



SUBJECT:	Governance and Organization			
POLICY:	103.1 Graphic Identity and Branding			
PROCEDURE:	103.1.1 Graphic Identity and Branding Procedures			
EFFECTIVE:	June 2013	REVISED:	September 2025	REVIEWED:

Procedures and Resources:

Table of Contents

Getting Started: Planning a Publication	2
Design Guidelines	3
Design Advice	4
Style Guide	5
Communications and Marketing Services	7
Compliance statements	10
Describing the College	10

Getting Started: Planning a Publication

Brochures, booklets, pamphlets and other promotional materials intended for public distribution, in whatever form or reproduction, shall not be authorized as an official publication of the college unless they have been routed and approved by the appropriate department chair and the Marketing and Community Relations Department. Once copy has been formalized, the communications team will be available for assistance on text, design, layout, use of college logo and photography.

When planning a publication, refer to the college's mission, values and strategic plan.

Pre-design Considerations: The Marketing Materials Request Form will guide you through the process of requesting marketing materials, and the communications team always is happy to meet with you

The deadline: When must the piece be in the readers' hands to get the reaction you want? Working backward from this date, allot time (at least two weeks for minor publications and more for major publications) for the following:

- Preparation for mailing
- Printing (either on or off campus)
- Design
- Copy preparation, including all approvals

Remember:

- Rushing a publication usually causes cost to increase and quality to decrease.
- Producing more copies of a publication lowers the cost per unit.
- Keep at least one copy of the finished piece in your files for future reference.
- Throwing away unused copies is equal to throwing away money and missing the opportunity to share your message.

Communications and Marketing - Communications

Before submitting copy for publication, check it thoroughly for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors. Although the communications team will proof your copy, you are ultimately responsible for the accuracy of your publication. When you sign off on your project, you are saying it is approved and ready for production. It can be very expensive to correct errors in later stages of production, so make sure you proofread carefully. Have multiple people review the piece because the more eyes the better.

- Please do not type in all caps or use abbreviations. Remember to be consistent throughout with capitalization, abbreviations, punctuation, symbols and words.
- Do all your editing and revisions, if at all possible or practical, before presenting it for production. This will save time and cut your costs for excess revisions and waste materials.

Art & Photography

- If communications is producing art (through an outside vendor) or taking photos for you, allow extra time to produce them.
- A collection of photos of the college, students, faculty, etc. is available for approved use. Contact the Communications team for information.
- We have access to an extensive supply of clip art and stock photos. The communications team will help you select appropriate artwork.
- If you are providing the art and/or photos, bring them with the text and other instructions so that they can be more easily incorporated with the design.
- Publications produced by communications will include the appropriate college logo.

Production & Printing Coordination

- The communications team will help you decide your best options for printing, color, cost and mailing.
- Camera-ready work will be produced, and proof copy will be available. Allow approximately eight working days for production, plus five to 10 days for printing. Extent of publication and revisions will impact production time frame. Make sure you go over your timeline carefully with the communications team in order to know if your job is feasible for on-campus production in the time allotted.
- An assigned member of the Communications team will organize off-campus printing. Specifications will be discussed and appropriate vendors contacted in a competitive bidding process. Once vendor and cost have been determined, a requisition should be initiated by the department following college procedures.

Design Guidelines

College Name

Using Great Falls College as the college's name is acceptable in most publications except in the most formal instance. Great Falls College Montana State University and Great Falls College MSU are acceptable in all instances. GFC, GFC MSU and GFCMSU are not acceptable.

There is no punctuation in the college's name

- Great Falls College Montana State University
- Great Falls College MSU

Other MSU Campus names:

Montana State University in Bozeman or at Bozeman

Montana State University Billings (no hyphen)

Montana State University – Northern

Montana State University – Northern in Great Falls

Montana State University – Extension

(Extension has an office in each of Montana's 52 counties. Its state office is on the MSU campus. The Cascade County Extension Service is our local office.)

The Montana State University Campuses

General Trademark Information (also see Great Falls College MSU Graphic Standards Manual)

The name and logos of the college are registered and protected trademarks which may not be used without the express permission of the college. This policy helps to ensure immediate recognition, maintain appropriateness and prevent commercial use without compensation to the college.

