.

This means that brand design, including the graphic design, logo, and look associated with the brand do not create the brand, although they do help accelerate recognition and thereby speed up the branding process (Rowley, 2004, 135).

Naddaff (2004, 18) states that when thinking about branding, it's the visual, the feeling, and the remembrance of an organization that are important. A solid brand reputation will strengthen an organization both internally and externally and can be strengthened throughout the life of the organization.

According to Rowley (2004, 136), a powerful brand has high brand equity, which essentially signifies it has high brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations and other brand assets. Brands have multiple levels of meanings as well.

A brand is signified by a brand mark, some sort of logo or visual representation of the organization. The brand mark's basic function is associated with recognition and association. A brand may also bring to mind certain attributes, such as "organized" or "reliable". A brand may also say something about the target audience's value. The brand will attract those people whose actual or desired self images are congruent with the brand. The user's brand image is formed not just by a product and its attributes, or even values, but by the total experience that they associate with the brand. Given the multiple meanings brands can carry, any one brand may be interpreted as a sign for recognition by one person, a set of attributes or values by another, or as an experience by a third person. The challenge of branding is to develop a set of meanings or associations for the brand that can resonate with the variety of different perspectives that the audience might adopt in formulating a brand image (Rowley, 2004, 137).

Compared to business world branding, non-profit organizations, including higher education institutions must apply a softer sales touch when it comes to branding. According to Naddaff (2004, 21), there are five P's to keep in mind when putting together a branding campaign; position, promise, permission, personality, and permanence.

Position refers to what is unique about the organization; what makes the organization different from similar institutions. Promise communicates the benefits and true attributes of an organization. For instance, the Red Cross spells out their promise in the tagline, "Together, we can save a life." Permission refers to the do's and don'ts of an organization. For instance, a university's tone should not be harsh or aggressive. It should, instead, represent warmth, hospitality, and helpfulness. Personality is the voice and attitude of the organization. And permanence speaks to the enduring qualities of the brand; the driving cause that will remain unchanged within the organization. (Naddaff, 2004, 21)

III. The Branding Strategy

According to Hughes (2010, 40), there are four basic components of a brand strategy; brand differentiation, brand relevance, brand esteem, and brand knowledge.

Brand differentiation is what makes the services an organization provides stand out from the competition. It is what makes the organization unique and special. For example, Ford and General Motors are companies that both offer the same product to consumers. However, consumers are not

indifferent towards the company, typically having a preference between the two organizations based on their perceived brand differentiation (Gilbert and Matutes, 1993).

Brand relevance requires asking the question of “are your products and services something customers need and can use?” (Hughes, 2010, 40). Particularly for higher education institutions, creating a brand that reflects the necessity for the services and learning the institution provides is essential to creating a solid brand reputation and for recruiting students.

Brand esteem is the degree to which the audience loves and respects what the organization does for them (Hughes, 2010, 40). This is something that cannot be attained through merely a logo or a visual representation of the company, but most come through customer experiences of having their expectations met. Without fully developing a branding identity throughout an organization, brand esteem can never be fully established.

Brand knowledge helps the audience understand who the organization is and what services are provided (Hughes, 2010, 40). Essential to the branding strategy are three major tenets; relationship marketing, public relations, and advertising.

A. Relationship Marketing

Marketing is vital in developing the personality of the brand and determining how it will be presented to the public. Marketing is not purely selling a product or an idea, but knowing what to sell and how to sell it as part of the larger branding plan.

Relationship marketing is a style of marketing in which there is a congenial interaction between suppliers, distributors, retailers, and consumers which thus makes it possible for marketers to build trusting long term relationships with each party in the selling chain and to be able to count on excellent service and cooperation (Cross, 1995). According to Gall (2010), the term “relationship marketing” entered the business world in the 1980’s to describe the idea that sales transactions do not end when the money changes hands. Rather, it is beneficial for both the buyer and seller to develop a long-term relationship, which provides support and help to the buyer and a return customer who will spend more money with the seller. Relationship marketing refers to all activities directed to establishing, developing, and maintaining successful long-term relationships (Berry, 1995).

Marketing is more than advertisements and promotion activities in higher education. It must also be concerned with student retention and recruitment. Recruitment strategies with an emphasis on

mass marketing go contrary to the need for a focus on services, building and maintaining a long-term relationship with the students (Shaik, 2005). A number of higher education institutions are implementing mass marketing campaigns through transactional marketing, a strategy that focuses on maximizing the efficiency and volume of individual sales rather than developing a relationship with the buyer. Strategies based on transactional marketing result in low student retention rates and as such are not a good economic model (Noel-Levitz, 2004).

Relationship marketing is an attitude of mind throughout the institution when students feel that the staff is interested in addressing their concerns spontaneously in a friendly and professional manner (Gronroos, 2000). According to Berry and Parasuraman (1991), there are three levels of relationship marketing. The first level is establishing price incentives to increase and promote student enrollment. The second level is social bonding between the staff and the current and potential students to develop trust in the relationship and loyalty to the brand. At level three, the focus is on building a structural relationship through customized programs to meet the needs of the students and the staff.

Traditional marketing techniques, often used by businesses and corporations are not to be applied blindly to marketing in higher education. Transactional marketing is often a one-way form of communication and students now want their voices to be heard. Marketing of educational services is about interactions between the institution and the students that form the basis of a process of relationship building (Shaik, 2005).

B. Public Relations

Public relations is a form of communication that seeks to make use of publicity and other non-paid forms of promotion to influence the feelings, opinions, or beliefs about the company, its products or services, or about the value of the product or service to the buyers, prospects, or stakeholders (American Marketing Association, 2011). Public relations is a very subtle way of attracting positive publicity for an organization. Its goal is to attract attention from media or the public that will reach many more people who may be interested in the product or service. Public relations does not decide on the message to be conveyed or the personality of the product being marketed.

Public relations professionals are responsible for the messages the public gets through indirect channels, such as the news media. The job of public relations is to combine what marketing and advertising do, and then use the information in different ways. Marketing determines the personality or

brand identity being publicized. Public relations take that information and find the proper media to carry the message (Davis, 2003).

According to Davis (2003), public relations professionals do not create news stories; they find the newsworthy aspect or unique selling proposition of a company's story and try to attract attention to that. Public relations is the art of telling the truth in the most positive light possible. The key to public relations is promoting the brand without being detected by the public.

C. Advertising

Advertising is the placement of announcements and persuasive messages to a target audience by an organization, seeking to inform and/persuade the audience about their products, services, identity, or ideas (American Marketing Association, 2011). Advertising doesn't create the organization identity, but it does choose how to present the identity and it helps define the identity of the product, and, by extension, its users (Davis, 2003).

When a brand is new, it's important that the target audience be able to identify the brand, and identify with the brand very quickly. After a brand identity is decided upon and the target audience has been selected, advertising is used to decide what message to convey and how to convey it (Davis, 2003). Traditional modes of advertising included television, print, and radio ads. New media is now taking over advertising through the internet.

One industry that has adapted to the interactive, web-based advertising era is higher education. More than any other group of students before, today's college students have grown up with computers and have adopted the current "cyber culture" and its accompanying zeitgeist, which includes a jaded view of advertising (Klassen and Sitzman, 2000, 44). Advertising now needs to build one-to-one relationships with consumers through customized promotional material, avoiding glitzy marketing gimmicks, and devote more attention to straight, information-based messages (Klassen and Sitzman, 2000, 44). When potential college students were asked what they most needed from a web page, they mentioned information on costs, admission, and available majors (Anderson and Reid, 1999).

IV. Considerations for Branding Online Higher Education

As universities develop distance learning programs, branding and marketing efforts need to be established to promote the online presence of the institution. Paden and Stell (2006) state that as universities develop distance programs, it is important that (a) there is a clear understanding of the university's brand image and the elements contributing to that image; (b) the university ensures that the distance program maintains/improves the image of the university; and (c) the university makes a decision to develop a separate identity/brand for the distance program that will stand on its own merit and not harm the overall university's image if it malfunctions or fails.

Branding has become a strategic managerial issue for universities and other educational institutions since it has been shown that the greater the congruence between the student's values, goals and attitudes and those of the institution, the less likely a student is to drop out (Jevons, 2006). It is important that how the educational institution views itself and its self-image is congruent with the view from external stakeholders. A university is no longer just an institution of higher learning, but also a business and needs to be branded as such (Bunzel, 2007).

According to Curtis, Abratt, and Minor (2009), institutions with well-known brands, a good reputation, and easily accessible comprehensive information will have better chances of recruiting students as well as faculty and staff. It has been argued that image and reputation of some universities are more important factors than actual teaching quality and logic would dictate that communicating the image would therefore assume high importance, suggesting a necessary role for branding (Chapleo, 2010).

Creating a brand requires both internal and external strategies. One way to develop a cohesive internal and external brand is through the process of building a brand community.

A. Building Brand Community

Based on the well-established importance of developing a strong brand for external constituents, it would be dubious for an organization to ignore the importance of internal branding initiatives and brand community. A brand community is defined as any group of people that possess a common interest in a specific brand and create a "community" with its own values, rituals, vocabulary and hierarchy (Cova and Pace, 2006). Within the academic brand community, professionals, faculty,

staff, students, parents, alumni, donors, and administrative professionals are brought together to form an internal and mutual brand identity.

Brand communities in higher education can be strategically nurtured to benefit their institutions through increased loyalty and all of the behaviors that customer loyalty implies, including increased positive word-of-mouth, intent to repurchase, and receptiveness to brand extensions (Algesheimer, Dholakia, and Herrmann, 2005; McAlexander, et al. 2002).

McAlexander and colleagues (2002) created a conceptual model of consumer integration within the brand community (see Figure 1) that emphasizes the importance of understanding and attending to diverse relationships that customers can form with peers, the product, with the brand, and with the institution behind the brand.

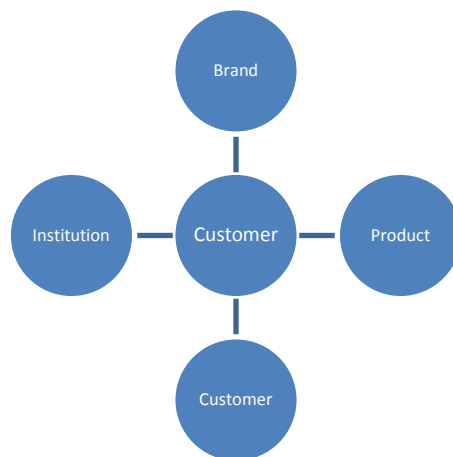


Figure 1. The Brand Community

B. Building an Online Brand

Rowley (2004, 137) set up a model to focus on what organizations can do to build their online brand. The model's components are discussed below. It is important to remember that the task of the brand builder is to tease out and communicate brand values that take the organization where it wants to go, while acknowledging and building on any existing values, attributes, or personality traits that existing users associate with the organization (Rowley, 2004, 136).

Component 1: Setting the context for the brand

Any brand must be designed to take into account the corporate brand. For instance, any brand mark for an academic library needs to consider the corporate brand. Values embedded in the corporate brand need to be translated into the library brand, but interpreted to match the unique services offered by the library, and the values associated with that service that are shared by library managers and their staff.

Another important element is to consider offline brands. Offline values are things such as friendliness of staff, relaxed atmosphere, commitment to service, informative and helpful staff, and attractive displays and environment. These offline brands may be represented online through friendly tone of voice, simple site, uncluttered, easy navigation, and helpful e-mail contact points (Rowley, 2004, 133).

Component 2: Deciding on brand objectives and message

Marketing, advertising, and public relations communications must deliver a consistent message across all channels. The first stage is to understand what that message might be, focusing on the concept of brand as a set of values. Brand values must match the values that customers seek in using information services and products. Values must resonate with both current and potential customers, as well as present a promise, which the organization can deliver. Also, determining the organization's objectives is vital when conducting online branding (Rowley, 2004, 133).

Component 3: Developing a brand specification

A brand specification takes the form of a brand mark, which needs to be recognizable, memorable, and visible and usable in different channels. These channels can include online sources, professionally printed promotions and in-house communication (Rowley, 2004, 133).

Component 4: Creating a brand design

During this stage, a designer is recruited to assist in translating a specification into a design. The process should be interactive, with the designer making a range of proposals and the manager, staff, and users having some structured input to the process of evaluating the impact and effectiveness of the design in communicating main messages (Rowley, 2004, 135).

Component 5: Creating the web site and other communications using the brand

A website is designed to reinforce and communicate a brand. While effective marketing design remains important in terms of usability, the central focus in the branding process is on communication and messages (Rowley, 2004, 135).

Component 6: Launching and promoting the brand

Once the website and other branding elements have been designed, it needs to be launched. In addition to making the website available, it is important to continue building brand presence offline, through publicity, launch events, and word-of-mouth (Rowley, 2004, 135).

Component 7: Building the brand experience

Once the brand is launched, interaction through those activities associated with the brand, including ease of navigation of the website, value of pointers to external information resources, and responsiveness and relevance of staff support, all contribute to building the brand experience.

Component 8: Reviewing, evolving and protecting the brand

Monitoring and control of the use of the brand, both at the level of its use in corporate communications, and the interaction between the use of online and offline presentations of the brand, and the associations that users are building with the brand is an important component in evaluating marketing communications and the success of the organization in engaging with its audience. Annual or biennial audits of how the brand is applied and how it is perceived yield important information for brand evolution. No serious brand builder leaves their brand to languish unnoticed, while technology, services, customers, and the environment change around it (Rowley, 2004, 135).

Evaluating Brand Effectiveness

The most effective way of determining the success of a branding strategy is to perform a brand audit. The objective of the brand audit is to identify the organization's direction from key stakeholders regarding its present and the future (Abratt, et al. 2009). The following description will provide information and an overview of the various questions developed for the questionnaire that were used to measure brand knowledge (awareness and image) and brand attachment.

Brand knowledge refers to brand awareness (whether and when customers know the brand) and brand image (what associations consumers have with the brand) (Chandon, 2004). The

different dimensions of brand knowledge can be classified in a pyramid, in which each lower level provides the foundation of a higher-level element (Keller, 2001) (see figure 2).

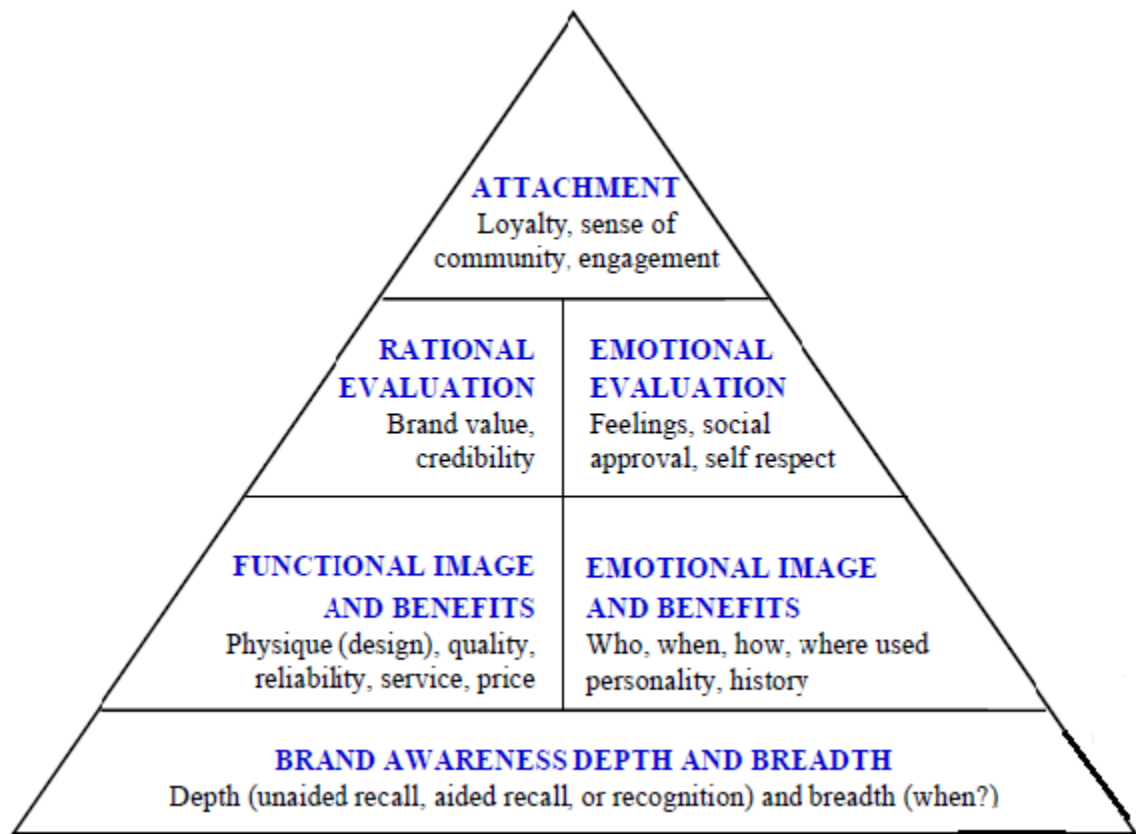


Figure 2. The Brand Pyramid (Adapted from Chandon, 2004)

V. Overview of Online Master’s Degree Programs in the College of Natural Resources at UWSP

The College of Natural Resources (CNR) at UWSP, a Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools accredited university, provides education, research and outreach in integrated natural resources management and environmental education, and paper science. UWSP offered the first conservation education major in the United States in 1946. The program evolved into the formal establishment of UWSP’s College of Natural Resources (CNR) in 1970 and now has an enrollment of nearly 2000 graduate and undergraduate students. The college emphasizes hands-on field

training and an integrated core curriculum that exposes students to the multiple disciplines (UW Stevens Point College of Natural Resources).

The College of Natural Resources Master's degree program is designed for students interested in pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Natural Resources with an emphasis in one of the six disciplines of forestry, wildlife, human dimensions of natural resource management, soil and waste resources, water resources and fisheries, or paper science and engineering. M.S. degree students emphasizing the Human Dimensions of Natural Resource Management choose either a thesis or non-thesis program option. Non-thesis options include Environmental Education for K-12 Teachers, Residential Environmental Education Program, Environmental Education and Interpretation, and Leadership and Administration.

The online non-thesis Environmental Education and Interpretation (EE/I) track is designed for working professionals who wish to develop their skills and expertise in natural resources, environmental education and interpretation, applied research, and leadership. Program participants choosing this track complete all coursework via online education. Multiple online courses already established at UWSP enable online learners to fulfill program requirements (Sheridan, 2010).

The online M.S. in EE/I program provides graduates with relevant advanced professional knowledge and skills. The online M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration (NRLA) program is designed to provide professionals with the skills necessary to lead and manage organizations effectively.

Applicants to the EE/I and Leadership and Administration non-thesis track must meet the general requirement for UWSP graduate candidates, which includes submission of the graduate studies application form and fee and undergraduate transcripts to the Admissions office. Applicants must also submit an application to the CNR graduate program, resume, copy of a paper written by the candidate, essay describing candidate's professional interests and goals, two letters of recommendation, and official GRE scores to the CNR.

The program requirements for the non-thesis EE/I and NRLA graduate degree are:

1. A candidate must earn at least 30 credits (36 in the non-Project Option) in graduate courses approved by their advisor. At least 15 credits must be in courses numbered 700 or above.

2. A candidate must complete graduate courses in at least three disciplines (e.g. forestry, wildlife, biology and education)
3. A candidate must complete one credit of NRES 750 and one credit of NRES 795.
4. A candidate must complete the core course requirements for each track which are determined by the Faculty Advisory Council for each track.

Non- Thesis Project Option

- a. A candidate must complete a minimum 30 credit Program of Study of graduate courses approved by the candidate's advisor which includes an independent study paper (NRES 796) for 3 credits related to the candidate's professional situation.
- b. A candidate must submit a bound copy of the candidate's independent study paper to the University Library.

Non-Thesis Comprehensive Exam Option

- a. A candidate must complete a 36 credit Program of Study of graduate courses approved by the candidate's advisor.
- b. A candidate must pass a comprehensive written exam on coursework completed.

Additionally, there are no minimum credit load requirements per semester, but candidates must earn all credits within a seven-year period (University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, 2009).

VI. Need for a Branding Strategy for the Online M.S. Degree Programs

In order to compete in the marketplace for the best students, qualified faculty and staff, as well as donors, higher education institutions should have a strong organizational brand. Higher education provides many similar services and "products" that students have to choose from (Abratt, et al. 2009). The alignment between organizational branding, which consists of the organization identity and perceived organization image and reputation, and organizational culture contribute to awareness among all stakeholders about who the organization is and what it stands for.

A university is no longer just an institution of higher learning, but also a business. In a competitive marketplace, awareness of business metrics, such as branding, is becoming more critical (Bunzel, 2007, 152). The dilemma facing universities can be summed up by a statement from Robert A. Sevier, Senior Vice President of Statmats, a nationally recognized higher education marketing group:

There are 3,600 two- and four-year colleges in the United States. Even as a member of the academy, how many can you name? How many can your prospective students name? Or prospective donors? Can they name yours? Will they (Bunzel, 2007, 153)?

In addition, it has been shown that the greater the congruence between the student's values, goals and attitudes and those of the institution, the less likely a student is to drop out (Jevons, 2006).

The percentage of online learners in higher education institutions is growing rapidly and these students are "practical problem solvers with life experiences that make them autonomous, self-directed and goal- and relevancy-oriented. They are motivated by professional advancement, external expectations, the need to better serve others, social relationships, escape or stimulation, and pure interest in the subject. Their demands include time and scheduling, money, and long-term commitment constraints. They also tend to feel insecure about their ability to succeed in online learning, find instruction that matches their learning style, and have sufficient instructor contact, support services, and technology training" (Howell, Williams, & Lindsay, 2003).

Since this boom in the online education world began, universities have had to increase their online programs to meet the growing demand. A consistently high demand for more online graduate degrees at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, prompted faculty in the College of Natural Resources to create not just one, but two online master's degree programs. As interests in these programs grow, there is an issue with cohesiveness between the two online programs.

Currently, the two online programs are marketed and managed separately. The goal of the coordinators of these programs is to create their own unique identity within the College of Natural Resources and to promote a cohesive brand for all programs. As non-subsidized programs, tuition revenue supports wholly the activity costs and faculty compensation for this program. A yearly student recruitment goal of 12 has been determined as the number of students needed to sustain financial viability of the program, while still maintaining quality attention and education to students. In order to promote retention and recruitment of students in these programs, it is necessary to develop a branding strategy that will encompass all programs, while still maintaining their individual identity.

VII. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Branding Strategies

The most effective way of determining the success of a branding strategy is to perform a brand audit. The objective of the brand audit is to identify the organization's direction from key stakeholders regarding its present and the future (Abratt, et al. 2009). Techniques for evaluating the effectiveness of branding strategies are discussed further in the next chapter.

In order to develop a strong university brand, the brand manager at universities must conduct an in-depth study of university's current branding efforts and strategies. The university has to understand what products and services they are currently offering, but take it one step further and understand the perceptions and beliefs that are created—these are the true meaning of the brand. Brand audits often set the direction of strategy for the specific brand and is an important aspect to creating a new strategic shift (Marrs, et al, 1965).

Moreover, it is important to ask the following questions: “Are the current sources of brand equity satisfactory? Do certain brand associations need to be strengthened? Does the brand lack uniqueness? What brand opportunities exist and what potential challenges exist for brand equity?” (Marrs, et al., 1967)

The perception of a university develops over time and is directly responsible for the continued support from all of the stakeholders connected to the institution. Maintaining a favorable brand image has a direct impact on student enrollment, faculty hires, recruiting athletes, and other activities. A quality brand image is necessary to attract prospective students. Ultimately, appropriate brand positioning, the fulfillment of brand promises and effective branding could lead to favorable enrollment. Overall, satisfied stakeholders perpetuate the brand promise (Marrs, et al., 1968).

A case study conducted by Marrs, et al. conducted a brand audit of Valparaiso University. They studied both internal and external branding and research conducted by the team included surveys, personal interviews, and data collected from university facilities and archives. The team looked at material produced by the University stating the brand and compared that information to what is actually being presented by the University. The team conducted a SWOT analysis and created a brand wheel to determine what role the brand plays with consumers and to determine activators for acceptance of the brand. They utilized the customer-based brand equity pyramid developed by Keller (see Chapter 3, Figure 2) to determine the levels the brand had reached.

Marrs, et al. suggests that after an internal and external audit is completed, an intricate analysis of the core values should be completed so that any changes to the brand will have a totality about it. It is imperative that once the brand strategy is redeveloped or formed, individuals that understand the concepts, relevance, and importance are set in place to deliver the brand message.

Note:

Some of the content in this literature review does not directly correlate to the discussion found in Chapter Five. The literature review is meant to serve as a background to branding and branding audits for future use by the organization.

Summary

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources offers several online masters' programs, but the cohesive identity to promote these programs is lacking. With online education continuing to grow in the market, it is imperative that UW-SP develop a branding strategy that includes marketing, public relations, and advertising to create a unique identity. It is also a necessity that UW-SP assesses the effectiveness of the brand once it has been established by conducting a brand audit.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

I. Overview

The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a branding strategy for the two online Master of Science programs (MS in EE/I and MS in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration) offered by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources. The branding strategy will provide details about the marketing, advertising, and public relations tactics to be developed to attain the overall goal of ensuring the financial viability of the program by increasing enrollments each school year.

A brainstorming session utilizing the nominal group technique was held involving the stakeholders of the online degree programs, including several of the EE/I and NRLA CNR instructors, administrators, and support staff. Target market research conducted by former UW-SP graduate student, Lesley Sheridan, was the base data used by the researcher and the stakeholders.

Based on the results of the brainstorming session and a review of the related literature regarding branding, the researcher developed the branding strategy for the online degree programs. The branding strategy was reviewed by the stakeholders that were present at the brainstorming session and was revised based on suggestions. The final branding strategy was developed and distributed to the stakeholders. Branding techniques were given dates of implementation and were delegated to the appropriate staff members. Implementation of the branding strategy began in late November 2011.

The researcher utilized a questionnaire to conduct an initial brand audit. The instrument consisted of items that would measure brand awareness, brand image, and brand attachment in our respondents. Respondents were selected from the mailing list utilized by former graduate student, Lesley Sheridan, who had conducted consumer research for the online degree program in environmental education and interpretation.

The conclusion from the brainstorming session, branding strategy development and implementation, and the initial brand audit, combined with information from the literature review and suggestions from program faculty and staff, provided the basis for the suggestions made for the continued implementation of the branding strategy.

II. Sub-Goal 1: Conduct branding planning activities, including holding focus groups with the faculty and staff prior to branding strategies being implemented.

Sub-Goal 2: Define branding goals, strategies, and tactics for the online M.S. programs based on the results of branding planning activities.

A. Consumer Research Survey

A consumer research survey has already been conducted for the College of Natural Resources online master's courses. The data collected from that survey were used by the members of the brainstorming group to develop a branding strategy for the online master's programs.

Data were selected by the researcher based on survey results that are relevant to the process of branding. The data chosen were summarized and emailed to all the members of the focus group. That data were intended to be reviewed by the participants prior to the brainstorming session.

B. The Brainstorming Session

The brand strategy was determined by utilizing the nominal group technique during a brainstorming session on October 5, 2011 involving the stakeholders of the organizations, including the EE/I CNR instructors, administrators, and support staff. Stakeholder analysis is particularly useful in determining whose support should be sought throughout the project's life cycle in order to ensure its eventual impact. The session was used to determine:

- The nature of stakeholder's interests;
- The extent to which stakeholders' interests converge or overlap;
- The importance stakeholders place on the brand;
- The stakeholders' influence with regard to the brand (Brugha and Varvasovsky, 2000).

The goals for the session were to:

- Update the faculty/staff on planning for the online MS programs
- Identify the key factors and attributes of the online MS programs
- Identify the key factors and attributes of the online MS program's faculty/staff
- Assign rankings to the factors identified
- Determine needed actions for the highest ranked factors

Prior to the session, the participants were emailed a branding questionnaire that they were to complete (Appendix A). They also received a summary of Lesley Sheridan's research findings that served as data they could utilize while completing the questionnaire (Appendix B), along with an explanation of branding (Appendix C), and an agenda (Appendix D).

III. Sub-Goal Three: Develop a brand specification, design, objectives, and message for the programs.

Sub-Goal Four: Launch and promote the brand through marketing, advertising, and public relations.

Upon completion of the brainstorming session, the researcher analyzed the input received and developed a branding strategy. The branding strategy was sent to all members of the focus group for review and evaluation. Timelines for specific task implementations were added and tasks were delegated to various staff members. After two rounds of revisions based on stakeholder's feedback, the branding strategy was implemented by the researcher and other employees of the program (Appendix E).

IV. Sub-Goal Five: Determine the extent to which the branding has succeeded by surveying current and potential M.S. graduate students and reviewing the change in the number of applications received for the program.

Due to the nature of branding as a slow process, it is difficult to fully evaluate a branding strategy after only seven months of implementation. It normally takes decades to build a successful brand and it is suggested that an audit is not conducted until after two years of implementation (Ries and Ries, 2002). Based on the fact that some of the strategy had been implemented for the full seven months, other tasks may not have been implemented as early depending on the timeline. It was decided by the researcher and the graduate committee that a preliminary initial branding audit would be conducted to retrieve a baseline of data that could be used as comparative data in a full branding audit that should be conducted within the next two to three years.

In addition, data were collected regarding the number of applications received during the spring semester 2012 through the fall semester 2012 and compared against the number of applications received from spring semester 2010 through fall semester 2010.

After the branding strategy had been implemented, the researcher conducted an initial evaluation of the brand. The brand audit was conducted by distributing questionnaires to current and potential online master's program participants. A consumer research study conducted using an online questionnaire fulfilled the purpose of enhancing understanding of the perceptions of the target market. The survey results were beneficial for informing branding strategy suggested revisions.

The questionnaire distribution and response collection software used was the online survey program, *Select Survey*. The researcher chose this software package because of previous familiarity with the program and because it is a free resource available to university faculty and staff..

I. Evaluating the Effectiveness of Branding Strategies

Brand awareness measures the accessibility of the brand in memory, which can be measured through brand recall or brand recognition (Keller, 2001). Brand recall reflects the ability of the customer to retrieve the brand from memory when given some type of probe as a cue. Brand recognition reflects the ability of customers to confirm prior exposure to the brand (Chandon, 2004). This was achieved through questions one through 11 on the non-student survey (Appendix F). Based on the results from these questions, the researcher was able to determine the level of brand awareness and recognition. If there is a high percentage of respondents who have seen the brand and associate it with UWSP and the CNR, then that reflects a high level of brand awareness and recognition.

Brand image is defined as consumer perceptions of a brand and is measured as the brand associations held in consumers' memory (Keller, 2001). To measure brand image, you can either use and adapt an existing list of brand associations or start from scratch by eliciting brand associations and then measuring the strength of these associations (Chandon, 2004). The outcome of this exercise is usually a short list of the positive and negative associations consumers have with the brand, ranked by strength (Chandon, 2004). This was achieved through questions 12-21 on the non-student survey. When analyzing the data, the percentage of those who selected agree or strongly agree will show that our brand currently exhibits strength in those individual brand values.

Attachment involves the loyalty to the brand, sense of community and engagement. Unstructured, indirect forms of questioning encourage respondents to project their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings regarding the issues of concern (Chandon, 2004). Consumers usually see an incomplete stimulus (e.g., a sentence) and are asked to complete it. The type of projective technique most appropriate for evaluating the online degree program brand is association techniques.

With association techniques, consumers see a stimulus and are asked to respond with the first thing that comes to mind. To elicit multiple attributes, the researcher can use the methods at varying levels of abstraction, starting from the brand down to the attribute. I utilized open coding to determine what are the brand images and attachment to the brand based on these open ended responses. This was achieved through questions 22-24 on the non-student survey and questions 1-25 on the current/former student survey (Appendix G).

Instrument Development

The researcher drafted questionnaire items to address the survey's prime objectives. Members of the researcher's graduate committee reviewed the survey design and revisions were made based on their comments and recommendations. Email communications were sent to several qualified members of the EE/I and higher education community that contained an overview of the survey methodology, the survey objectives and instrument, and a request to review and comment on the survey. After the revisions were made according to the comments by the expert reviewers, three professionals outside the field of EE reviewed the survey instrument for clarity and understanding.

After obtaining approval from the University's Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, the questionnaire was distributed to a list of contacts.

The final instruments contained a welcome screen. The questionnaires contained twenty-nine items on seventeen pages. The non-student instrument included three multiple answer (check all that apply), seventeen multiple choice (choose one), seventeen opportunities for open-ended responses, and six Yes/No. The current/former student instrument included one multiple answer (check all that apply), two multiple choice (choose one), twenty-six opportunities for open-ended responses, and one Yes/No. It is important to note that the instrument contained a number of contingency questions. In *Select Survey*, it is possible to program in skip patterns so that, depending on the response, the online software automatically directs respondents to the next appropriate item, therefore, eliminating the need for respondents to view all items and determine item pertinence.

Instrument Deployment

The online survey tool was chosen over traditional mail surveys for several reasons. Online surveys work well for reaching large populations over a widely dispersed area. Online surveys also save time since the software collects and manages the responses, eliminating the need to enter data

manually into a computer analysis program (Sue and Ritter, 2007). In addition, online surveys are more affordable and reach audiences who have access to the internet, which is a component of the target market for this research.

A list of contacts was obtained from former graduate student, Lesley Sheridan, which provided a purposive sample of interview participants who expressed a strong interest in an online graduate degree program. A list of current and former students was obtained from Jessica Tomaszewski, an online degree program staff member.

An introductory email was deployed with the survey hyperlink to individual contacts and contacts at professional organizations, state and federal agencies. Potential program enrollees were contacted through mailing lists obtained through professional associations, federal and state agencies, and UWSP course participant's contact list. The email provided an overview of the study and instructions for accessing the survey. The email also requested assistance in distributing the survey link to professional and employee networks. The survey remained open for five weeks (Appendix H). The researcher used a convenience sampling strategy to obtain survey responses. An introductory email deployed the survey hyperlink to over 1500 non-student individual contacts and twenty-four current/former students. The email provided an overview of the study and instructions for accessing the survey. The survey remained open for four weeks. The researcher emailed both individual and organizational contacts a reminder to complete the survey in the second and fifth week.

Upon completion of the survey, the researcher analyzed the results of the close-ended questions through quantitative analysis and the open-ended responses were open coded and categorized into themes and sub-themes. The themes that emerge from these open-ended questions will assist in reviewing and revising the branding strategy pertaining to the online graduate degree program.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis of the consumer survey open-ended responses involved open coding related responses and categorization into themes.

V. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability is a crucial factor in survey research, since it is often subject to numerous sources of error. Validity is the instrument's ability to measure what the researcher intended to

measure. Reliability implies that the respondents interpret instrument items consistently. The most common causes that threaten validity and reliability include poor questionnaire design and distribution. Although it is impossible to completely eliminate all sources of error, the researcher will design the study to minimize threats to validity and reliability.

The purpose of this survey was to collect data to analyze the initial branding plan for the online M.S. programs at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. The researcher will not make generalizations concerning a defined population. The researcher will seek input from a large and geographically dispersed target population broadly defined as natural resource professionals in the United States and particularly those who may have an interest or may have expressed an interest in one of the online degree options at UWSP. A web-based survey instrument is preferable for reaching members of a large and geographically dispersed population (Dillman & Bowker; Sue & Ritter, 2007) and the instrument deployment methods described above reflect the variety and number of the population that the survey will attempt to reach. The researcher also assumes those individuals who respond to the survey are those with an interest in the subject and have access to the necessary technology. These two factors help justify that the data collected is valid and reliable to use for its intended purpose of creating a marketing plan for the program.

The researcher could have also performed a phone survey with the survey non-responders to reduce bias, however, the researcher did not have the information (phone numbers) available to utilize this form of follow-up. Based on that, there will be a level of bias in performing an online only survey. These groups of responders and non-responders may have not responded the same, which will bias the results.

Instrument reviews and revisions were also utilized to minimize the threats to validity and reliability. Instrument reviewers included the researcher's graduate committee, several experts in the field of EE/I and several of the researcher's peers. The researcher revised the instrument accordingly after each set of reviews. In addition, the researcher conducted a pre-test of the instrument with the Select Survey software to assure technological aspects worked correctly.

VI. Branding Strategy Revision

The branding strategy for the online degree programs specifies marketing, advertising, and public relations strategies and tactics for achieving the branding goals. The branding strategy was developed based on insights gained from previous marketing planning activities and brainstorming session results.

Based on the results of the current/former student and non-student survey results, the researcher provided her suggestions for a revision to the current branding strategy.

VII. Communications Materials

The communications materials were developed and designed based on insights gained from previous marketing planning activities and brainstorming session results. Based on the results of the current/former student and non-student survey results, the researcher provided her suggestions for a revision to the current communication materials.

VIII. Branding Audit

Monitoring and control of the use of the brand, both at the level of its use in communications and the interaction between the use of online and offline presentations of the brand, and the associations that users are building with the brand is an important component in evaluating marketing communications, and more widely the success of the organization in engaging with its audience. Annual audits of how the brand is applied and how it is perceived yield important information for brand evolution (Rowley, 2004). The researcher provided her suggestions for developing and implementing a brand audit in the future.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

I. Brainstorming Session

Five members of the UWSP online degree program faculty and staff attended the brainstorming session. Utilizing the nominal group technique (Horton, 2007), the participants went through a variety of brainstorming exercises to provide their insights into the branding strategy. Appendix I provides a comprehensive review of the suggestions made by the participants regarding marketing, advertising, and public relations activities they viewed as being beneficial to the branding strategy.

Context mapping was used to determine the main themes and attributes of the online Master's programs. Context mapping refers to the methods, techniques, and tools to bring contextual insights to design teams (Stappers, 2009). Essentially, context mapping is the process of visually representing a group's ideas and thoughts through a map.

Based on the branding questionnaire that was completed, participants wrote their top five words they believed most positively represented the online degree programs on pieces of paper. These keywords were posted on a white board and then divided into categories by the participants. The four categories that were developed were:

1. Convenience
2. Quality Instruction
3. Career Relevance
4. Networking

The participants conducted a review of the marketing, advertising, and public relations techniques that were already in place and determined if they were beneficial based on Lesley Sheridan's research and their personal experiences with the techniques. They determined that the current practices that were successful and should still be utilized were:

1. News Releases
2. Website
3. Promotions at Conferences
4. Word of Mouth
5. Keeping in contact with past course participants

Participants were then led through the process of sharing their ideas for marketing, public relations, and advertising techniques that should be implemented in the branding strategy. A comprehensive list of ideas was developed. Following the initial brainstorming, an opportunity for clarification and discussion was presented. A voting process determined the priority ranking of the ideas presented by the participants. The researcher prepared a typed copy of the brainstorming ideas developed. Techniques that were listed as a priority by the participants included:

1. Develop a logo with CNR/UWSP that will be added to all marketing and advertising materials.
2. Express the answer to the question “what’s in it for me?” to the target audience through the wording of our materials.
3. Research and consider joining the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium.

II. UWSP Online Degree Programs Consumer Research Surveys

The consumer research surveys were open for thirty-five days beginning in July 2012 and ending in August 2012. There were two surveys distributed; the first was distributed to a mailing list of people who had never taken a course through the online degree program, which was acquired from former graduate student, Lesley Sheridan and the second was distributed to current and former graduate students in the online degree programs.

A. Non-Student Survey

During the time the survey was open, Select Survey logged 307 total accesses to the survey. This number reflects the total number of times that the survey was viewed, including periodic checks by the researcher to review the survey and check that it was working properly. This number does not reflect the number of unique individuals who accessed the survey. Of the 307 logged survey responses, ten contained no data, while another 42 responses completed less than 40% of the questionnaire items. Removal of these 52 responses from the data set left 255 responses remaining for data analysis.

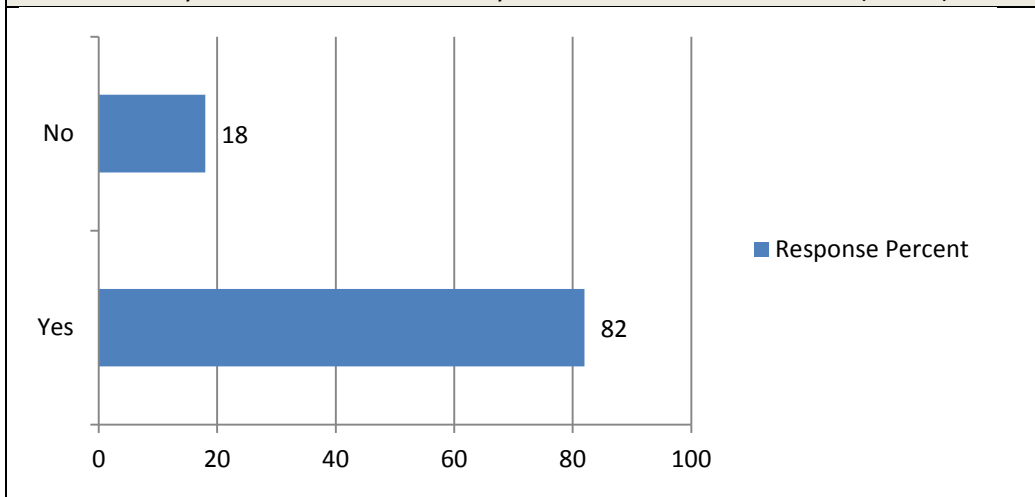
The majority of respondents work for a Federal/National agency (38%), followed by a nature/visitor center (26%), a local agency (13%), and some other non-profit organization (13%). Other responses included state agency (6%), resource management agency (8%), college/university (8%), residential EE facility (5%), school (3%), zoo or aquarium (3%), self-employed (3%), or not currently employed (2%). Other organizations listed included school district environmental center, county government, federal

government, retired, national park partner, non-formal education, farm, under employed, county park system, regional land trust, Native Hawaiian organization, and professional development for k-12 science teachers.

Questionnaire items 1-11 measured brand awareness. 82% of respondents had heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, while 71% had heard of the UW-SP College of Natural Resources (see Table 1, #1 & 2). Only 42% of respondents had seen and recognized the UWSP logo prior to the survey, while only 33% of respondents had seen the CNR logo prior to the survey (see Table 1, #3 & 4).

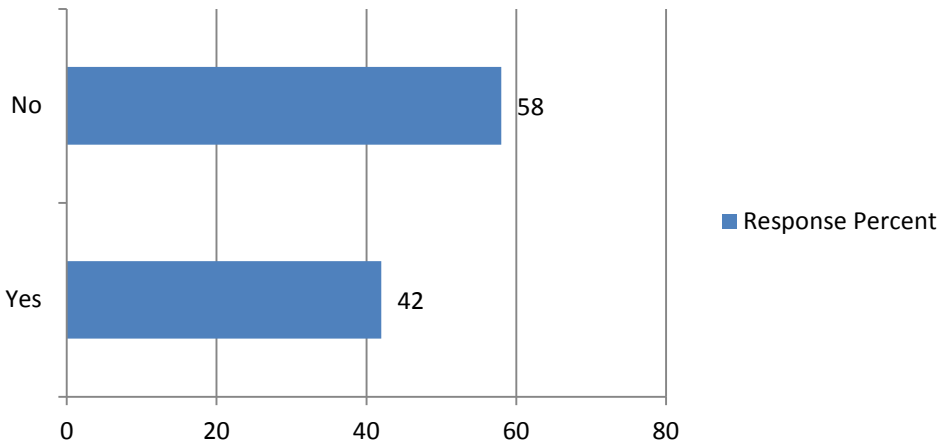
Table 1: Brand Awareness

1. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point? (n=293)

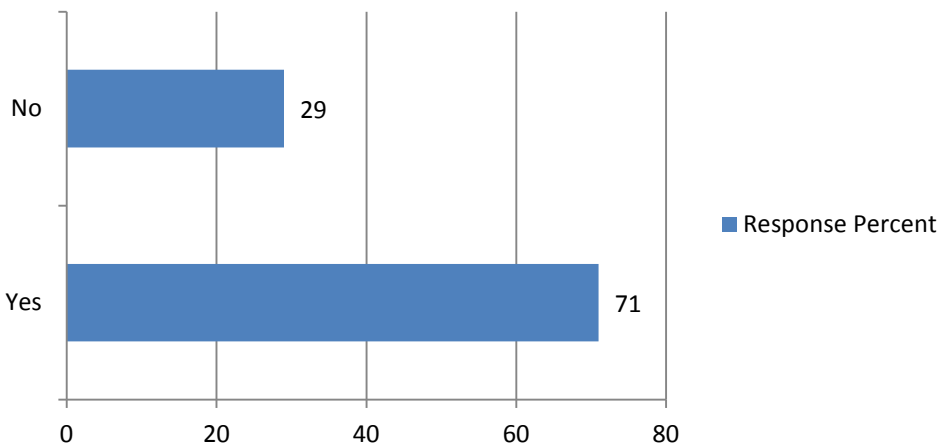




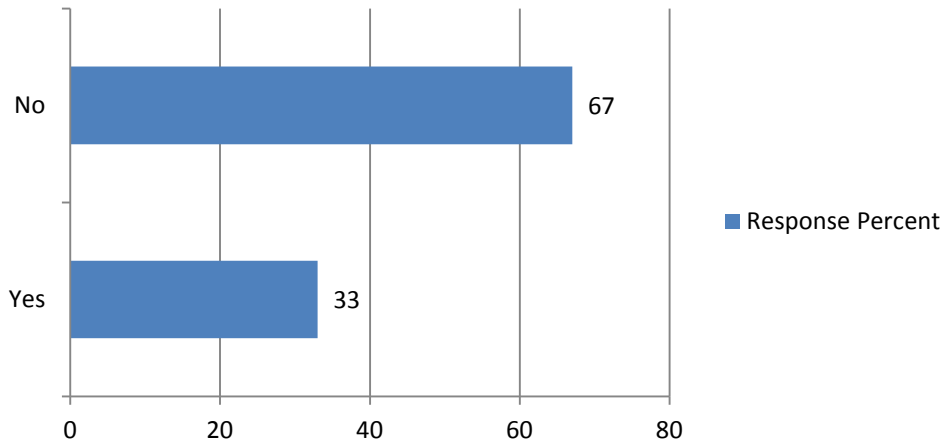
2. Have you seen this logo prior to this survey? (n=292)



3. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources? (n=288)



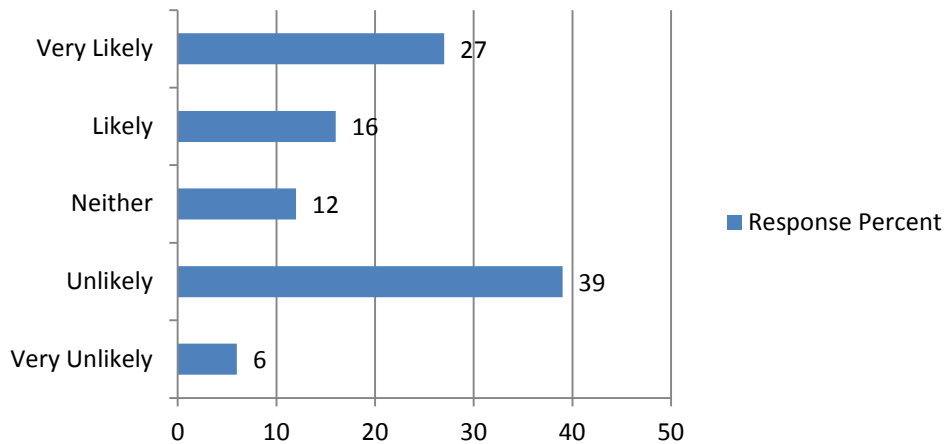
4. Have you seen this logo prior to this survey? (n=290)



The 33% of respondents that answered that they had seen the CNR logo were directed to a question that asked them if they would be able to associate the CNR logo without the UW-SP image and wording associated with it. The majority of the respondents (39%) found it unlikely that they would be able to recognize the CNR logo, but 27% of respondents found it very likely (see Table 1a).

Table 1a.: Brand Awareness, cont.

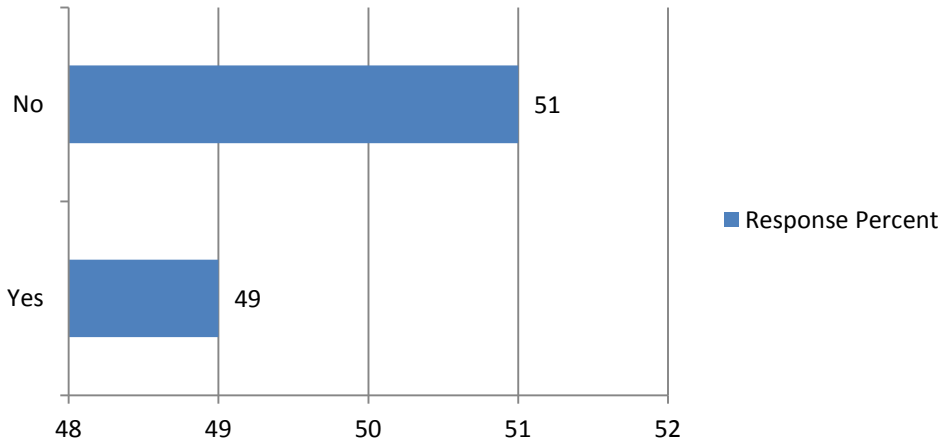
5. If you were to see this logo without the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point image and wording associated with it, how likely would you be to associate the College of Natural Resources logo with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point? (n=96)



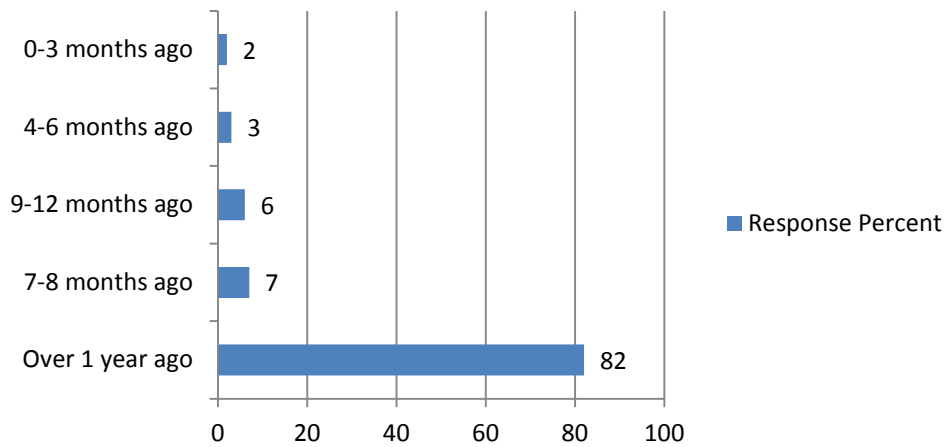
Respondents were almost evenly split between those who had heard of the UW-SP online M.S. in Environmental Education and Interpretation (49%) and those who had not (51%) (see Table 1b, #6). Those that had heard of the online M.S. in EE/I first heard of the program over one year ago (82%) (see Table 1b, #7). Of those respondents, they mainly heard of the program through an organization website posting (42%) and word-of-mouth (40%) (see Table 1b, #8). Based on responses entered in the “other” category, many respondents (16) heard of the program through email (see Table 1b, #7).

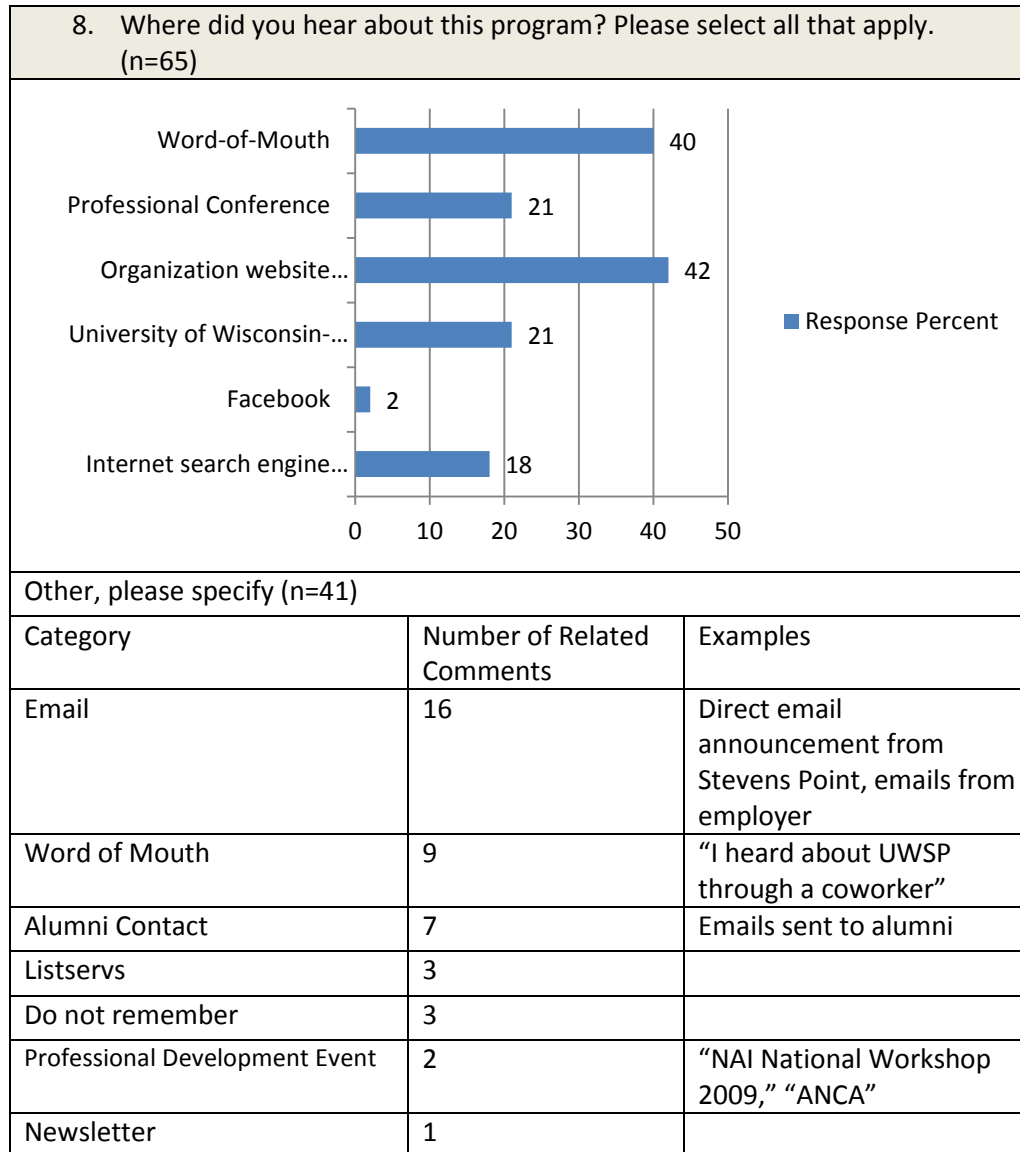
Table 1b.: Brand Awareness, cont.

6. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point online Master's Degree in Environmental Education and Interpretation prior to this survey? (n=288)



7. When did you first hear about the program? (n=141)

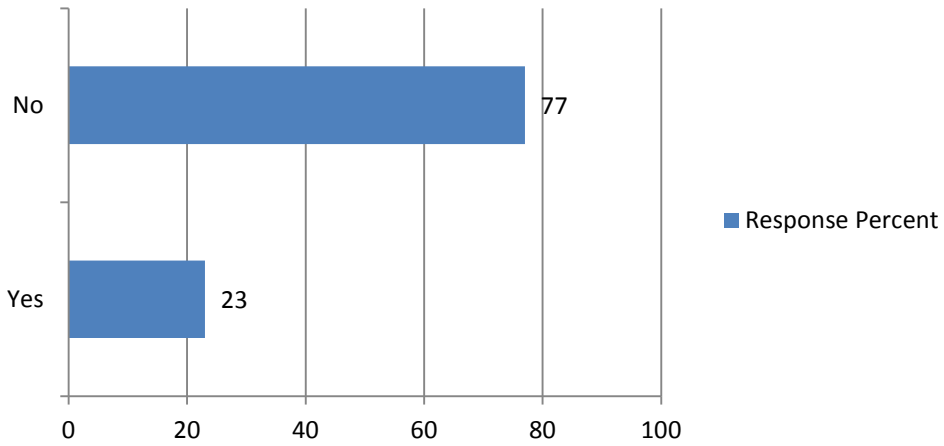




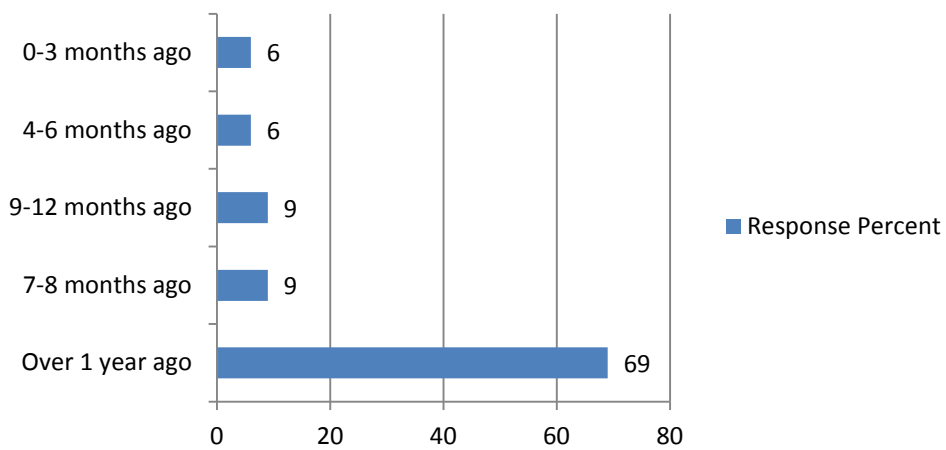
Respondents who had heard of the UW-SP online M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration had markedly different results than the EE/I program. Only 23% of respondents had heard of the program and of those respondents, 69% had first heard of the program over a year ago (see Table 1c, #9 & 10). The respondents who had heard of the online M.S. in NRLA primarily heard of the program through word of mouth (43%) and organization website postings (34%) (see Table 1c, #11). Based on responses entered in the "other" category, many of the respondents (11) had heard of the program through email (see Table 1c, #11).

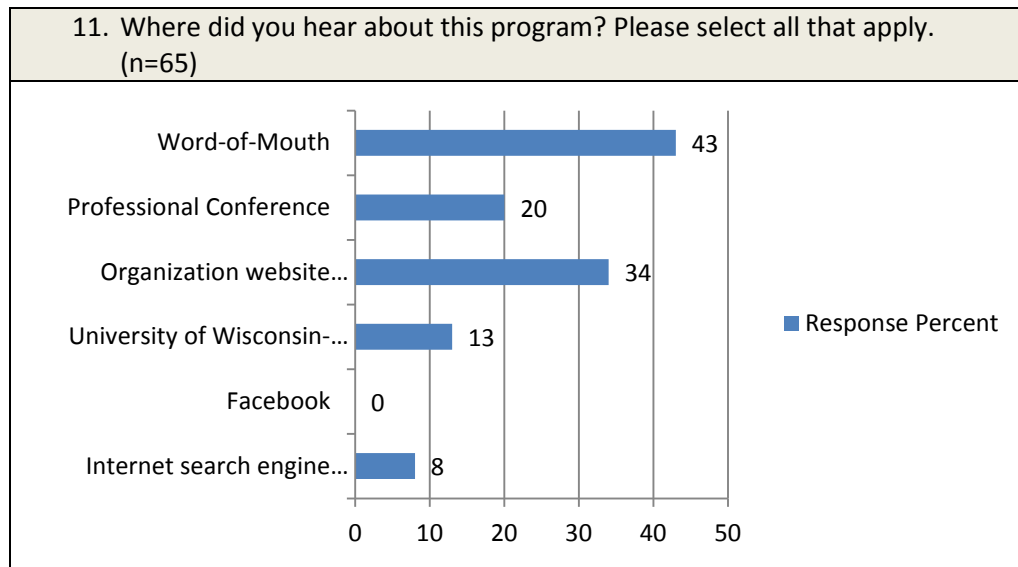
Table 1c.: Brand Awareness, cont.

9. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point online Master's Degree in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration prior to this survey? (n=282)



10. When did you first hear about this program? (n=64)





Other, please specify (n=25)

Category	Number of Related Comments	Examples
Email	11	Direct email announcement from Stevens Point, emails from employer
Professional Development Event	4	"NAI National Workshop 2009," "ANCA"
Alumni Contact	4	Emails sent to alumni
Word of Mouth	3	"4-H Agent"
Do not remember	2	
Mailings	1	

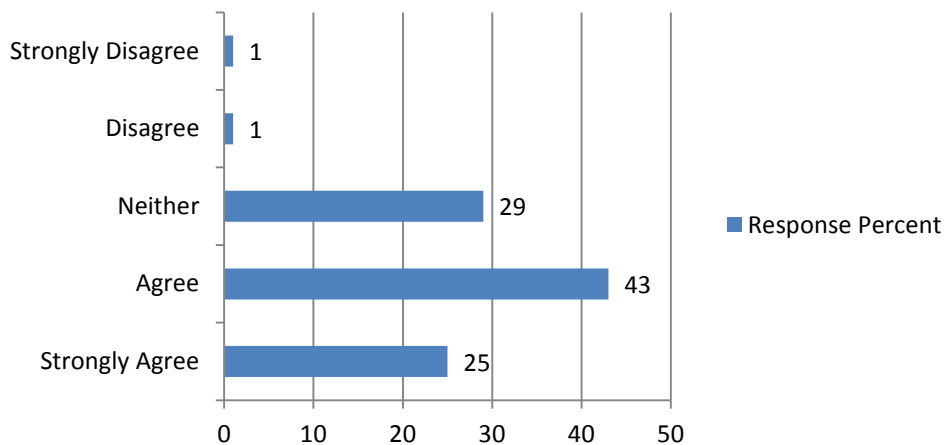
Questionnaire items 12-21 measured brand image. The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that OMSEEI was a reputable program (68%) (see Table 2, #12), would sufficiently prepare a student for a career in environmental education and interpretation (68%) (see Table 2, #14), is convenient for working professionals (84%) (see Table 2, #16), appears to provide quality instructors for their courses (74%) (see Table 2, #18), and provides a good network for environmental education professionals to interact (64%) (see Table 2, #20).

The majority of respondents also strongly agreed or agreed that NRLA was a reputable program (58%) (see Table 2, #13), would sufficiently prepare a student for a career in natural resources (57%) (see Table 2, #15), is convenient for working professionals (81%) (see Table 2, #17), appears to provide

quality instructors for their courses (71%) (see Table 2, #19), and provides a good network for environmental education professionals to interact (58%) (see Table 2, #21).

Table 2.: Brand Image

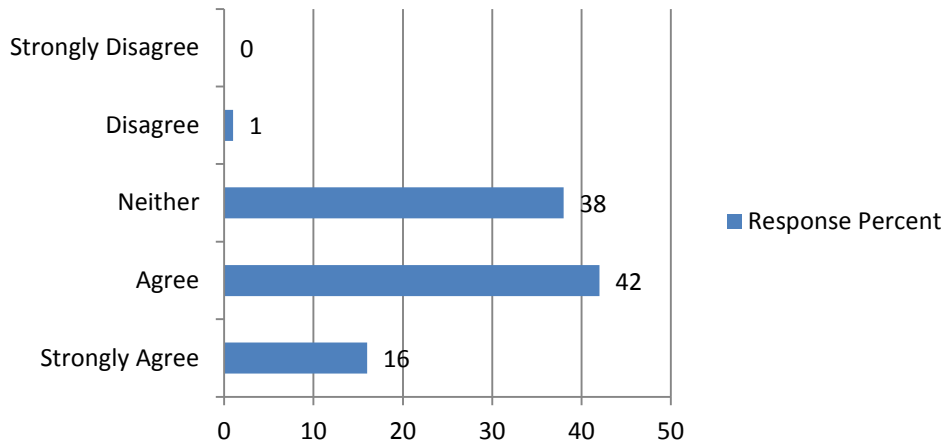
12. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION is a reputable program. (n=259)



Comments (n=30)

Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Comments
Unfamiliar/Cannot Answer	"Cannot rate a program I know nothing about; just reading the website does not give me the knowledge to say that it is a reputable program."	9
UWSP overall has a solid reputation	"UWSP does have a solid reputation in natural resources, just not sure about the online program specifically."	5
Previously taken courses at UWSP	"The courses I took were delivered by highly qualified professionals."	5
Word of Mouth	"Based entirely on abilities of grads from UWSP I've worked with."	5
Skeptical of Online Degrees	"Online degrees often allow unqualified people access to qualifying credentials"	3
Associated with a professional organization	"...assume that EETAP and NAAEE would only work with a quality program."	2
Development of new courses	"There has been development of new courses now and then."	1
Not appealing to all educators	"This program may not appeal to educators in other regions of US."	1

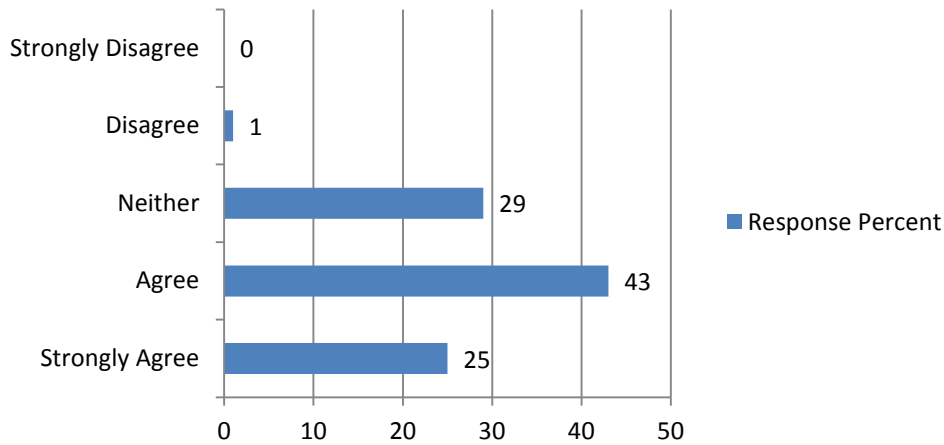
13. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION is a reputable program. (n=259)



Comments (n=23)

Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Responses
Unfamiliar/Cannot Answer	"I do not know anyone who has participated in this program and thus I do not have a professional opinion."	12
UWSP overall has a solid reputation	"I assume the online program is as strong a program as the campus program"	7
Word of Mouth	"I have heard from previous museum sources that your college has excellent programs."	2
Skeptical of Online Degrees	"I am a bit skeptical of all online degrees."	1
Website does not describe reputation	"The "History of the Program" link only talks about the EE and Interp program; not the NRLA program, so I don't have any info to base my answer on."	1

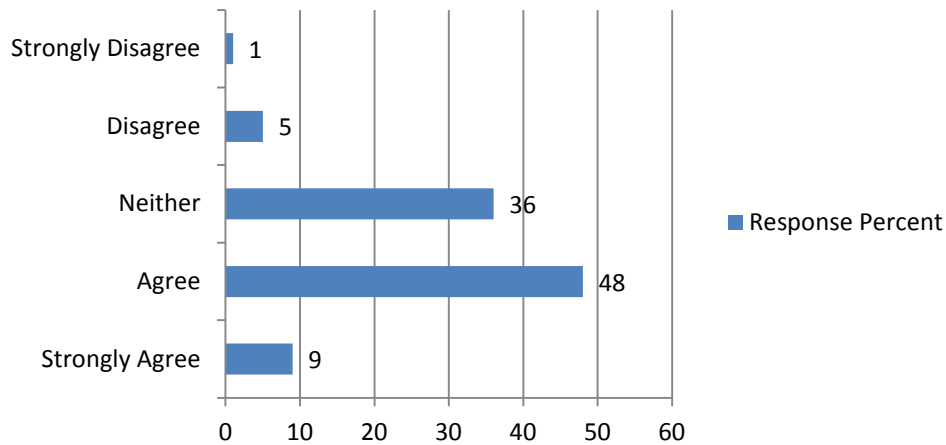
14. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION would sufficiently prepare a student for a career in environmental education and interpretation. (n=259)



Comments (n=27)

Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Responses
Missing in class/face-to-face interaction	"Being entirely online, I feel that they will miss out on the important field experiences and learning from their peers."	14
Skeptical of Online Degrees	"It concerns me that the program is only online."	3
Preparation for only some portions of career	"I think an entire online course in this subject would only be sufficient to prepare someone for most aspects of the job, not all."	3
Unfamiliar/Cannot Answer	"From web, I can't see what you would take for this degree, and I can't say if it would prepare you or not."	3
Comprehensive Courses	"Great selection of courses"	2

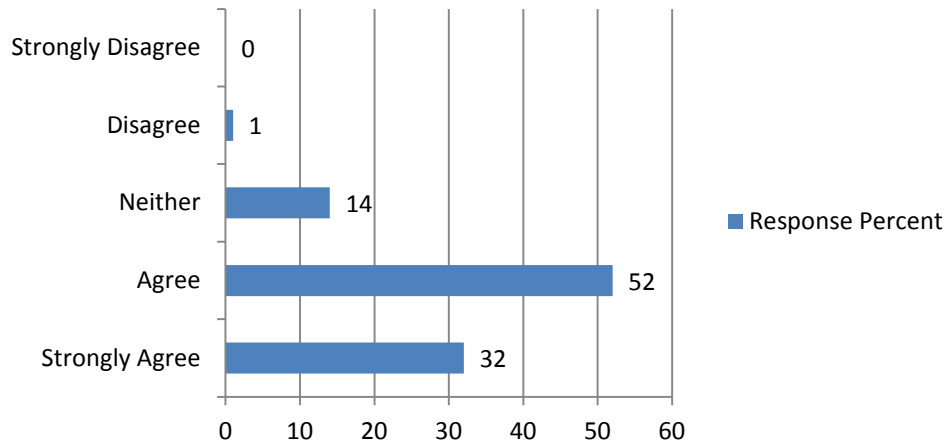
15. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION would sufficiently prepare a student for a career in environmental education and interpretation. (n=250)



Comments (n=28)

Themes	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Missing in class/face-to-face experiences	"Still need hands on, face to face experience."	6
Not enough courses related to NRLA Degree available	"There are very few classes listed for the NRLA masters degree."	6
Unfamiliar/Cannot Answer	"Not sure I entirely know what courses are needed for this degree."	6
Skeptical of online degrees	"I am just not confident in a course that is entirely online."	3
Preparation for some portions of career	"It would enhance the skills of someone moving from field work to program management."	3
General program too focused on EE/I	"Seems like most of the courses are aimed at the EE/I aspect, with a few leadership/admin courses that are specific to the Wisconsin School Forest Program. Maybe more general leadership/admin courses would add different perspectives?"	3
Not applicable to all regions	"Not sure that course requirements would meet my needs living in Chihuahuan desert"	1

16. Completing the Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION program is convenient for working professionals. (n=246)

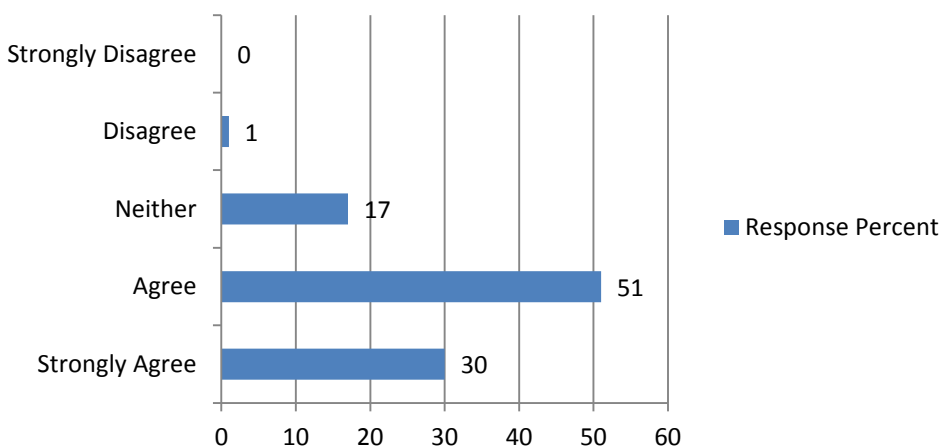


Comments (n=20)

Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Appropriate for working professionals	"Good to have the ability to complete the program online for those professionals who cannot take leave time from work or family."	5
Convenient/Flexible	"I completed my bachelor's degree online as a working professional and found this method to be flexible and as convenient as it can be."	6
Cannot Answer	"No data."	3
Less desirable than face to face	"If a working professional spends 50-75% of work time on computer, spending more time on computer may be less convenient than attending a class, interacting with profs and other working professionals one-on-one."	2
Online courses are too demanding	"Tried taking one course, but it was too much with work, kids, etc. Especially if I was away for a week for travel/training."	2
Beneficial	"Its fantastic to have a solid reputable course offering available as this is not offered locally to me in person."	2
Great learning environment	"The online interface and group feedback is excellent."	1
Convenience should not be a goal	"I am not sure that convenience should be a goal for an educational degree."	1
Online may be the	"Sometimes online is the only way."	1

only choice		
Hesitant in hiring	"I also would hesitate to hire an entry level person with a degree from a 100% on-line curriculum..."	1

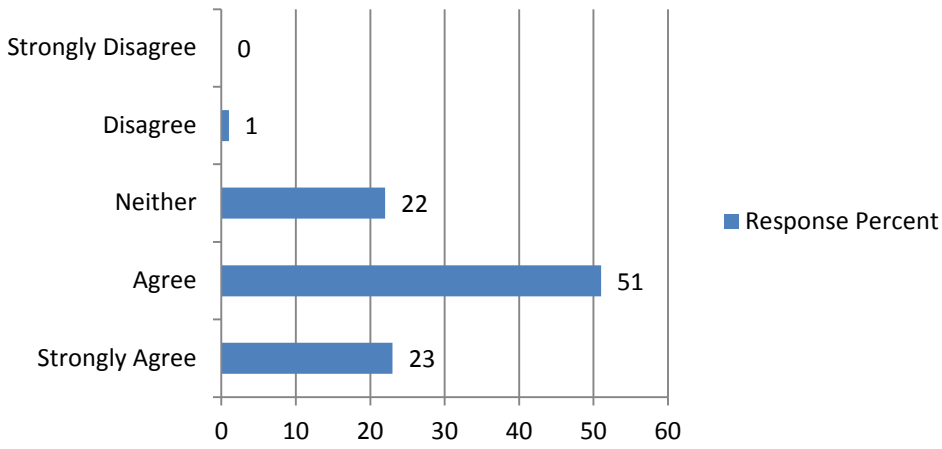
17. Completing the Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION program is convenient for working professionals. (n=246)



Comments (n=10)

Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related responses
Flexible/Convenient	"Online coursework is an excellent way for working professionals to balance a job and school on their own busy schedules."	5
Cannot Answer	"...haven't been able to sign up yet and therefore cannot make the statement."	2
Too Demanding	"Tried taking one course, but it was too much with work, kids, etc. Especially if I was away for a week for travel/training"	1
Networking Opportunities	"Absolutely, many folks work in remote areas, away from campuses and this is a great way to get connected"	1
Interested in further information	"Have not really given this much consideration, however I am interested in looking into this one further."	1

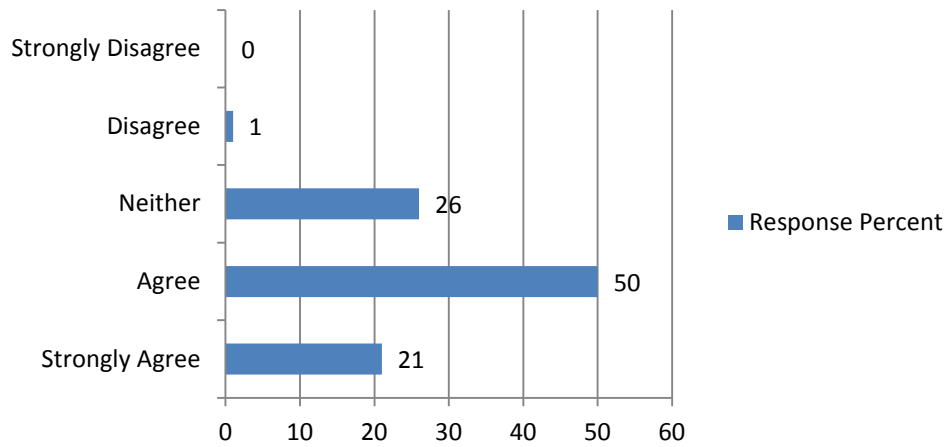
18. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION program appears to provide quality instructors for the courses. (n=245)



Comments (n=17)

Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
High respect for instructors based on experience in online course	"I took a course from *****. It was the first and best online course I've taken. I appreciated her timely guidance and feedback."	5
High respect for instructors based on UWSP reputation	"...I know that the university has a reputation of fine instructors."	5
Disappointed in quality of instructor based on experience in online course	"I took a Making EE Relevant to Diverse Audiences course and was not very impressed with the instructor's knowledge or teaching style."	2
Instructors have a strong background in their fields	"Instructors seem to have nice balance of pedigrees and real world experience."	2

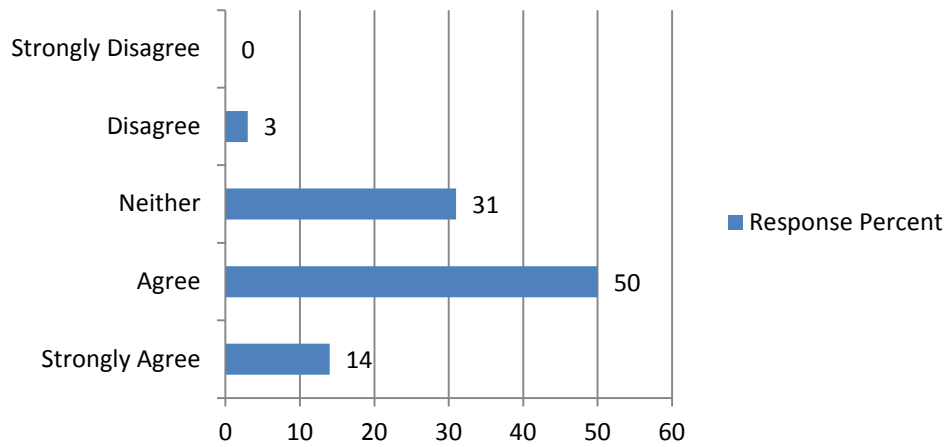
19. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION program appears to provide quality instructors for the courses. (n=245)



Comments (n=9)

Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Strong background in field	"Instructors seem to have nice balance of pedigrees and real world experience."	2
High respect based on experience	"Don't know much about this field, but **** and **** are wonderful instructors - the best!"	2
Cannot Answer	"I can't rate this based on your website."	2
Disappointed in quality of instructor based on experience in online course	"I was unimpressed by my online instructor."	1
Unsure of instructor competency in NRLA field	"Based on the staff listing, I feel unsure of their competency in the area of Natural Resource Administration though they appear to be extremely passionate and qualified in their fields"	1
Prefer instructors from across fields	"...I would like to see professors from across disciplines ie administration	1

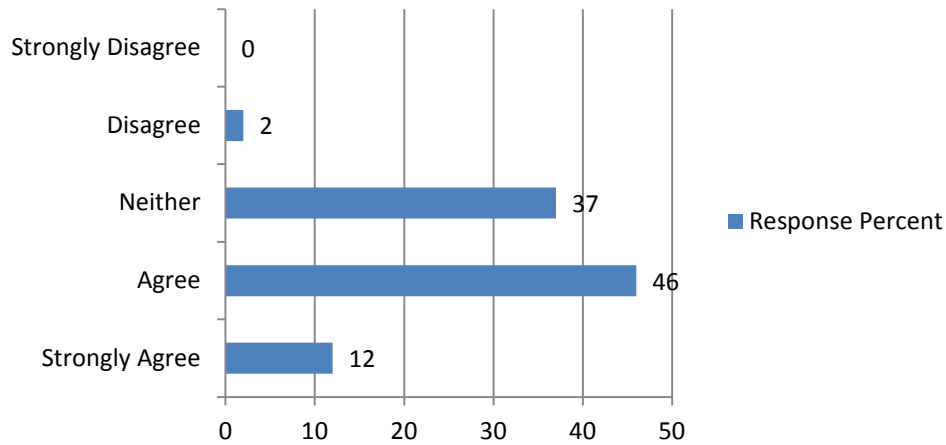
20. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION program provides a good network for environmental education professionals to interact. (n=242)



Comments (n=20)

Themes	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Prefer in-person networking	"Even in this age of Facebook and Twitter, relationships are still built on at least some face-to-face interaction."	7
Cannot Answer	"Not sure"	6
Good way to connect with other professionals	"From the UWSP course I took and other online courses, I found it to be a good networking opportunity and sometimes a more effective way of communicating than in the classroom."	5
Connections made did not last	"I liked the networking throughout the class, but I think due to the lack of real connection, the connections died shortly thereafter the class ended."	3
Online networking is not real networking	"Interacting via a computer is not networking and can be dangerous."	1
Limited	"It seems like it is a limited network."	1
Challenging	"I know they are popular but I would think that networking electronically would be a challenge."	1

21. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION program provides a good network for environmental education professionals to interact. (n=242)



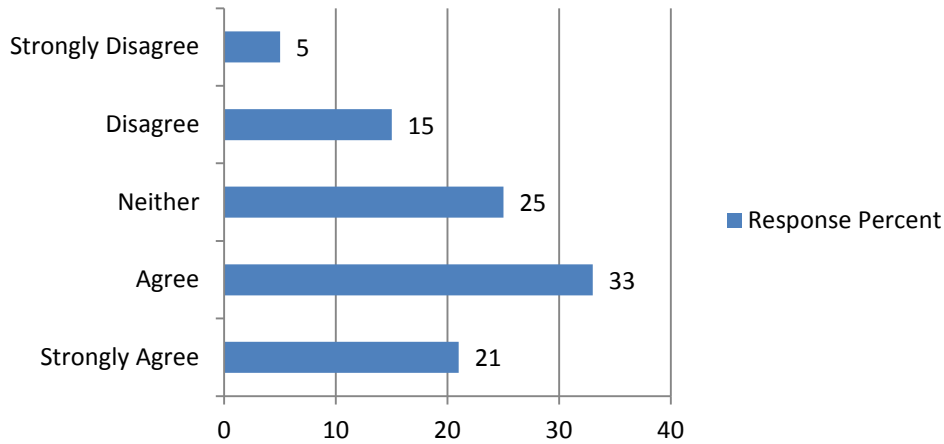
Comments (n=7)

Themes	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Cannot Answer	"Not enough available information to make a determination."	3
Key Factor	"This may be one of the key factors for this course."	1
Prefer in-person networking	"Even in this age of Facebook and Twitter, relationships are still built on at least some face-to-face interaction."	1
Potential	"Potentially"	1
Limited	"It seems like it is a limited network."	1

Questionnaire items 22-24 measured brand attachment. Of those responding, 33% agreed that they would seek out more information regarding the OMSEEI program and 36% of respondents agreed they would seek out more information regarding the NRLA program (see Table 3, #22 & 23). Based on the comments provided by the respondents, their reasoning for not pursuing more information about either program is due to the fact that they have no plans to pursue a M.S., they already have a M.S. degree, or they are already currently pursuing a M.S. Other responses included that they were planning to retire or already have retired or the program is too expensive.

Table 3: Brand Attachment

22. I will request more information about the Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation program if I desire to pursue a graduate degree.

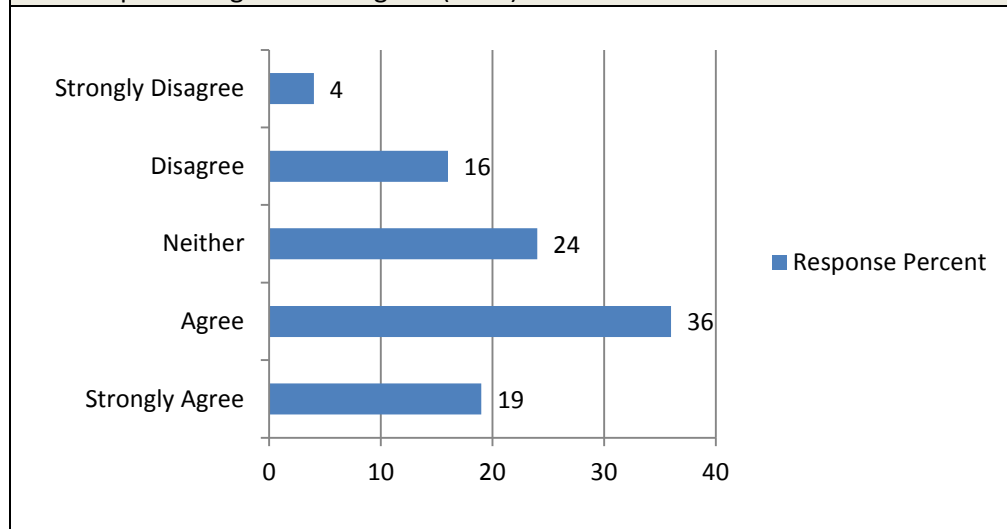


Comments (n=46)

Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Comments
Already have a graduate degree	"I've already got a M.S. in this field."	22
No plans to pursue a M.S. at this time	"I have no intention of pursuing a graduate degree."	8
Not interested, but will recommend the program to others	"I already have a graduate degree from UWSP, but would recommend the program to others."	5
Currently enrolled in a graduate degree program	"I am currently finishing an online degree with SFASU. If Point had a program when I started, I would have selected UWSP."	4
Bias against online degrees	"I completed my MPA, on the campus of the university I attended, over a 4-yr period (2002-2006), working full time. I would not consider an online graduate program then or now."	3
Already have information regarding program	"I do have information already."	3
Too Expensive	"Too expensive, especially for those working at nonprofit facilities with lower pay."	2
Retired and not seeking further education	"Retired; have limited fixed income."	2
No time	"I think it would be a great course just not	1

	sure if I have the time to take it as a nursing student.”	
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23. I will request more information about the Online Master of Science in Natural Resources Leadership & Administration program if I desire to pursue a graduate degree. (n=34)



Comments (n=29)

Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Responses
Already have a graduate degree	“I already have a Master’s in Resource Interpretation from Stephen F. August State University, but might consider signing up for an online course in the future.”	14
No plans to pursue a M.S. at this time	“No plans to further my education.”	5
Not interested, but will recommend the program to others	“I already have a Ph.D. but will recommend it to my students.”	3
Too expensive	“Too expensive.”	2
Bias against online degrees.	“Some personal bias against online classes/programs.”	2
Only interested in EE/I programs.	“My focus is primarily EE/I, so the leadership & admin program does not fit my needs.”	2
Possibly	“I might. I began one course online through the EE&I program and disliked the organization & expectations intensely. I may be willing to give it a second chance, particularly given some of the courses in the leadership program.”	1

Retiring	"Within 1 year of retirement."	1
Already have information regarding the program	I would likely make my decision to enroll based on the info online."	1

Question 24 was an open ended question asking respondents if they were a new student, when they would choose to pursue this specific degree program. The majority of respondents would be employed in a related field for several years, be looking to advance their career and would be financially stable. Many would only pursue the degree if there was some sort of financial aid or support or if they had just finished their undergraduate degree (see Table 4c).

Table 4c: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire		
24. If you were a new student, when would you choose to pursue this specific degree program? (n=237)		
Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Comments
Employed in field for several years	"Ideally, I think I would pursue a Master's when I was a newer professional, like 5 years into my profession."	55
Seeking to advance career	"Looking to advance in my job..."	51
Financially Stable	"I would want to be in a secure financial situation."	35
Other (mostly listed dates they would enroll)	"Fall 2013." "During winter."	30
Immediately following undergraduate degree	"Ideally, directly after I completed my undergraduate degree."	28
Financial assistance available	"Only if financial aid is available."	28
Unsure	"Don't know."	25

No family	"If I were single..."	20
Have adequate time	"If I had the time to devote to the program."	20
Have older children	"I would likely wait until my kids are in high school, as my family commitments are too great for an online program at present."	18
Would never pursue online degree	"No...I did not and would not choose online grad work..."	14
Seeking to increase pay	"If the need for additional course work would provide the opportunity for jobs with increased pay."	5

B. Current/Former Student Survey

During the time the survey was open, Select survey logged 22 total accesses to the survey. This number reflects the total number of times that the survey was viewed, including periodic checks by the researcher to review the survey and check that it was working properly. The number does not reflect the number of unique individuals who accessed the survey. Of the 22 logged survey responses, one contained no data, while another five responses completed less than 40% of the questionnaire items. Removal of these 6 responses from the data set left 16 responses remaining for data analysis.

Demographically, the majority of respondents were employed by a Federal/National Agency (33%), followed closely by a local agency (20%) and schools (20%). Other organizations included state agency (13%), resource management agency (13%), nature/visitor center (13%), other non-profit organization (13%), and those not currently employed (13%). Two respondents stated that they were employed by a college access program and as an intern for the US Forest Service. The average age of the respondents was 35 years old, however the range of ages was from 26 years old to 54 years old (n=13). Three of the 16 respondents did not provide their age.

Questionnaire items 1-22 measured brand attachment. Respondents who selected that they are/were students in the OMSEEI program were directed to OMSEEI labeled questions and vice versa for the NRLA past/present students. Both groups received the same questions, but had the programs names inserted into the question depending on their program affiliation. Of the respondents, 76% were past/current students in the OMSEEI program and 24% were respondents in the NRLA program. 71% of respondents were female, 21% were male, and 7% chose not to answer (n=14). Three respondents

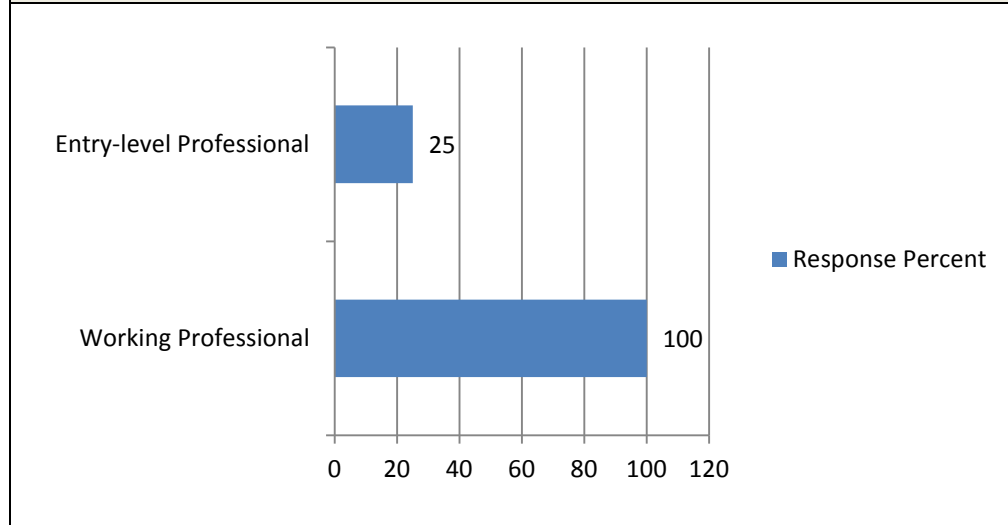
reside in Wisconsin, two reside in Illinois, two reside in Missouri, one resides in California, one from North Carolina, one from New York, and one from Minnesota.

Questions 10-18 and 20-23 received such similar answers that they did not require open coding and are therefore, presented in quantitative graphs. Respondents could choose more than one response. When asked what respondents believed were the primary characteristics of the typical OMSEEI students, the majority believed they were self-motivated (60%), followed closely by being a working professional in the field (50%) (see Table 4, #10). Other responses included passionate, flexible, intelligent, and organized. There were two very definitive characteristics that respondents in the NRLA category believed represented the typical NRLA student; a working professional (100%), and of those that believed it was a working profession, some also believed it was an entry-level professional (25%) (see Table 4, #11). For Table 4, question 15, the reason the total number is 120% is because all of the four respondents (100%) answered “working professional”. Of those respondents, one respondent also stated “entry level professional”, which was 25% of the respondents.

Table 4: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire																						
10. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of the typical Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation student? (n=10)																						
<table border="1"> <caption>Data for Table 4: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Characteristic</th> <th>Response Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Introspective</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Creative</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Adventurous</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Organized</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Intelligent</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flexible</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Passionate</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Working Professional in Field</td> <td>50</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Self-Motivated</td> <td>60</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Characteristic	Response Percent	Introspective	10	Creative	10	Adventurous	10	Organized	20	Intelligent	20	Flexible	20	Passionate	30	Working Professional in Field	50	Self-Motivated	60
Characteristic	Response Percent																					
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Organized	20																					
Intelligent	20																					
Flexible	20																					
Passionate	30																					
Working Professional in Field	50																					
Self-Motivated	60																					
Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Comments																				
Self-Motivated	“Self-motivated, good with deadlines, disciplined.”	6																				

Working Professional in field	"Working professional, usually in the EE field."	5
Passionate	"...passionate about their field."	3
Flexible	"...flexible."	2
Intelligent	"...intelligent."	2
Organized	"organized" ; "good with deadlines"	2
Adventurous	"...passionate"; "adventurous"	1
Creative	"creative"	1
Introspective	"intrapersonal learner"	1

15. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of the typical Online Master of Science in Natural Resources Leadership & Administration student?
(n=4)



Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Responses
Working Professional	"Working professional who is studying part time."	4
Entry-level Professional	"Relatively early in their career."	1

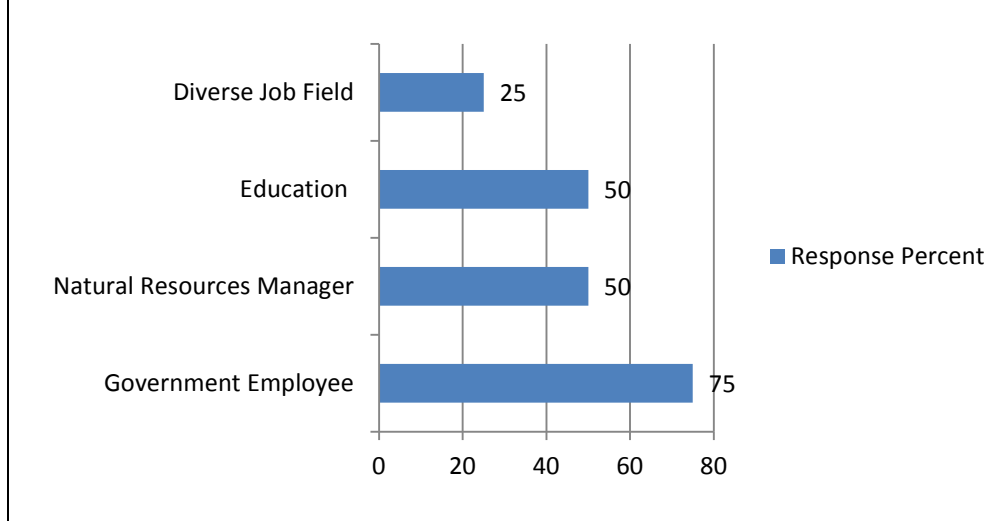
The OMSEEI respondents believed that the average age of a typical OMSEEI student would be 39 years old, with a range of 20-65 years old. The NRLA respondents believed that the average age of a typical NRLA student would be 35 years old, with a range of 25-50 years old.

OMSEEI respondents believed that the typical OMSEEI student would have a career in education (90%), followed by a distant second of a general natural resources career (30%) and parks and recreation (30%) (see Table 4a, #12). 75% of NRLA respondents believed that the typical NRLA student would have a career as a government employee, followed by a natural resources manager (50%) and a career in education (50%). 10% believed that they would be part of a diverse job field (see Table 4a, #17).

Table 4a: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire																
12. What type of professions do they have? (OMSEEI) (n=10)																
<table border="1"> <caption>Data for Figure 12: Professions of OMSEEI Respondents</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Profession</th> <th>Response Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Museum</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tourism</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Non-Profit</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Parks/Recreation</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Natural Resources</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education</td> <td>90</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Profession	Response Percent	Museum	10	Tourism	10	Non-Profit	10	Parks/Recreation	30	General Natural Resources	30	Education	90
Profession	Response Percent															
Museum	10															
Tourism	10															
Non-Profit	10															
Parks/Recreation	30															
General Natural Resources	30															
Education	90															
Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Comments														
Education	“Education-Informal and Formal”	9														
General Natural Resources	“...natural resource professional.”	3														
Parks/Recreation	“state park naturalist, national park naturalist...”	3														
Non-Profit	“...non-profit organization.”	1														

Tourism	“eco-tourism or adventure travel...”	1
Museum	“museum...”	1

17. What type of professions do they have? (NRLA) (n=4)

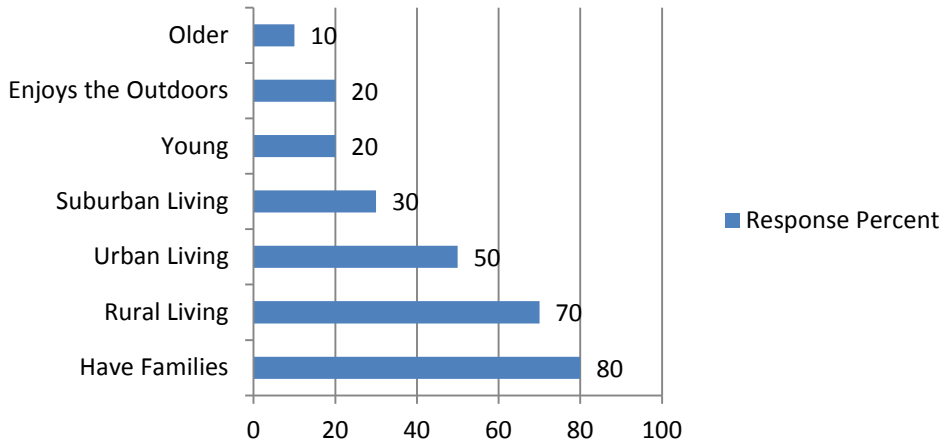


Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Responses
Government Employee	“...some form of government job.”	3
Natural Resources Manager	“Natural resource managers...”	2
Education	“interpreters/educators...”	2
Diverse job field	“Diverse employers...”	1

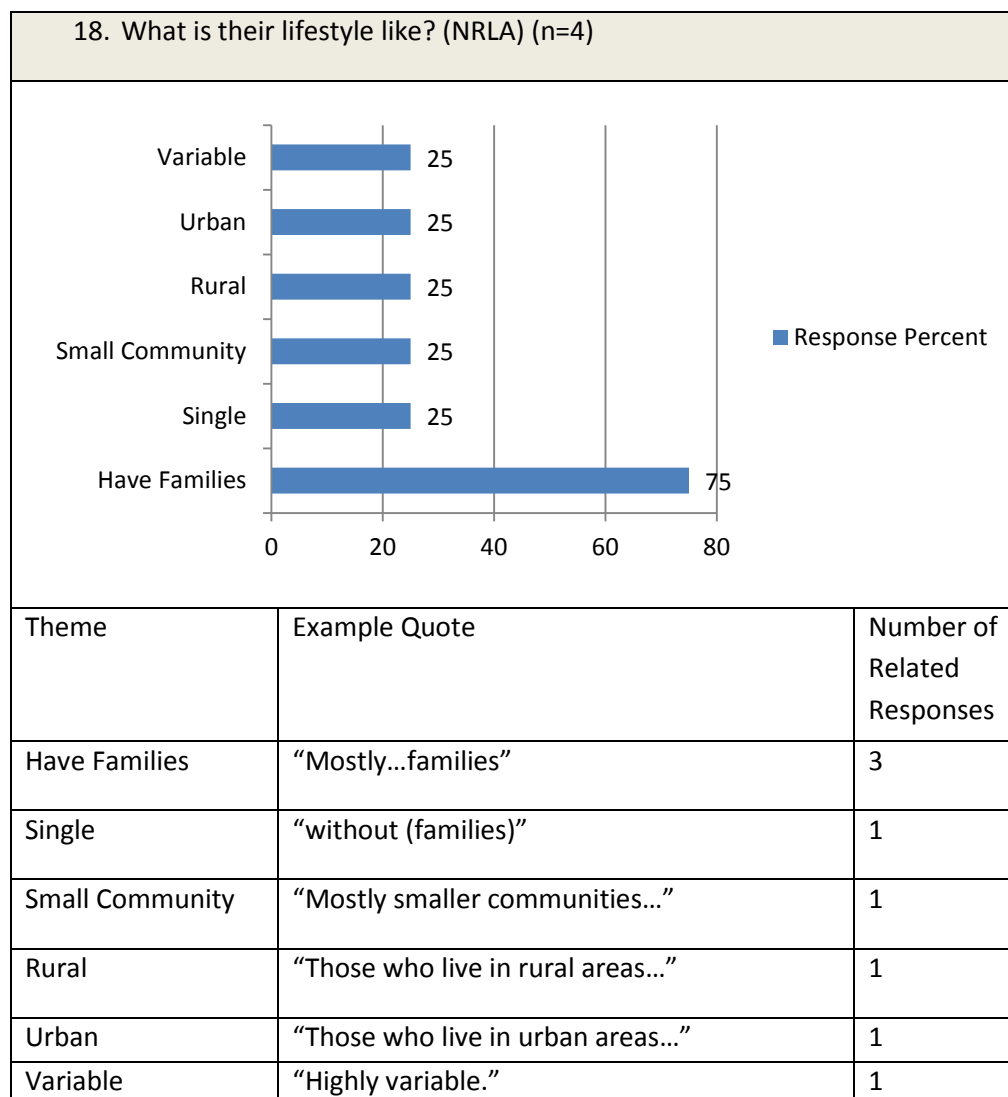
OMSEEI respondents believed that the typical OMSEEI student has a family (80%), primarily rural living (70%), but followed closely by urban living (50%), with suburban living falling behind (30%). Few believe they are young (20%) and few mention that they enjoy the outdoors (20%). Only one respondent believed that an OMSEEI student would be “older” (see Table 4b, #13). Similarly, NRLA respondents believed that the typical NRLA student has a family (75%), though 25% believed they could be single. Across the board, 25% believed that they could live in both rural and urban areas. One respondent believed that their lifestyle was variable (see Table 4b, #18).

Table 4b: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire

13. What is their lifestyle like? (OMSEEI) (n=10)



Theme	Example Quote	Number of Related Comments
Have Families	"Many have families and are young"	8
Rural Living	"Some living in very rural areas..."	7
Urban Living	"Urban..."	5
Suburban Living	"Predominantly suburban..."	3
Young	"...are young."	2
Enjoys the Outdoors	"Must enjoy being outdoors..."	2
Older	"older..."	1



Due to an error by the researcher that was not caught during the testing process, only the OMSEEI respondents were asked what stage they believed the typical OMSEEI student was in their career. All of the respondents believed they were mainly mid-level professionals, while entry-level professionals came in second (60%), followed by senior-level professionals (40%).

Questions 20-23 were presented to all of the respondents. The respondents were split when determining (if they were a new student) when they would choose to pursue this specific degree program. 38% would immediately pursue this degree program after attaining an undergraduate degree and 38% would pursue this degree program after several years of career experience. 23% stated they would pursue this degree if they did not have a family (see Table 4c, #20).

The majority of students would be working professionals (69%), while a much smaller number would be part-time/seasonal employees (15%) or entry-level (15%). Mid-level and senior-level professional situations were also mentioned (8%) (see Table 4c, #21).

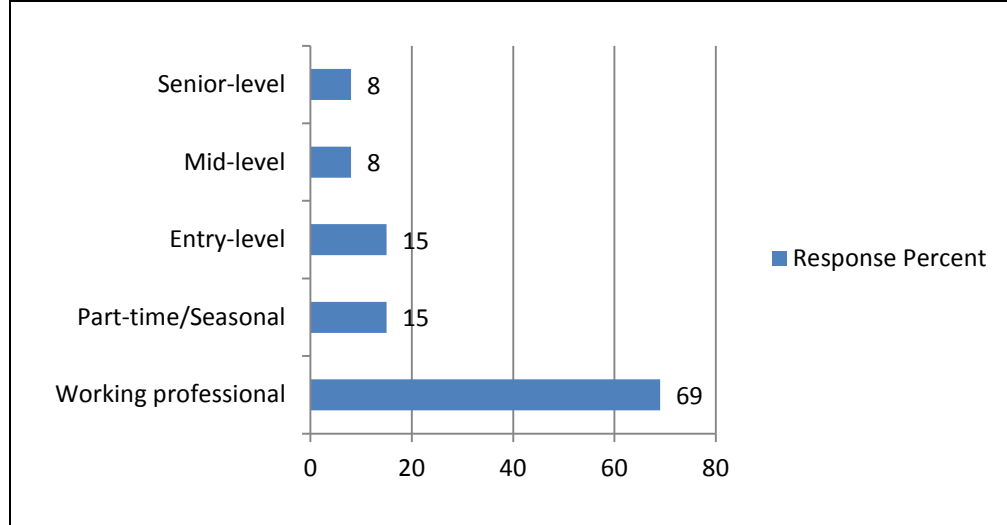
Economically, 46% would be in a low income situation, followed closely by those who would be financially stable (30%), those that would have assistance from their employers (23%), and those that would be in the middle income range (8%) (see Table 4c, #21).

Most of the respondents would not have a family (70%). However, a small percentage would have older children (20%). Another small percentage stated that it would not matter if they had a family or not (20%) (see Table 4c, #23).

Table 4c: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire										
20. If you were a new student, when would you choose to pursue this specific degree program? (n=13)										
<p>A horizontal bar chart with three bars. The x-axis is labeled 'Response Percent' and ranges from 0 to 40 in increments of 10. The y-axis lists three categories. The bars are blue. The values are: 'No family' at 23, 'After several years of career experience' at 38, and 'Immediately after attaining undergraduate degree' at 38.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Response Percent</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>No family</td> <td>23</td> </tr> <tr> <td>After several years of career experience</td> <td>38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Immediately after attaining undergraduate degree</td> <td>38</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Category	Response Percent	No family	23	After several years of career experience	38	Immediately after attaining undergraduate degree	38
Category	Response Percent									
No family	23									
After several years of career experience	38									
Immediately after attaining undergraduate degree	38									
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Comments								
Immediately after attaining undergraduate degree	"Immediately following undergrad..."	5								
After several years of career experience	"After working in the profession for a few years..."	5								

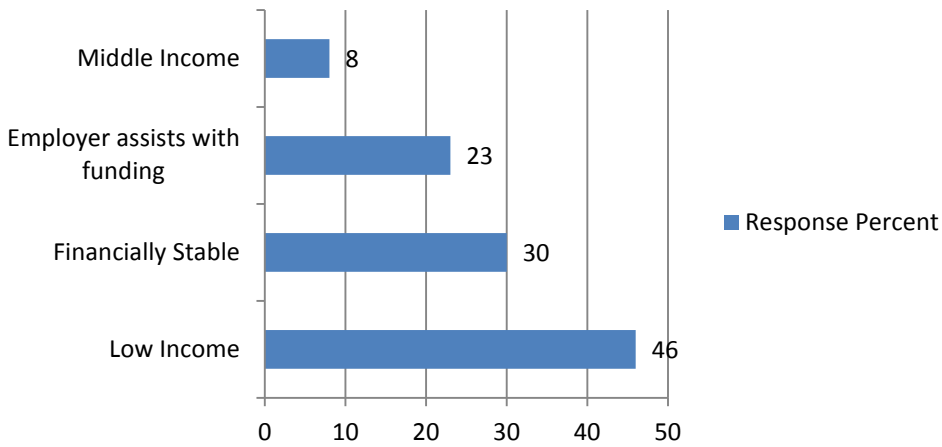
No family	"...before I had children."	3
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21. What professional situation would you be in? (n=13)



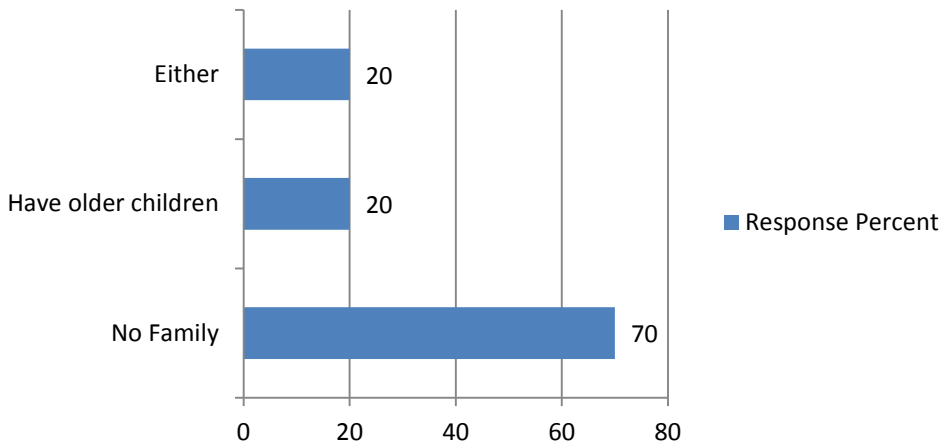
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Working professional	"After working full-time for a few years..."	9
Part-time/seasonal	"Working seasonal or temporary jobs..."	2
Entry-level	"Beginning of career"	2
Mid-level	"...mid-level."	1
Senior-level	"A job where you have some leaderships and/or admin responsibility to relate class concepts to."	1

22. What economic situation would you be in? (n=13)



Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Low income	"Not great—no one pursues a career in EE to make lots of money!!"	6
Financially stable	"Stable and able to afford the program without having to take out loans."	4
Employer assists with funding	"My workplace would help me pay for grad school."	3
Middle income	"mid"	1

23. What family situation would you be in? (n=10)



Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
No Family	"I would probably be single, unmarried, and"	7

	without children.”	
Have older children	“...with older children.”	2
Either	“Can make it work with or without a spouse and kids.”	2

The questionnaire included open ended questions that were open coded by the researcher. Table 5 depicts the themes that emerged from qualitative analysis of participant’s comments for each question. An example quote is provided for each theme, as well as the number of comments that related to that theme.

Table 5: Brand Attachment Current/Form Student Questionnaire		
2&3. When you think of the Online Master’s Degree, what comes to mind? (OMSEEI only respondents: n=12) (NRLA		
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Comments
Positive Attributes (OMSEEI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement • Self-Paced • Communication with others • Convenient • Flexible • Quality Education • Career Relevant 	“I was excited...” “I like to learn at my own pace...” “I love the interactive discussion forums.” “Not only is the online aspect of it convenient, but the assignments are designed to be immediately relevant...” “The flexibility of the program makes it possible for me to participate given my ‘life situation’” “...quality education experience.”	19
Positive Attributes (NRLA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient • Flexible • Quality Education • Career Relevant 	“To find a degree that I can earn without moving to campus that is from an outstanding university such as UWSP is amazing to me.” “The amount of	7

	knowledge being gained related to the profession.”	
Negative Attributes (NRLA & OMSEEI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavy workload 	“How difficult the workload for some of the course work is.” “Lots of work.”	2

4&5. What does the Online Master’s Degree mean to you? (OMSEEI only respondents: n=12) (NRLA only respondents: n=4)		
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Career Focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Relevant • Career Preparation • Make a contribution to the field • Acquiring increased pay • Competitive edge in field 	“It means studying for a job that is a dream.” “An opportunity to grow both professionally and personally.” “Becoming a leader in my field...” “It means I will get paid at least \$30K per year instead of minimum wage from temporary jobs.” “A degree that will assist in moving to the next level in my profession.”	18
Education Focused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced learning and skills • Communication with other professionals • Create public interest in environment 	“It is giving me the chance to improve my skills and efficacy as an interpreter.” “I’m inspired by many of the professors and other students in this program.” “Ability to get students/public excited about and understand the world around them.”	11

6. What feelings and/or thoughts does the website convey to you? (n=15) (See Appendix J)		
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Personal Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor connections/nostalgia • Positive • Active • Personal Advancement • Excitement • Envy 	<p>“The website makes me nostalgic for being outdoors...”</p> <p>“Active, positive.”</p> <p>“Conveys an opportunity to advance personal/professional training in EE and Interpretation.”</p> <p>“The following are my feelings: excitement, happiness, wishing I was in the picture...”</p>	6
Professional Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ease of navigation • Improvement • Recruitment tool • Professional Advancement • Defines applied program • Well organized 	<p>“Much more user friendly in appearance than previous site with important degree info readily apparent.”</p> <p>“Is useful as a tool for recruitment.”</p> <p>“Conveys an opportunity to advance personal/professional training in EE and Interpretation.”</p> <p>“...it was the first time that I really understood what an applied program really is.”</p> <p>“Well organized and easy to navigate.”</p>	10
Negative Emotions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much text • Deceptive • Indistinguishable between programs 	<p>“There are a lot of words.”</p> <p>“The course descriptions for NRLA are incomplete and mixed with the EE courses. This could lead someone to wonder if the NRLA program is right for them and/or to get a false impression.”</p>	4

7. What feelings and/or thoughts does the Facebook page convey to you? (n=13) (See Appendix K)		
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Positive Feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative • Interesting • Good images • Technologically relevant • Enjoyed posts highlighting students 	“Appears informative.” “It looks interesting though.” “Great images and text.” “Up to date with technology and social communication, relevant.” “Highlighting students is a great way to keep the page busy.”	8
Negative Feelings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generic/Needs diversity • Self-conscious associating with online degree 	“Doesn’t really apply to the program. Too generic.” “I do feel a little self-conscious with the term ‘online learning,’ as many people have a negative idea of this.”	4
Not Applicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use facebook 	“I don’t do facebook.”	2

8. What feelings and/or thoughts does the brochure convey to you? (n=14) (See Appendix L)		
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representative of student’s experiences & professional development • Displayed a serious program • Quality photos • Informative 	“Summarizes well my experiences in the program.” “Serious program.” “The bullet points are good and so are the pictures.” “I think the brochure is very accurate in its content.”	9
Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displayed poor graphics 	“The photos used seem to be misleading since they are all field related activities and	5

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confusing • Text heavy 	<p>that is not reflective of my experience in the M.S. program.”</p> <p>“Having them (OMSEEI/NRLA) on the same brochure is a little confusing...”</p> <p>“It is a lot of text.”</p>	
Not Applicable	“Would not load”	2

9. What feelings and/or thoughts does the course flyer convey to you? (n=14) (See Appendix M)		
Theme	Example Quotes	Number of Related Responses
Positive <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Succinct • Clear • Informative • Exciting • Relevant to students around the world 	<p>“Easy to read. Clear.”</p> <p>“Good brief summaries of NRES courses.”</p> <p>“Excites me about what I will be learning.”</p> <p>“The course topics are broadened and seem to apply to learners all over.”</p>	9
Negative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard to read • Descriptions do not reflect applicability 	<p>“Hard on the eyes.”</p> <p>“My only suggestion is that some courses many not be very obvious as to whether they target educators or Natural Resources professionals.”</p>	5

Table 6: Additional responses sent via email to researcher

“Thanks for asking me to take the survey. I had known of UWSP but more for work in industrial distribution and energy, fuels in particular. Your programs appear to be just the kind of practical education that will allow the in-service teacher, the serving ranger naturalist or the working administrator or planner to build on experience gained on the job and through baccalaureate training. In today's world this is how work related tasks and challenges are best achieved and how careers furthered. When I first started, one could be hired without much formal training. Almost everything was learned in the field. Today there's a great deal of theory to be considered. And as contradictory as it might seem, there's nothing more practical than a good working theory. By matching theory and conditions one can make those educated guesses that allow for good decisions that must be made in the real world where the data are incomplete and funding is [always] short.”

“Hi I have taken courses a few years ago in environmental ed online at uwsp and wanted to add some info to the survey if you are interested. I switched to Miami University online courses and will graduate this year with a masters from their Global Field Program. It has been a great program and we go to another country to do field work for 3 summers (10 days each year). Most importantly the courses are less than half the cost of uwsp. Charging out of state rates for an online course is ridiculous. Your courses were good, but WAY too expensive. This is my final semester and my 2 credit course graduate course is about \$350.00. I would take more courses if they were more reasonable.”

“I admire how you've built the program. It's clear that the online environment has a growth trajectory. I appreciate that your EE program has both online and face to face components.”

III. Enrollment Comparison

To determine if the branding strategy had any effect on enrollment numbers, the application status of those interested in the online degree programs was tracked. Table 7 indicates the number of people who inquired about the application process, started an application packet, completed an application, and were accepted into the program per semester since fall semester of 2010. It also tracks the total number of students enrolled in the program per semester.

The branding strategy was implemented during mid-semester of fall 2011. The following semester following its implementation, the program saw an increase of 7 people inquire about the program over the previous semester. During the spring 2012 semester, 8 students were accepted into the program, which was the highest number of students accepted during the span the data was tracked from fall 2010 to fall 2012 (see Table 7).

Semester	Application Inquiries	Started Application Packet	Completed Application Packet	Accepted into Program	Total Enrolled
Fall 2010	18	2	1	3	4
Spring 2011	19	7	4	2	6
Summer 2011	15	4	4	3	9
Fall 2011	12	3	6	3	12
Spring 2012	19	8	5	8	20
Summer 2012	17	7	3	5	25
Fall 2012 (as of 10/11/12)	7	5	4	1	25

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

I. Interpretation of Results Related to Sub-goals

Sub-goal 1: Conduct branding planning activities, including holding focus groups with faculty and staff prior to branding strategies being implemented.

Brainstorming Session

The brainstorming session is an important tool for branding strategy development and evaluations and revision efforts in the future. The process of the brainstorming session serves as an informal evaluation of the key qualities of the program and the marketing strategies currently in place. It also develops buy-in from internal stakeholders in the branding process, since their opinions are used as the backbone of the final branding strategy. Qualitative data from the brainstorming session can provide a snapshot of the program at that specific point in time, which can influence former evaluations in time.

The session allowed for the programs to develop internally and could garner buy-in of the core values of the program from staff participants. Since branding is developed both internally and externally, it was necessary to base the brand strategy on the feedback provided by the internal participants.

Sub-goal 2: Define branding goals, strategies, and tactics for the online M.S. programs based on the results of branding planning activities.

Brainstorming session participants determined that the main keywords that best describe the online degree programs were; convenience/flexibility, quality instruction, relevant to career, and networking.

Participants ranked convenience and flexibility very high. This ranking implies that convenience and flexibility must be an important component of the branding messages in both marketing and advertising. Accurately displaying the convenience and flexibility of online learning must be presented to the target market. Branding strategies that highlighted this strength included incorporating it into the program's slogan, which is/will be incorporated on all advertising and

marketing materials. This value was also stressed on many facebook status updates and further described on the new website.

Quality instruction was also ranked very high. This was displayed through instructor descriptions on the website, while also citing the reputation of UWSP in marketing materials. Keeping the UWSP logo instead of creating a unique logo allowed the program to visually maintain its ties to UWSP and the CNR and therefore, maintain ties to the strong reputation of UWSP and the CNR.

Career relevance and networking were also seen as the main keywords for the programs. This was displayed in the wording on the website and marketing materials. Networking was displayed through monthly webinars with current students and program staff. A facebook page was developed to help connect EE/I and NR professionals with each other and the program.

Sub-goal 3: Develop a brand specification, design, objectives, and message for the programs.

Based on the brainstorming session, the researcher developed the Five P's of the UWSP Online Degree Program Branding Campaign. According to Nadaff (2004), there are five P's to keep in mind when putting together a branding campaign; position, promise, personality, and permanence. For the Online Degree Programs , those included:

1) Position: what is unique about the organization

- a. Long history in the environmental education and natural resources field
- b. Instructors with diverse backgrounds located across the country
- c. Partnerships with natural resource organizations, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- d. UW-SP has a large alumni base working in organizations across the country

2) Promise: benefits and attributes of the organization

- a. Students will receive a quality education
- b. Students will have personal contact with their advisors and course instructors
- c. Courses are relevant to student's professional careers
- d. Courses are an asset to student's professional development
- e. The online degree programs will be flexible for the student
- f. Students will have the opportunity to network with other professionals across the country and world

3) Permission: Do's and don'ts of the organization

- a. The organization's tone will be welcoming and helpful
- b. The organization will respond to student inquiries in a timely manner and will resolve any issues as quickly as possible
- c. The organization will be courteous to all students

4) Personality: voice and attitude of the organization

- a. Welcoming
- b. Helpful/Knowledgeable
- c. Courteous
- d. Hospitable
- e. Approachable/Accessible

5) Permanence: enduring qualities of the brand that will remain unchanged

- a. Quality Education
- b. Excellent Customer Service

Sub-goal 4: Launch and promote the brand through marketing, advertising, and public relations.

The branding strategy tactics included three specific components; marketing, advertising, and public relations. Each component serves a unique purpose in development of the brand message and objectives. For every component, the researcher developed a list of current strategies that were viewed as useful and successful by the internal stakeholders. Based on the feedback from internal stakeholders, review of literature related to the development of a brand, and the previous research by Lesley Sheridan, the researcher developed additional strategies for each component. The components and their strategies are summarized below and can be viewed in more depth in Appendix E.

Marketing

Current marketing strategies that were seen as useful and successful by the staff included distributing news releases, updating the website, promotion at conferences, and contact with past course participants.

New strategies that were implemented included staff attending at least one major conference per year, current students in the online program receiving a stipend to promote the program at their state professional development conferences, developing a slogan based on the brand values, updating the website, creating a facebook page, adding CNR and UWSP EE/I alumni to marketing list, joining the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium and posting information regarding future courses and the online program on the D2L news page every semester.

One strategy that was not implemented included turning the former Environmental Education Training and Partnership website into a “landing page” for the online M.S. programs, which would link to both programs website. This was not implemented because a new website was developed in its place, which housed both programs, making the landing page unnecessary. Another strategy that has not been

completed included joining the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium, which at this time is currently in progress.

Advertising

Current advertising strategies that were seen as useful and successful by the staff included the comprehensive mailing list of EETAP contacts and past students, the tri-fold display for exhibit space, and the brochures for the OMSEEI program.

New strategies that were implemented included developing one brochure for the NRLA and OMSEEI programs, purchase facebook ads, and establish contact with resource agencies and appropriate NGO's at the state and federal levels.

Developing a brochure for the NRLA program that was similar to the OMSEEI program was not completed because a brochure was created that included both the NRLA and OMSEEI program, making two brochures obsolete. In addition, hard-copy flyers and posters were not sent to organizations because of the cost of their production and mailing, as well as a lack of staff time to develop these materials. The same was true for the development of banners/posters for conference exhibits. A logo was not developed since the University and the College of Natural Resources restricts the development of logos by programs due to their unique branding policy. Videos of current/past student's graduate work was not developed because of a lack of time and expertise in this area.

Public Relations

Current public relations strategies that were seen as useful and successful by the staff included follow-up email correspondence within two days and inquiries being forwarded on to the correct staff member.

New strategies that were implemented included the development of monthly webinars for students, descriptive instructor information pages on the website, and all inquiries are added to the mailing list for future correspondence.

One strategy that was not seen through to completion was when a new inquiry is received, the email is forwarded on to an advisor or instructor who will "welcome" the potential student. This was removed because the instructors lacked the time necessary to correspond with potential students and

did not have the information many students requested. It was determined that correspondence would be handled only by the staff that typically handle student inquiries.

Sub-goal 5: Determine the extent to which the branding has succeeded by surveying current and potential M.S. graduate students and reviewing the change in the number of applications received for the programs.

Formative Evaluation

After implementation of the branding strategy for several months, a formative evaluation was developed. Formative evaluation is a method of judging the worth of a program while the program activities are forming or happening. Since formative evaluation allows the researcher to develop a better understanding of what is working and what does not, it is possible to gather the information necessary to learn and improve future branding strategy tactics and implementation.

The researcher conducted target market research studies through an online survey to gather data relevant to determining if the initial tactics of the branding strategy were effective for our target market. The online survey collected information from a relatively large and geographically dispersed population regarding several survey objectives meant to measure a variety of topics meant to measure brand effectiveness.

The questionnaire sent to non-student respondents included primarily close-ended questions. Current and former students received a questionnaire with primarily open-ended questions. The reason current and former students received a questionnaire with open-ended questions was to be able to provide the researcher with more in-depth responses to specific questions and provided further insight into the attitudes and actions of our target market that is most likely to pursue an online degree through UWSP.

Discussion of the results pertaining to each measurement of brand effectiveness occurs in the following sections.

a. Brand Effectiveness: Survey Measurements

Brand Awareness and Recognition

Brand awareness measures the accessibility of the brand in memory, which can be measured through brand recall or brand recognition. Brand recall reflects the ability of the customer to retrieve the brand from memory when given some type of probe as a cue. Brand recognition reflects the ability of customers to confirm prior exposure to the brand. When analyzing the data, if the percentage of those who have seen the brand and associate with UWSP and the CNR is high, then there is a higher level of brand awareness and recognition.

Survey results indicated that over half of the non-student respondents had heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, with only slightly lower numbers having heard of the College of Natural Resources. This implies that UWSP and the CNR have very strong brand recognition and awareness as institutions. This signifies that most of our respondents have had some sort of prior exposure to the brand. Given that many stated in their responses to later questions that they had heard of UWSP and knew it had a very good reputation, it can be implied that simply being associated with UWSP and the CNR lends some level of credibility and reputability to the online degree programs.

However, though UWSP and the CNR have strong recognition and recall in our target market, the logos associated with these organizations do not carry the same level of awareness. A majority of respondents did not recognize either the UWSP logo or the College of Natural Resources logo. Continued use of the logo by the online degree programs, as well as UWSP and the CNR should continue to increase brand awareness of the image.

Although a majority of the respondents did recognize UWSP and the CNR, very few of them had heard of the OMSEEI degree and even fewer had heard of NRLA. Clearly, there is a strong lack of brand awareness within the target market. It can be implied that the reason that the OMSEEI program is better known is due to the fact that it was established several years before the NRLA program. Of those that had heard of the programs they discovered them primarily through word of mouth, an organization website posting, and email notifications over one year ago. It can be implied that awareness of the program is coming primarily from sources outside of the organization. This can be seen as both an advantage and disadvantage. It is advantageous because more often, people will trust those they know personally versus an organization. Hearing of the program through word of mouth increases people's trust in the program due to the relationship with the carrier of the message. It also can be implied that

we are successfully distributing information about the program through the right channels; promoting our program through organization contacts versus individualized contact, which should reach a larger number of people. However, this could be a disadvantage due to the fact that even though we have several channels to distribute the message, a majority of our target market has still not heard of the program. In addition, hardly any of our respondents heard of the program or participated in the program's facebook page. The facebook page was established based on a strong recommendation in Lesley Sheridan's marketing plan to utilize social media as a marketing tactic. The lack of engagement and recruitment based on the facebook page may imply that social media is not as strong of a venue as previously thought.

Brand Image

Brand image is defined as consumer perceptions of a brand and is measured as the brand associations held in consumers' memory. To measure brand image, the researcher utilized an existing list of brand associations. The outcome of this exercise is a short list of the positive and negative associations consumers have with the brand, ranked by strength. When analyzing the data, the percentage of those who selected agree or strongly agree will show whether our brand currently exhibits strength in those individual brand values.

The majority of respondents agreed that the OMSEEI and NRLA programs have a solid reputation, provide sufficient career preparation, convenience, quality instructors, and networking opportunities. It can be implied that the overall brand image is currently positive. However, the "neither" category ranked at least second or third per question, which implies that respondents ranged from those that had a positive brand image to those that had no opinion. The large number of responses in the neither category suggests that many in the target market are generally unaware of the programs, so are unable to have any sort of association with the brand.

Based on respondents' comments, the solid reputation of the program comes from the fact that UWSP has a solid reputation, not necessarily that the program itself has a strong reputation. This was established from respondents either having taken a course through UWSP or hearing about the experiences of others.

Though the respondents saw the program as being reputable and career relevant, there was a number of respondents' that were still reserved about online learning. Many comments displayed a lack of respect and skepticism towards fully online degrees in the field of EE and natural resources. It can be

implied that the image of the online degree program is somewhat negative. Some respondents saw online degrees as preparation for only specific portions of a career in EE and natural resources, but not sufficient without field experience or in-person programs.

Overall, respondents agreed that the programs were convenient for working professionals. Based on their comments, the online degree program is appropriate for those working full time and cannot relocate, but if a student had the ability to go through an in-person program, many thought it would be preferable. Comments from several respondents implied that though it may be convenient, the amount of work that an online course requires is overwhelming and may not be any more convenient than an in-person course.

Comments by respondents based on their agreement that the program has quality instructors implied that they have a high respect for the instructors based on the reputation of UWSP and the CNR in general, not necessarily based on the credentials or quality of the program specific instructors.

Respondents' comments regarding networking implied that though many prefer in-person networking, they saw the online interface as a good way to connect with other professionals.

Of the open ended responses to eight of the questions in the current and non-students questionnaires, 33 responses mentioned some sort of negative reaction to online learning. Many reactions from respondents were that online degrees may be necessary, but are not necessarily preferred. The implication is that even if the program has an outstanding reputation or provides a myriad of positive attributes, the stigma of receiving an online degree may be a barrier to increasing enrollments.

Brand Attachment

Attachment involves the loyalty to the brand, sense of community and engagement. Unstructured, indirect forms of questioning encourage respondents to project their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings regarding the issues of concern.

A slight majority of the non-student respondents stated that they would request more information about the online degree programs if they were interested in pursuing a graduate degree. Though many respondents commented that they already had a graduate degree or they had no plans to pursue a graduate degree, several stated that they would recommend the program to others. This supports the data that word-of-mouth is a primary means of communication regarding the online degree programs.

If non-student respondents were a new student, the majority of them would choose to pursue this specific degree program after having been employed in the field for several years and when seeking to advance their careers, while also being financially stable. This data could imply what our ideal target market could look like. Many respondents stated that they would not pursue the online degree program because the cost is too high or they simply do not have time due to family obligations.

Questions for the current and former students primarily focused on what they viewed as the “typical” online degree program student. This data will provide input into what the “stereotypical” view of an online degree student is and how the program can utilize that when marketing the program. Knowing what type of person our target market believes the program is fit for, the branding strategy can be adapted to either support that image or alter it.

The characteristics of a typical online degree program student that were mentioned most frequently was self-motivated and working professional. The data between the OMSEEI respondents and the NRLA respondents shows a variety of responses. NRLA respondents had two main themes, while OMSEEI respondents had 9 themes. Overall, throughout the survey, NRLA respondents had fewer themes in their responses. This is due primarily to the fact that there were fewer NRLA respondents, however, it could be implied that NRLA students had a much narrower field of view. For example, when asked what professions they believed the typical student would have, OMSEEI respondents listed a variety, including education, tourism, parks/recreation, etc., while NRLA respondents listed government employees, managers, and education. These themes may have some differences since both programs have different purposes and intended audiences.

OMSEEI respondents believed the typical student primarily worked in the field of education, while NRLA students believed that the typical student was a government employee. It is interesting to note that OMSEEI respondents did rank “general natural resources” as their second choice of professions and the NRLA respondents did rank “education” as their second choice of professions. This indicates that though they see the programs as applicable to two different types of students, there are some overlapping similarities that connect the programs.

The majority of both OMSEEI and NRLA respondents believed that the typical student had a family and lived in a primarily rural area, with those living in urban areas coming in as a close second. This indicates that the preference for pursuing an online degree comes from the fact that having a family makes it difficult to pursue an in-person degree program due to the time and lack of flexibility.

Also, the fact that many of the respondents believed that the students typically came from rural areas indicates that there is the perception that students choose an online degree program due to the fact that they may be distanced from an on-campus institution.

Respondents were split when determining when they would pursue this degree program if they were a new student. The two options most mentioned were after several years of career experience or immediately after attaining an undergraduate degree. This split indicates that most students preferred attaining an online graduate degree early in their careers, mostly before they had family obligations. This could indicate that those working in the field for 10, 20, or 30 years may not need the online graduate degree due to their experience in the field. However, those early in their careers may need to pursue a degree for career advancement. This correlates with the data that suggests that they would pursue the degree when they were in opposition with a low income. The indication is that a student is more likely to pursue a degree if there is the opportunity for increased pay in their career.

Respondents' views of the program were primarily positive, but several negative attributes did emerge. Most respondents indicated that the program was convenient, flexible, provides a quality education, and was career relevant. However, the primary negative attribute was the heavy workload of the online courses. The overarching theme was that the online degrees provide career preparation and advancement. This indicates that although the program is marketed to with an emphasis on a variety of benefits to students, the one that really stands out and is primarily important to students is the opportunity for career advancement.

Overall, respondents' view of the website was positive. This indicates that the new version of the website is user-friendly and provides appropriate information about the program for student's and potential student's needs. Though comments were made which indicated that it was difficult to distinguish between the NRLA and OMSEEI programs from the website, which once again, indicates that the programs are still seen as being separate, but with some overlays.

Responses were similar to the facebook page, however, more respondents indicated that they do not use facebook and they are self-conscious about associating themselves with an online degree in a social media format. The indication is that they do not want their facebook "friends" to know they are part of or associate with an online degree program. As stated earlier, this stigma associated with online degrees and social media may indicate that social media is not as strong of a venue for marketing as previously assumed.

Respondents had generally positive reactions to the advertising materials (brochure and flyer). They found that the brochure was representative of student's experiences and professional development, but did lead to some confusion since both programs were on the same brochure. This once again indicates that the branding strategy has not fully connected these two programs together for the target market. Overall, the flyer was seen as succinct, clear, and informative, but the course descriptions may not reflect the applicability of the courses to the target market. This indicates that respondents are seeking more of a clear cut line between the primarily NRLA courses and the OMSEEI courses.

A. Other Insights from Questionnaire Responses

The responses of the questionnaire respondents led the researcher to conclude that there were three main themes that encapsulated the responses. There is still a somewhat negative stigma attached to being involved in an online degree program. Though online degrees may be more widely accepted today than they were in the past, online degrees in the field of natural resources and environmental education are still seen by some as less reputable and desirable than an in-person degree program.

Increasing brand awareness is a necessary starting point before moving on into more in-depth areas, such as image and attachment. The University and the CNR both have high brand awareness and brand image, but the online degrees have a very low level of brand awareness. Tying in more closely with UWSP and the CNR may be necessary, but it is also essential to create more awareness of the program itself before attempting to increase image and attachment.

Career advancement and preparation were the overarching positive attributes of the program according to the respondents. This data can imply two things; 1) Career preparation was one of the key attributes listed during the brainstorming session and clearly is being presented well to students. The program could continue to push career advancement/preparation as a main attribute in all of our branding tactics. 2) The branding strategy is failing at promoting the other key attributes of the program and therefore, a larger push must be made to have the other attributes stand out to the target market.

B. Enrollment Comparison Data

Though the number of application inquiries and those accepted into the program has increased since the branding strategy was implemented, there is not enough conclusive evidence to support the theory that enrollment increased due to the branding strategy alone.

The fall of 2010 and the spring of 2011 saw a high number of application inquiries, which almost perfectly matched the number of inquiries for the two semesters following the branding strategy implementation. There was a drop in the number of inquiries for the two semesters preceding the strategy implementation, but that could be due to a number of factors in the market that cannot be determined.

However, the number of students accepted into the program following branding strategy implementation has doubled versus previous semesters. This could indicate that the branding strategy has helped increase the number of students who not only inquire about the program, but also follow-through by enrolling in the program.

While the results alone cannot support a definitive evaluation of the effectiveness of the branding strategy, when considered with future evaluation, they do provide supporting evidence for how to proceed with future branding activities.

II. Recommendations

Implement branding strategy improvements and revisions based on the results of future and consistent branding audits.

A branding strategy cannot be fully evaluated until at least one to two years after its implementation. Considering the fact that the formative evaluation was conducted less than a year after the strategy had been implemented, it is not an accurate representation of the success of the strategy. However, the formative evaluation should be utilized as comparison research when conducting a full brand audit in the future.

It is the researcher's recommendation that a full internal and external brand audit be completed in November of 2013, one year after the results of the formative evaluation were presented. This will allow for additional time to implement branding strategy tactics that had not yet been employed and to apply the recommendations in this report to the strategy. It is also recommended that faculty and staff collaboratively assess and revise the branding strategy every 2-3 years. A basic guide to conducting a brand audit can be found in Appendix N.

Branding can often take years to fully evolve, so regular brand audits are necessary to track changes in the target market's perception of the brand and to determine the effectiveness of the strategies that are deployed. The brand audit process helps determine the strength of the brand, what is

successful, where it works, how well the target market recalls it, uncovers weakness and inconsistencies, and shows where there are opportunities for improvement.

A typical brand audit (and one that is suggested by the researcher) includes; a marketing audit, which is a complete review of the physical representation of the brand; an internal audit, which determines how internal employees and staff view the brand; and an external brand audit, which determines how the target market is spoken of, its current positioning, and perceived culture. Some of the most successful brands have achieved their success not just through implementing an initially strong branding strategy, but by monitoring changes in customer perceptions over time and being strategically flexible with these changes. If there is no one within the program that feels comfortable and confident implementing a thorough brand audit, it is suggested that the program hire a consultant to conduct the audit.

Maintain current branding strategy until first formal branding audit.

The key to thoroughly reviewing a brand is to carry out its initial implementation prior to the first formal brand audit. Though the formative evaluation did provide some insight into the effectiveness of the branding strategy, the true test of the strategy will come after a formal evaluation is completed. To most accurately compare results between the formative evaluation and the formal audit, it is necessary to continue to carry-out the tactics listed in the branding strategy. Changing the strategy based on the formative evaluation will only decrease the validity of the formal brand audit. Slight changes can be made as necessary and the researcher does have several suggestions for minor changes and updates to the current strategy.

It is necessary for the faculty and staff to review the branding strategy regularly to make sure that the tactics are being carried out without the presence of the researcher. It is suggested that the staff delegate a member of the program to take over the implementation and upkeep of the strategy once the researcher has removed herself from the project. It is essential that the strategy is continuously implemented and reviewed by a staff member to ensure that it is properly maintained.

Focus on increasing brand awareness over the next year.

The data from the formative evaluation suggests that brand awareness is lacking and brand image and attachment cannot be fully realized without almost complete brand awareness from the

target market. Based on the data gathered, it is the researcher's recommendation that the branding strategy tactics that should be focused on to increase brand awareness include the following:

- 1) Staff from UWSP should attend at least one major conference per year as an exhibitor.
- 2) Current students in the online program should receive a stipend to attend their state environmental education or natural resources professional development conferences as an exhibitor or presenter promoting the online M.S. programs.
- 3) Slogan should be featured on all marketing and advertising materials.
- 4) Establish contact with resource agencies and appropriate NGO's at state and federal levels. Ask them to distribute program information to their employees and/or members.
- 5) Send hard-copy flyers to organizations to post in their buildings.
- 6) Order promotional materials such as pens or notepads with program name on it for distribution at conferences.
- 7) The online degree program should join the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium.

These tactics have been pulled from the branding strategy developed in 2011. Upkeep of these tactics will be essential to increasing brand awareness of the program.

Develop "buzzwords" that draw attention away from the stigma of online degrees.

One of the overarching themes in the data was the distrust and dislike of online degrees in the EE and natural resources field. Though many similar programs exist throughout the country, many students are embarrassed to admit they received their degree fully online. This is very challenging for an online degree program to overcome, but it must be dealt with promptly.

The researcher's suggestion is to change the wording of the program from "Online Graduate Degree Program" to "Applied Master's Degree Program." This word-smithing allows students to interpret the program as not just being online, but being a program that can be applied to their current work situation. The change has already been made on the website and the course brochure and would most likely be seen as more favorable by our target market.

Though the premise of the program is still the same (all courses are online), the title of the programs will have changed to something more palatable and accepted in the field. This allows students to tell others the title of the program without being embarrassed about calling it an "online degree program."

Focus on promoting the career advancement and preparation attribute.

Respondents indicated that career advancement and preparation was a major attribute to the program. Since the target market of the program is working professionals, it is necessary to make this attribute a priority when promoting the program. It is recommended that future advertising and promotional materials include a section devoted to expressing the ways in which the program can assist students in preparing for and advancing their careers.

Though the other key attributes of the program (convenience, quality instruction, and networking) are important, many of these attributes are implied and developed in our marketing and advertising materials. Career advancement and preparation ranked strongly for our respondents and it is necessary to take that into account.

The following is a list of potential branding tactics that can promote the career advancement/preparation attribute:

1. On course flyers, list courses as “Professional Development Courses” instead of simply “Online Courses.”
2. Find examples of past/current students that have advanced in their career due to the program. Promote their stories on the website, facebook page, and communications materials.
3. Highlight the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnership the program has. Request that the US FWS write a recommendation for the program, which includes a focus on how their employees advance in their career thanks to the courses offered. Promote this recommendation on the website, facebook page, and communications material.

Emphasizing the career advancement/preparation attribute will show the target market the continued service the program provides towards their success in their career, without leaving their current position to pursue a graduate degree.

An updated version of the branding strategy based on the recommendations by the researcher and changes to the program is included in Appendix O.

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Appendix A

Please fill out this questionnaire prior to the branding brainstorming session. Keep in mind that we are creating a unique identity for OMSEEI and NRLA as one cohesive unit.

Please list five to ten (or more) keywords that you believe express or describe the online degree program. Please list these words in order of importance or significance.

Describe the aspects of the current marketing plan that are most valuable.

Provide recommendations for improving:

Marketing:

Advertising:

Public Relations:

List at least two branding priorities for the remainder of the school year.

Notes/Ideas/Suggestions:

Appendix B

Summary of Lesley's Research Findings

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- Reputation/National Credibility
- CNR continuing education staff and infrastructure already established
- EE/I focus (unlike other programs)
- Customer service focus

Weaknesses:

- Limited staff and faculty time for course development, teaching, advising and project overview
- Limited credits, compensation, or incentives for advising
- Possible decreased enrollment in traditional (face-to-face) program and courses
- Restrictive entrance requirements

Opportunities:

- Expand to new audience of national and international professionals
- Participation in Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium
- New/fresh start for EE/I

Threats:

- Other universities developing similar programs
- National professional certification programs
- Agency budget cuts may reduce funding for potential students

Survey participants indicated the most important factors influencing their decisions regarding online graduate degree programs are:

- Monetary cost
- Time commitment/time to completion
- Scope and choice of relevant and interesting courses
- Program/university/faculty reputation
- Program format allows coursework to be completed at a convenient time and place
- Online learning orientations
- Individualized contact with advisor

How do most respondents learn about professional development opportunities?

- Word of mouth
- Organizational newsletters
- Listservs

Appendix C

What is Branding?

Your product or service is not your company's brand and neither is your logo or your business card. Your brand is the genuine "personality" of your company. It's what your customers think of you and say about you when they've left your company.

Your brand is what your company stands for and what it is known for. Look at yourself in the mirror and ask yourself what you stand for. If you can't define your brand, your customers won't be able to either.

Branding is when that idea or image is marketed so that it is recognizable by more and more people, and identified with a certain service or product when there are many other companies offering the same service or product. Advertising professionals work on branding not only to build brand recognition, but also to build good reputations and a set of standards to which the company should strive to maintain or surpass.

- *Marketing* is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.
 - *Research*
 - *Communications Plan*
 - *Promotions, Events, Trade Shows, Social Media*
- *Advertising* is a paid communication in which the message is controlled by the sponsor, and is designed to gain attention and motivate action.
 - *Print, Radio, Television, Internet Ads*
 - *Flyers, Brochures, E-mails, Cold Calls*
- *Public Relations* is planned and sustained effort to establish and maintain goodwill and mutual understanding between an organization and its public by telling an organization's story to its public.
 - *Customer Service*
 - *Positive relationships with the public & media*

Appendix D

Branding Brainstorming Session
Wednesday, October 5 1:00 p.m.
WCEE Conference Room 109 TNR

- I. Welcome/Overview of Brainstorming Session
- II. Overview of Branding
- III. Review of Lesleys' Suggestions
- IV. Review of Responses to Questionnaire
 - a. Keywords
 - b. Current Marketing Plan
 - c. Group Suggestions
 1. Marketing
 2. Advertising
 3. Public Relations
 - d. Priorities
 - e. Other ideas/suggestions
- V. Tentative Timeline & Wrap-Up

Introduction

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources offers two online master's degree programs (M.S. in Environmental Education & Interpretation and M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership & Administration), but lacks the cohesive identity to promote these programs. With online education continuing to grow in the market, it is imperative that UW-SP develop a branding strategy for these programs that includes marketing, public relations, and advertising to create a unique identity.

In order to compete in the marketplace for the best students, qualified faculty and staff, as well as donors, higher education institutions should have a strong organizational brand. Higher education provides many similar services and "products" that students have to choose from. A university is no longer just an institution of higher learning, but also a business. In a competitive marketplace, awareness of business metrics, such as branding, is becoming more critical

Currently, the two online programs are marketed and managed separately. The goal of the coordinators of these programs is to create their own unique identity within the College of Natural Resources and to promote a cohesive brand for both programs. As non-subsidized programs, tuition revenue supports wholly the activity costs and faculty compensation for this program. In order to promote retention and recruitment of students in these programs, it is necessary to develop a branding strategy that will encompass both programs, while still maintaining their individual identity.

A Definition of Brand:

The sum of all characteristics, tangible and intangible, that make the Online M.S. in Environmental Education & Interpretation and the M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership & Administration programs unique.

Brand

Values:

- ❖ Convenience
- ❖ Quality Instruction
- ❖ Career Relevance
- ❖ Networking Opportunities

What will this brand experience involve?

- Implementing marketing, advertising, and public relations strategies outlined below
- Continually reviewing and improving the branding strategy

The Five P's of the Branding Campaign

1) Position: what is unique about the organization

- a. Long history in the environmental education and natural resources field
- b. Instructors with diverse backgrounds located across the country
- c. Partnerships with natural resource organizations, such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- d. UW-SP has a large alumni base working in organizations across the country

2) Promise: benefits and attributes of the organization

- a. Students will receive a quality education
- b. Students will have personal contact with their advisors and course instructors
- c. Courses are relevant to student's professional careers
- d. Courses are an asset to student's professional development
- e. The online degree programs will be flexible for the student
- f. Students will have the opportunity to network with other professionals across the country and world

3) Permission: Do's and don'ts of the organization

- a. The organization's tone will be welcoming and helpful
- b. The organization will respond to student inquiries in a timely manner and will resolve any issues as quickly as possible
- c. The organization will be courteous to all students

4) Personality: voice and attitude of the organization

- a. Welcoming
- b. Helpful/Knowledgeable
- c. Courteous
- d. Hospitable
- e. Approachable/Accessible

5) Permanence: enduring qualities of the brand that will remain unchanged

- a. Quality Education
- b. Excellent Customer Service

Marketing

Current Marketing Strategies:

- Distributing news releases to contacts at least 3 months prior to beginning of courses (Katie)(3 months before beginning of each semester)
- Updating websites with most current information available (Katie & Jessica)(continuous)
- Promoting the program through exhibits at professional conferences (Faculty, Staff, & Students)(continuous)
- Sending information on courses to past course participants (Katie & Jessica)(3 months before beginning of each semester)

Additional Marketing Strategies:

- Conference Attendance
 - Staff from UW-SP attends at least one major conference per year as an exhibitor. (Various Faculty & Staff)(continuous)
 - Current students in the online program will receive a stipend to attend their state environmental education or natural resources professional development conferences as an exhibitor or presenter promoting the online M.S. programs. (Tim?)(Continuous-Students are asked to participate by February 1, 2012)
 - Develop a package of presentation materials for staff and students to use at conferences. (Katie)(February 1, 2012)
- Develop slogan based on the brand values of the program (see page 1). Slogan will be featured on all marketing material, including flyers and brochures. (Katie, with input from faculty & staff)(December 16, 2011)
- All staff will add the M.S. program's web link to their email signature. (Katie will develop, faculty & staff will participate)(December 2, 2011)
 - Example of email signature:
 - Find out more about our online M.S. programs at UW-SP: (link)
- The current EETAP website (<http://www4.uwsp.edu/natres/eetap>) will be turned into a "landing" page for the online M.S. programs. (Katie) (January 30, 2012)
 - Website will receive a new url address
 - Website will link to both program's websites
 - Website will have a brief description of each program
 - Website will host marketing materials, such as flyers for upcoming courses

Appendix E

- Website will host videos of student's projects from each program
- Social Marketing: Send updates to the College of Natural Resources Facebook manager with course/program information (Katie)(Continuous)
 - Consider developing a Facebook page for the M.S. programs that would establish a presence on social media, while also interacting with other environmental education/natural resource organizations (Katie)(February 6, 2012)
- Request a list of UW-SP College of Natural Resources alumni and EE/I alumni to add to contact lists (Brenda?) (November 30, 2011)
- Instructors for online courses should post information regarding the courses and M.S. programs on the D2L news page for their courses (Katie will develop, instructors will implement)(Beginning Spring Semester 2012)
 - Beginning of semester: instructor posts information regarding the online M.S. programs
 - Mid-semester: instructor posts information regarding the next semester course offerings
 - End of semester: instructor posts condensed version of information regarding M.S. programs and course offerings
- The CNR should join the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium (Kristin?)(Spring Semester 2012)

Advertising

Current Advertising Strategies:

- Comprehensive list of EETAP contacts and past students receive flyers and course information (Katie & Jessica) (continuous)
- Tri-fold display for M.S. program for exhibit space (Jessica)(completed)
- Brochures for OMSEEI (Jessica)(completed)

Additional Advertising Strategies:

- Establish contact with resource agencies and appropriate NGO's at the state and federal levels. Ask them to distribute program information to their employees and/or members. (Katie)(January 30, 2012)
 - Examples of agencies and organizations include: Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, American Zoological Association, Association of Nature Center Administrators, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North American Association for Environmental Education, National Green Schools Network, etc.

Appendix E

- Send hard-copy of flyers to organizations to post in their buildings. (Katie)(December 16, 2012)
 - Examples include: Universities that offer undergraduate degrees in EE/I or Natural Resources, nature centers, state EE headquarters, etc.
 - Send to all Wisconsin based nature centers and state agencies (ex. DNR, DPI)
- Hard-copy posters that are sent to organizations should include “tear-off” perforated postcards, in which potential students can sign up for our e-mailing list and request information on the M.S. programs. (Katie)(May 1, 2012)
- Develop brochure for NRLA program that is similar to OMSEEI brochure. (Jake)(February 1, 2012)
- Develop banners/posters for conference exhibit booths that will draw people to booth. (Katie & Jake)(March 1, 2012)
- Order promotional materials such as pens or notepads with program name on it for distribution at conferences. (Katie & Jake) (March 1, 2012)
- If staff or students are not able to exhibit at major conferences such as NAAEE or NAI, purchase ad space in their conference programs, budget pending(Jessica?)(continuous)
- Develop cohesive logo for programs. Logos should be added to all marketing materials, including posters, flyers, emails, and letterhead. (Jessica) (January 6, 2012)
- Purchase Google and Facebook Ads (Katie)(December 16, 2011)
- Develop videos of current/past student’s graduate work. Enlist the assistance of UWSP Communication students to edit the videos. (Katie-Communication Students)(Beginning Spring Semester 2012)

Public Relations

Current Public Relations Strategies:

- Follow-up to email correspondence within two days (All)(continous)
- Inquiries are forwarded to the correct staff member (All)(continuous)

Additional Public Relations Strategies:

- Promote and provide monthly webinars for students (Jessica)(Monthly)
- Create descriptive instructor information pages on websites (Katie & Jessica-EE/I Website, Jake-NRLA Website)(February 1, 2012)
- Follow up to inquiries within one business day (All)(continuous)

Appendix E

- When a new inquiry is received, forward the email to an advisor or instructor who will “welcome” the potential student (All)
 - Create a premade email response for all advisors and instructors to send to potential students (Katie) (December 16, 2012)
- Send a hard-copy welcome packet to all new students (Jessica)(continuous)
 - New students to M.S. program: include information on the program, list of courses, etc.
 - New students to general courses who are not M.S. students: include information on the M.S. programs, introduction to D2L, list of courses offered, etc.
- All inquiries should be added to mailing list for future correspondence (Katie-faculty & staff should forward inquiries to Katie)(continuous)

Priorities

The following action items have been ranked as most important by faculty and staff in the online master’s degree program. These high priority tasks will be implemented as quickly as possible.

- Develop slogan based on the brand values of the program (see page 1). Slogan will be featured on all marketing material, including flyers and brochures.
- All staff will add the M.S. program’s web link to their email signature.
 - Example of email signature:
 - Find out more about our online M.S. programs at UW-SP: (link)
- The CNR should join the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium
- Complete NRLA website

Timeline

- I. Stakeholder review of branding strategy: Oct. 24-Nov. 15, 2011
- II. Revisions made to branding strategy & high priority tasks identified: Nov. 15, 2011
- III. Final draft reviewed and approved by stakeholders: Nov. 16-Nov. 25, 2011
- IV. High priority tasks implemented: Nov. 28, 2011-ongoing
- V. All other tasks implemented: Dec. 1, 2011-ongoing
- VI. Evaluation of branding strategy: Early August 2012-October 2012

Appendix E

Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

Welcome & Thank You!

Welcome!

Please read the information below before selecting the "Next" button at the bottom of the page that will take you to the questionnaire.

As a professional in the natural resources management, environmental education, or interpretation fields, we need your help in developing a promotion strategy for our online Master of Science programs designed to provide continuing education and professional development opportunities. The emphases of the programs are Environmental Education and Interpretation, and Natural Resources Administration and Leadership. Rick Wilke, emeritus professor, and Kaitlin Boseo, graduate assistant, are conducting this research. By participating in this survey, you will provide valuable information to assist us in designing and marketing online programs to meet the needs of professionals. Please allow about 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and the answers you provide will be recorded in an anonymous form. There is nothing linking your survey responses to your email address. All data will be aggregated, and individual responses will not be viewed by anyone other than Kaitlin Boseo and Rick Wilke. You may withdraw from the study at any time by simply closing the web browser.

We greatly value your input and hope that you will choose to participate. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Katie Boseo
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-4245
kboseo@uwsp.edu

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

Dr. Jason Davis, Chair
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Academic Affairs Office
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point 54481
715-346-3712

If you wished to be removed from our mailing list, please email kboseo@uwsp.edu with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line.

Your completion and submission of this survey to the researchers represents your consent to serve as a subject in this research.

Next

Save

Cancel

Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

Page 2 of 18

1. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point?

- Yes
 No

2. Have you seen this logo prior to this survey?



- Yes
 No

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Cancel

Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

Page 3 of 18

3. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources?

- Yes
 No

4. Have you seen this logo prior to this survey?



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources

- Yes
 No

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Cancel

Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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5. If you were to see this logo without the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point image and wording associated with it, how likely would you be to associate the College of Natural Resources logo with the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point?



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Neither Likely or Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very Unlikely

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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5. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point online Master's Degree in Environmental Education and Interpretation prior to this survey?

- Yes
- No

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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7. When did you first hear about this program?

- 0-3 months ago
- 4-6 months ago
- 7-8 months ago
- 9-12 months ago
- Over 1 year ago

8. Where did you hear about this program? Please select all that apply.

- Internet search engine (google, yahoo, etc.)
- Facebook
- University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point website
- Organization website posting (NAAEE, NAI, etc.)
- Professional Conference
- Word-of-Mouth
- Other, please specify

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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6. Have you heard of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point online Master's Degree in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration prior to this survey?

- Yes
- No

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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7. When did you first hear about this program?

- 0-3 months ago
- 4-6 months ago
- 7-8 months ago
- 9-12 months ago
- Over 1 year ago

8. Where did you hear about this program? Please select all that apply.

- Internet search engine (google, yahoo, etc.)
- Facebook
- University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point website
- Organization website posting (NAAEE, NAI, etc.)
- Professional Conference
- Word-of-Mouth
- Other, please specify

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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Please answer the following questions based on your initial opinions of the online degree programs. Though you may not be very familiar with the programs, we are interested in your perceptions of the program currently, even if you have limited knowledge.

Please review the following website for more information about the online degree programs and to familiarize yourself with the program prior to answering the questions.

[Click Here](#)

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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Please select whether you strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the following statements. If you would like, you may add comments regarding your response.

7. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION is a reputable program.
Reputable: the program has a solid reputation in environmental education and interpretation. For more information, visit: [History of the Program](#)

- Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neither Agree nor Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree
 Comments regarding your response:

8. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION is a reputable program.
Reputable: the program has a solid reputation in natural resources. For more information, visit: [History of the Program](#)

- Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neither Agree nor Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree
 Comments regarding your response:

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9. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION would sufficiently prepare a student for a career in environmental education and interpretation.

Career Relevant: the program provides courses and instruction that is relevant to a career in environmental education and interpretation. For more information visit: [Program Information](#)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

10. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION would sufficiently prepare a student for a career in natural resources.

Career Relevant: the program provides courses and instruction that is relevant to a career in environmental education and interpretation. For more information visit: [Program Information](#)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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- 11.** Completing the Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION program is convenient for working professionals.
Convenient way of obtaining a degree: the program provides participants with an easy, flexible way to complete coursework, while maintaining a professional career. For more information visit: [Online Learning](#) and [Time Commitment](#)

- Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neither Agree nor Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree
 Comments regarding your response:

- 12.** Completing the Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION program is convenient for working professionals.
Convenient way of obtaining a degree: the program provides participants with an easy, flexible way to complete coursework, while maintaining a professional career. For more information visit: [Online Learning](#) and [Time Commitment](#)

- Strongly Agree
 Agree
 Neither Agree nor Disagree
 Disagree
 Strongly Disagree
 Comments regarding your response:

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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- 13.** The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION program appears to provide quality instructors for the courses.

Quality: students receive an excellent education from knowledgeable instructors. For more information visit: [Faculty & Staff](#)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

- 14.** The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION program appears to provide quality instructors for the courses.

Quality: students receive an excellent education from knowledgeable instructors. For more information visit: [Faculty & Staff](#)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

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Cancel

15. The Online Master of Science in ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION program provides a good network for environmental education professionals to interact.

Networking: the program gives students the opportunity to network with other environmental education and interpretation professionals. For more information visit: [Online Learning](#)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

16. The Online Master of Science in NATURAL RESOURCES LEADERSHIP & ADMINISTRATION program provides a good network for natural resource professionals to interact.

Networking: the program gives students the opportunity to network with other environmental education and interpretation professionals. For more information visit: [Online Learning](#)

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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17. I will request more information about the Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation program if I desire to pursue a graduate degree.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

18. I will request more information about the Online Master of Science in Natural Resources Leadership & Administration program if I desire to pursue a graduate degree.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Comments regarding your response:

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Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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19. If you were a new student, when would you choose to pursue this specific degree program?*

ex. What professional situation would you be in? What economic situation would you be in? What would be your family situation?

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Cancel

Almost Done! Please answer a few demographic questions below before completing the survey.

20. Which of the following best describes the organization for which you are currently employed? (Check all that apply)

- Local Agency
- State Agency
- Federal/National Agency
- Resource Management Agency
- College/University
- Museum
- Nature/Visitor Center
- Residential EE Facility
- School
- Zoo or Aquarium
- Other Non-profit organization
- Self Employed
- Not Currently Employed
- Other, please specify

21. What level of education have you completed?

- High School
- Some College
- 2-year Degree or currently enrolled
- Bachelor's Degree or currently enrolled
- Master's Degree or currently enrolled
- PhD or currently enrolled

22. In what year were you born?

23. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

24. What state do you currently reside in?

Online Degree Program: Non-Student Survey

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Thank you for your participation. Your input is greatly appreciated!

Please be sure to click on the "Done" button to submit your answers.

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Done

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Cancel

Appendix G

Current/Former Student Survey

Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

Page 1 of 18

Welcome!

Please read the information below before selecting the "Next" button at the bottom of the page that will take you to the questionnaire.

As a professional in the natural resources management, environmental education, or interpretation fields, we need your help in developing a promotion strategy for our online Master of Science programs designed to provide continuing education and professional development opportunities. The emphases of the programs are Environmental Education and Interpretation, and Natural Resources Administration and Leadership. Rick Wilke, emeritus professor, and Kaitlin Boseo, graduate assistant, are conducting this research. By participating in this survey, you will provide valuable information to assist us in designing and marketing online programs to meet the needs of professionals. Please allow about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and the answers you provide will be recorded in an anonymous form. There is nothing linking your survey responses to your email address. All data will be aggregated, and individual responses will not be viewed by anyone other than Kaitlin Boseo and Rick Wilke. You may withdraw from the study at any time by simply closing the web browser.

We greatly value your input and hope that you will choose to participate. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

Katie Boseo
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources
Stevens Point, WI 54481
715-346-4245
kboseo@uwsp.edu

If you have any concerns about your treatment as a participant in this study, please call or write:

Dr. Jason Davis, Chair
Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Academic Affairs Office
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point 54481
715-346-3712

Your completion and submission of this survey to the researchers represents your consent to serve as a subject in this research.

Next

Save

Cancel

Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

Page 2 of 18

1. In which degree program are/were you a student?
- Online M.S. in Natural Resources Leadership & Administration
 - Online M.S. in Environmental Education & Interpretation

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

Page 3 of 18

Please fill in the answer to the following questions, based on your personal opinions and your knowledge of the programs.

2. When you think of the Online Master's Degree in Environmental Education & Interpretation, what comes to mind?

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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3. What does Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation mean to you?

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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4. What feelings and/or thoughts does the website convey to you? Please click the link to view the website before answering the question:

[Click Here](#)

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Cancel

Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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5. What feelings and/or thoughts does the Facebook page convey to you? Please click the link to view the Facebook page before answering the question.

[Click Here](#)

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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6. What feelings and/or thoughts does the brochure convey to you? Please click the link to view the brochure before answering the question:

[Click Here](#)

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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7. What feelings and/or thoughts does the course flyer convey to you? Please click the link to view the flyer before answering the question:

[Click Here](#)

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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8. In your opinion, what are the characteristics of the typical Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation student?

9. What is their age range?

10. What type of professions do they have?

11. What is their lifestyle like?

ex. Do they have families? Do they live in rural or urban areas?

12. What stage are they in their career?

ex. Entry-level, Mid-level, or Senior-level?

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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13. Are you currently an accepted student in one of the degree programs?

- Yes
 No

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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14. If you were a new student, when would you choose to pursue this specific degree program?

15. What professional situation would you be in?

16. What economic situation would you be in?

17. What family situation would you be in?

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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18. If the Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation was a person, what characteristics would it have?

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Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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Almost Done! Please answer a few demographic questions below before completing the survey.

19. Which of the following best describes the organization for which you are currently employed? (Check all that apply)

- Local Agency
- State Agency
- Federal/National Agency
- Resource Management Agency
- College/University
- Museum
- Nature/Visitor Center
- Residential EE Facility
- School
- Zoo or Aquarium
- Other Non-profit organization
- Self Employed
- Not Currently Employed
- Other, please specify

20. In what year were you born?

21. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to answer

22. What state do you currently reside in?

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Cancel

Online Degree Programs Survey: Current & Former Students

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Thank you for your participation. Your input is greatly appreciated!

Please be sure to click on the "Done" button to submit your answers.

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Done

Save

Cancel

Appendix H

Non-Student Survey Email:

Greetings!

As a professional in the natural resources management, environmental education, or interpretation fields and a current or former UW-Stevens Point student, we need your help in developing a promotion strategy for our online Master of Science programs designed to provide continuing education and professional development opportunities. The emphases of the programs are Environmental Education and Interpretation, and Natural Resources Administration and Leadership.

We are asking you to assist us by completing a survey. Please click this link or copy and paste it into your browser window:

<http://survey.uwsp.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=I2K0398K>

Rick Wilke, emeritus professor, and Kaitlin Boseo, graduate assistant, are conducting this research. By participating in this survey, you will provide valuable information to assist us in designing and marketing online programs to meet the needs of professionals. Please allow about 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you for your time!

Katie Boseo

Katie Boseo

Online Course Manager

Graduate Assistant

[UWSP College of Natural Resources](#)

E-mail: kboseo@uwsp.edu

Phone: 715-346-4254

Current/Former Student Survey Email:

Greetings!

As a professional in the natural resources management, environmental education, or interpretation fields, we need your help in developing a promotion strategy for our online Master of Science programs designed to provide continuing education and professional development opportunities. The emphases of the programs are Environmental Education and Interpretation, and Natural Resources Administration and Leadership.

We are asking you to assist us by completing a survey. Please click this link or copy and paste it into your browser window:

<http://survey.uwsp.edu/TakeSurvey.aspx?SurveyID=9IK05o64>

Rick Wilke, emeritus professor, and Kaitlin Boseo, graduate assistant, are conducting this research. By participating in this survey, you will provide valuable information to assist us in designing and marketing

online programs to meet the needs of professionals. Please allow about 20-30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Thank you for your time!
Katie Boseo

Katie Boseo

Online Course Manager
Graduate Assistant
[UWSP College of Natural Resources](#)

E-mail: kboseo@uwsp.edu
Phone: 715-346-4254

Appendix I

Central Categories Based on Participant's Keywords:

1. Convenience
2. Quality Instruction
3. Career Relevance
4. Networking

Current Marketing Procedures seen as Valuable by Participants:

1. News releases
2. Website
3. Promotions at conferences
4. Word of Mouth
5. Maintaining contact with past participants

Marketing Ideas Generated by Participants:

1. On D2L courses, put a paragraph about the MS program on the course home page at the beginning and end of the semester. Have instructors post this to all of the online courses.
2. Have students who are in the online program become "local advocates". We will pay them a stipend to attend state conferences and promote the program through presentations or exhibits. Create a package for them.
3. Send Facebook updates to Stacey Allen-Bannach, Brenda
4. Contact CNR/Alumni Office to get CNR alumni.
5. Contact Brenda to get EE/I alumni
6. Turn EETAP website into a landing page describing online programs & links to the individual program websites
7. Add links to email signatures
8. Develop slogan for online programs

Advertising Ideas Generated by Participants:

1. More communication/spur contact with resource agencies (state agencies).
 - a. Example: BLM, Corps of Engineers, NOAA, ANCA (Corky), AZA
2. If not attending NAAEE or NAI, put ad in conference program
3. Google & Facebook Ads = get cost estimates
4. Develop videos of current/past student's work. Have communication students edit the videos.
5. Add note to flyers that additional courses can be found at our website. Include website in flyer.
6. Develop logo with CNR, UWSP on it. Put on flyers/materials
7. Express "what's in it for them?" in materials
8. Develop NRLA brochure
9. More displays for conferences
10. Send posters & emails to universities that offer undergrad degrees in EE or Natural Resources

11. Develop posters for programs-send to FWS, nature centers, organizations, etc. (Specifically in WI for NRLA). Have rip off cards that people can send in for more information or be put on mailing list.

Public Relations Ideas Generated by Participants:

1. Figure out how to be timelier in response to contacts/announcements/registration, etc.
2. Forward inquiries to advisors (Dan, Brenda, Tim, Kristin) Forward course inquiries to instructors. Create canned response for them.
3. Promote that there are webinars monthly—contact with teachers/administrators
4. Descriptive staff pages on websites. Descriptive student pages of current projects.

High Priority Tasks Determined by Participants:

1. Develop logo with CNR/UWSP to be used on communications materials
2. Express an answer to the question “What’s in it for me?” in communications materials
3. Join the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium

University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point

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Sign In

College
of Natural Resources

Applied Master's Program

Home About Apply Program Information Course Information Student Resources Contact

Welcome to the Applied Master of Science Degree Programs!

Through the Applied Master of Science degree programs at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, students will complete coursework relevant to their professional development that may help advance their career in natural resources, environmental education and interpretation and K-12 schools.

The Applied Master of Sciences in Natural Resources is designed for working professionals who are:

- Seeking professional development
- Seeking a Master's Degree
- Looking to increase their knowledge and leadership skills relative to natural resources and environmental education

Environmental Education for K-12 Teachers

If you are a K-12 teachers seeking to expand your knowledge of environmental education, the partially online M.S. in EE is an exciting option. The program offers many benefits:

- Designed especially for K-12 Teachers
- Online courses offered during the academic year making one-third of the degree available online
- Face to face courses held during the summer session
- May transfer in up to 9 graduate credits
- Only M.S. in Environmental

Environmental Education and Interpretation for Naturalists

If you are a naturalist, interpreter or other non-formal educator, the Online M.S. in EE/I is an excellent opportunity to expand your professional development. The program offers many benefits:

- Designed especially for Environmental Education and Interpretation professionals
- 100% of the degree is offered via distance learning (no travel to UWSP is required)
- May transfer in up to 9 graduate

Natural Resources Leadership and Administration

If you are a professional working in Natural Resources who is interested in earning a Master's Degree you are in the right place. The program offers many benefits:

- Designed especially for Natural Resource professionals 100% of the degree is offered via distance (no travel to UWSP is required)
- May transfer in up to 9 graduate credits
- Increase your knowledge and leadership skills in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration



UWSP College of Natural Re... Timeline Now



UWSP College of Natural Resources Online M.S. Degree Programs

249 likes

Education

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources offers two completely online Master of Science degree programs; Environmental Education & Interpretation and Natural Resources Leadership & Administration.

About



249 Likes

Highlights

Status Photo / Video Event, Milestone +

What's on your mind?



UWSP College of Natural Resources Online M.S. Degree Programs shared a link.

3 seconds ago

Our courses for Spring 2012 are now available! Interested in forestry? Teaching methods? Sustainability? Social Media? Conflict resolution? Or more? Then we have a course that's right for you! <http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/AMP/Pages/Course%20Info/Registration.aspx>

Likes

See All



UW-Stevens Point Alumni College/University



Wisconsin Center for Environmental Education Non-Profit Organization



UWSP College of Natural Resources College/University



Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education Local Business



UWSP Graduate Fellowship in EE Education

CONVENIENCE & CONNECTIONS

Taking an online course is a great option for those who find it difficult to travel to a physical campus. The benefits of online learning is the convenience and flexibility to complete coursework at the time and place of your choosing. Online courses give learners the opportunity to interact with professionals from a wide variety of cultural and experiential backgrounds.

Online learning is a student-centered and student-driven education model that is rigorous and requires a significant time commitment. Online learners are self-motivated and self-directed individuals with the abilities to monitor their own progress, prioritize their time, and work independently.

Participants in online courses learn by sharing experiences and ideas through forums like discussion boards and e-mail. Information exchange and sharing is what makes online learning so unique!



REPUTATION & QUALITY CONTACT US

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point began its reputation as a leading institution for natural resources education in 1946 with the establishment of the nation's first conservation and education major. Today, UWSP boasts the largest number of environmental education/interpretation (EE/I) faculty, undergraduate majors and graduate students of any EE/I specific program in the nation.

The online courses are taught by highly experienced and award-winning instructors from across the nation to provide students with a quality education that cannot be found anywhere else. Instructors and staff are dedicated to providing students with one-on-one feedback and assistance with their coursework.

Students complete courses such as:

- *Applied EE Program Evaluation*
- *Natural Resources Policy & Law*
- *Fundamentals of Natural & Cultural Interpretation*
- *Leadership Development in Natural Resources*
- *Environmental Education Curriculum*
- *Leadership Development in Natural Resources*
- *Natural Resources & Public Relations*
- *Energy Education*

Program Staff:

Timothy Byers
Outreach Program Manager
715-346-4176
tbyers@uwsp.edu

Jessica Tomaszewski
Outreach Program Specialist
715-346-3854
jtomasze@uwsp.edu

Find all of the information you need about the programs at:

<http://www.uwsp.edu/cnr/AMP/>

'Like' us on Facebook to stay connected:

<http://www.facebook.com/UWSPOnlineMS>



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources
800 Reserve Street
Stevens Point, WI 54481

University of Wisconsin- Stevens Point APPLIED MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE PROGRAMS



ONLINE & ON-CAMPUS

~Environmental Education for
K-12 Teachers

~Environmental Education &
Interpretation

~Natural Resources Leadership &
Administration



University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
College of Natural Resources

ABOUT THE PROGRAM



Through the Applied Master of Science degree programs at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, students will complete coursework relevant to their professional development that may help advance their career in natural resources, environmental education and interpretation and K-12 schools.

The Applied Master of Sciences in Natural Resources is designed for working professional who are:

- Seeking professional development
- Seeking a Master's Degree
- Looking to increase their knowledge and leadership skills relative to natural resources and environmental education.

The Applied Master's Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point offers opportunities for personal and professional advancement through academically rigorous and professionally relevant online training for the development of competent and dedicated professionals who provide leadership in the field.

FOR TEACHERS--

The Master's Program in Environmental Education for K-12 teachers will increase your knowledge and leadership skills relative to natural resources and environmental education in Wisconsin and it's K-12 schools and districts.

One-third of the degree is online during the spring and fall terms. Face-to-face classes are held during the summer. Teachers can earn an environmental science teaching license through this program, which is the only M.S. in Environmental Education for Teachers degree offered in Wisconsin.



FOR NATURALISTS--



The Online Master of Science in Environmental Education & Interpretation is a non-thesis degree designed specifically for working professionals who desire to increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities in environmental education and interpretation.

Program participants receive environmental education/interpretation focused training and complete coursework that is directly relevant and immediately applicable to their current professional situation.

Enhance your professional knowledge in accordance with the NAAEE Guidelines for the Preparation and Professional Development of Environmental Educators and the NAI Standards and Practices for Interpretive Methods.

FOR NATURAL RESOURCES--

The Online Master of Science in Natural Resources Leadership and Administration is a non-thesis degree designed specifically for working professionals in the natural resources field.

Program participants will develop their skills and expertise in organizational leadership, applied research, policy and law, and more in a natural resources focused education.

Meet other professionals from around the world that are working towards similar goals. You will receive a high quality education focused on natural resources management and leadership skills.



College of Natural Resources		Applied Master's Program	
Convenience, Reputation, Quality Education...		Fall 2012	
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point EE & Natural Resources Online Courses			
Course Title	Credits	Instructor	Dates
NRES 600 Environmental Studies Wisconsin's natural, social, and economic factors influencing quality of environment; ecological relationships/principles and their relation to population growth, pollution, resource allocation and depletion, conservation, technology, and urban/rural planning.	3 credits	Tim Byers	9/24-12/7
NRES 640 Making Environmental Education Relevant to Diverse Audiences Broaden your perspective of EE to encompass interests and issues of concern to culturally diverse audiences, assess barriers to participation, appraise the role and significance of building relationships and partnerships with members of an audience you intend to work with in the future.	3 credits	Sabiha Daudi	9/13-12/14
NRES 701 Environmental Education Theory & Practice Gain foundational knowledge of EE and learn how to incorporate quality EE into your instruction. Discuss the history and goals of EE and develop an understanding of the professional roles and instructional methods of environmental educators.	3 credits	Susan Toth	9/6-12/3
NRES 705 Environmental Issues Investigation & Action Examine current theories of behavior change. Use primary and secondary information sources to investigate environmental issues and develop a case study. Explore strategies for issue analysis/resolution.	2 credits	Dan Sivek	9/10-11/30
NRES 750 Human Dimensions Research Methods: Proposal Writing Discussion of literature and current issues in research as they relate to student projects. Focus on writing proposals.	1 credit	Brenda Lackey	9/13-12/9
NRES 750 Human Dimensions Research Methods: Quantitative Methods Discussion of methods in research as they relate to student projects. Focus on quantitative methods.	1 credit	Aaron Thompson	10/31-12/13
NRES 750 Human Dimensions Research Methods: Qualitative Methods Discussion of methods in research as they relate to student projects. Focus on qualitative methods.	1 credit	Kristin Floress	9/26-11/11
NRES 767 Fundamentals of Natural & Cultural Interpretation Provides participants with basic concepts of natural and cultural interpretation and how they can be applied in a professional setting.	3 credits	Lackey & Buchholz	9/10-12/9
NRES 752 Needs Assessment in Environmental Education/Interpretation Conduct a needs assessment to develop or revise your programs, products, or services to meet the needs of EE audiences, program providers, and organizations.	1 credit	Janice Easton	10/1-12/3
NRES 772 The Natural Resources Management Leader Introduction to models of leaderships and their use at different scales, principles of followership, and strategic planning.	3 credits	Kristin Floress	9/29-12/15

Courses can be taken for undergraduate/graduate credit or as a 0-credit workshop.

Appendix N

Basics of a Brand Audit

How effective is your branding?

Internal, communications and external brand audits help determine how effective your branding activities have been. More important, brand audits show what your branding must accomplish in the future.

Audits, which offer qualitative brand snapshots, have multiple advantages. They benchmark the current brand position by showing how internal and external audiences perceive your offerings and the strengths and weaknesses of your service, quality and marketing. Brand audits also unify an organization. Too often, many in your company have a different definition or perception of what your brand stands for. A brand audit can illustrate those differences, providing a roadmap to building a consistent, universally accepted vision of the brand. This vision is critical to ensure that everyone is marching to the beat of the same branding drum. Finally, brand audits can help eliminate the all-too-common disconnect between what companies believe their brand to be and what customers perceive it to be.

Internal Brand Audit

An internal brand audit takes the brand temperature from organization executives and other personnel. One-on-one confidential interviews probe to determine each manager's perceptions of the brand, branding goals, evaluation of past branding activities, knowledge of key corporate or brand messages and other key points. Typical questions:

- What is the organizations's core value?
- Who are the key stakeholders
- Describe a typical customer and his requirements?
- What past marketing activity has had the greatest impact? What past marketing activity has had the least impact?
- If you could design the brand experience from scratch, what would you offer to customers?

Each interview should take about 20 minutes, but they can last as long as an hour. On average, 5-15 staff are interviewed. Questions can be prepared beforehand, but the most valuable insights often result from free-ranging discussions on the brand.

Communications Audit

A communications audit is especially useful for larger organizations involved in branding activities. A communications audit looks at all the material that represents a brand - press releases, ads, brochures, Web site, logos, etc. Analysis then determines the amount of consistency and integration in appearance/design, messages and adherence to corporate standards. Ideally, a brand manual is in place to provide a benchmark.

The organization should look at such issues as:

- What are the key messages? Are these consistent across all channels and media?
- Is there a common look-and-feel? Are corporate standards followed?
- How current is information?
- How well does the material support the brand vision and values?
- Are target market requirements being met?

A communications audit is usually conducted at the same time as an internal audit.

External Brand Audit

An external brand audit looks at how various stakeholders (or, more accurately, constituencies) view the brand. Such constituencies include customers, "lost" customers, prospects, media, distributors/retailers, regulatory bodies and suppliers. Sometimes, an external brand audit is combined with a loss analysis to determine why a contract or other business went to a competitor.

These constituencies are asked about their perceptions of the brand, based on their experiences, exposure to advertising/PR/referrals, corporate relationships, etc. Sample questions include:

- What does the brand mean to you?
- Why did you buy the first time?

- Why will (or won't) you buy again?
- How useful and relevant are corporate communications?
- How responsive is support?
- How do competitors compare?

The number involved in external brand audits can vary greatly according to time, cost or other constraints. Even as few as 5-10 interviews can produce insights. In general, however, 3-8 interviews should be conducted among each constituency. Names and contact information are provided by the client. Each anonymous interview takes about 20 minutes.

Source: <http://www.fusionbrand.com/brandaudits.htm>

Marketing

Current Marketing Strategies:

- Distributing news releases to contacts at least 3 months prior to beginning of courses
- Updating websites with most current information available
- Promoting the program through exhibits at professional conferences
- Sending information on courses to past course participants

Additional Marketing Strategies:

- Conference Attendance
 - Staff from UW-SP attends at least one major conference per year as an exhibitor.
 - Current students in the online program will receive a stipend to attend their state environmental education or natural resources professional development conferences as an exhibitor or presenter promoting the online M.S. programs.
 - Develop a package of presentation materials for staff and students to use at conferences.
- Slogan Developed: “Convenience, Reputation, Quality Education...” Slogan will be featured on all marketing material, including flyers and brochures.
- Change wording from “Online Degree Program” to “Applied Master’s Program”.
- All staff will add the M.S. program’s web link to their email signature.
 - Example of email signature:
 - Find out more about our online M.S. programs at UW-SP: (link)
- The current website will be updated continuously with course/program information
- The Facebook page will be updated weekly at a minimum.
- UW-SP College of Natural Resources alumni and EE/I alumni will continue to receive course information updates.
- Instructors for online courses should post information regarding the courses and M.S. programs on the D2L news page for their courses
 - Beginning of semester: instructor posts information regarding the online M.S. programs

- Mid-semester: instructor posts information regarding the next semester course offerings
- End of semester: instructor posts condensed version of information regarding M.S. programs and course offerings
- The CNR should join the Natural Resources Distance Learning Consortium

Advertising

Current Advertising Strategies:

- Comprehensive list of EETAP contacts and past students receive flyers and course information
- Tri-fold display for M.S. program for exhibit space
- Brochures for OMSEEI

Additional Advertising Strategies:

- Maintain contact with resource agencies and appropriate NGO's at the state and federal levels. Ask them to distribute program information to their employees and/or members.
 - Examples of agencies and organizations include: Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, American Zoological Association, Association of Nature Center Administrators, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, North American Association for Environmental Education, National Green Schools Network, etc.
- Send hard-copy of flyers to organizations to post in their buildings.
 - Examples include: Universities that offer undergraduate degrees in EE/I or Natural Resources, nature centers, state EE headquarters, etc.
 - Send to all Wisconsin based nature centers and state agencies (ex. DNR, DPI)
- Hard-copy posters that are sent to organizations should include "tear-off" perforated postcards, in which potential students can sign up for our e-mailing list and request information on the M.S. programs.
- Revise and print online degree program brochures.
- Develop banners/posters for conference exhibit booths that will draw people to booth.
- Order promotional materials such as pens or notepads with program name on it for distribution at conferences.
- If staff or students are not able to exhibit at major conferences such as NAAEE or NAI, purchase ad space in their conference programs, budget pending

- Continue to utilize UWSP and CNR logo for all communications materials
- Purchase Google ads
- Find examples of past/current students that have advanced in their career due to the program. Promote their stories on the website, facebook page, and communications materials.
- Highlight the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service partnership the program has. Request that the US FWS write a recommendation for the program, which includes a focus on how their employees advance in their career thanks to the courses offered. Promote this recommendation on the website, facebook page, and communications material.
- On course flyers, list courses as “Professional Development Courses” instead of simply “Online Courses.”

Public Relations

Current Public Relations Strategies:

- Follow-up to email correspondence within two days
- Inquiries are forwarded to the correct staff member

Additional Public Relations Strategies:

- Promote and provide monthly webinars for students
- Maintain and update descriptive instructor information pages on websites
- Follow up to inquiries within one business day
- Send a hard-copy welcome packet to all new students
 - New students to M.S. program: include information on the program, list of courses, etc.
 - New students to general courses who are not M.S. students: include information on the M.S. programs, introduction to D2L, list of courses offered, etc.
- All inquiries should be added to mailing list for future correspondence