Requests should be directed to a member of the communications team. The college logo must appear on all college publications. There are versions with just the shield, just the River Otter and with both the shield and the River Otter. All are appropriate in all uses. You are free to choose which version is most appropriate for your project, but you are welcome to consult with a member of the communications team if you would like advice on which to use for your project. Maintain these logos/seals without embellishing, distorting or subtracting information from them. Do not separate the images from the name of the college.

DO Use the college logo as the primary means of visually communicating our name to the many publics we serve.

Use the logo as a major element in any printed or electronic materials coming from the college.

Maintain the integrity of the logo without embellishment or change.

DON'T Distort the proportions of the logo when reducing or enlarging the logo. Only in rare instances should the logo be used smaller than one inch wide.

Both color and black & white logo images are available.

The logo should be used for publications and on- and off-campus printing.

Logos in both color and black and white and fonts are available to employees in Teams < College Council < Files < Communication Resources. Questions regarding this policy and requests for images in specific formats such as: jpg, tif, gif, eps, bmp should be directed to the communications team.

PowerPoint Presentations

Templates for presentations that complement the current design for the college's collateral print pieces also are available in Teams < College Council < Files < Communication Resources. .

Design Advice

We hope the following information will be helpful to you in creating your own publications, but you are encouraged to submit requests to marketing. Please submit a draft of your project for approval by the communications team before printing.

Type Styles & Text

- Generally, use no more than two fonts on a page.
- Use italic instead of bold to emphasize more than a few words in a line.
- Try not to use all capitals for more than a few words at a time. They are too difficult to read.
- Use special character styles such as outline or shadow rarely, if ever.
- Use reverse type (white type on black background) with extreme restraint.

- When typing numbers in text, always spell out one through nine. Use figures for 10 or more unless they appear at the beginning of a sentence.

Graphics, Photos & ClipArt

- Use clip art discerningly.
- Use boxes, borders and rules with restraint.
- A 'screen' (gray fill) behind a block of type can separate and highlight special sections, but keep the percent of black in the 'screen' to no more than 20 percent, or the type becomes difficult to read.
- Graphics, photos and spot color can brighten a publication and focus attention when relevant.

General Composition

- Avoid cramming too much information into a small composition.
- Make sure your headlines and subheads are closer to the text they refer to than the text above.
- Don't use every available feature.
- Keep sentences and paragraphs short but varied in length.
- Break up long text with subheads.

Style Guide

There are several writing style guides in general use, but the Associated Press (AP) Style Guide is the recommended resources. The following general rules may be of use to you. All of these are standard styles. Italics generally indicate an example of correct use.

Acronyms

The first rule of acronyms is to use them sparingly or never. They cause unnecessary confusion and distract readers. In most cases acronyms have no periods. For less widely known abbreviations, spell out the complete name in the first reference followed by the abbreviation in parenthesis.

Common acronyms:

ABE	Adult Basic Education
BOR	Board of Regents
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CLEP	College Level Examination Program
FASB	Financial Accounting Standards Board
FAFSA	Free Application for Federal Student Aid
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GED	General Education Development Testing Program
GPA	Grade Point Average
HC	Headcount
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System
NACUBO	National Association of College and University Business Officers
NWCCU	Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
OCHE	Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
OPI	Office of Public Instruction

Common use: degrees

AA	Associate of Arts Degree
AAS	Associate of Applied Science Degree
AS	Associate of Science Degree
CAS	Certificate of Applied Science
CTS	Certificate of Technical Studies

Dates

Show plurals of decades by adding an s (not the possessive “ ‘s”). 1920s, the mid-1990s

All ranges of time or dates are set with en-dashes (–), not hyphens (-). October – December, 7:30 – 8 p.m., 3 – 5 years of age. The top of the hour does not need anything more than the hour as in the example above. The a.m. and p.m. are not capitalized and always include the periods.

Dean’s list:

Lowercase in all uses. He is on the dean’s list.

Degrees, specific:

Name of subject is lowercase, i.e., mathematics, economics, except English. There is no apostrophe. He or she has a Bachelor of Science in biology; also Master of Arts in English. He or she has a Bachelor of Science degree.

Degrees, generic:

Use an apostrophe. He or she had an associate’s degree, a bachelor’s degree, a master’s degree a doctorate or a Ph.D. (NOT Associates of Science)

Degrees, honorary:

All references to honorary degrees should specify that the degree was honorary.

Degrees, abbreviations:

Use period in abbreviations. Bachelor of Arts, B.A. Common use for the Associate degrees is to use no periods - AA, AS AAS - are all acceptable.

Departments and titles:

Position title is lowercase with formal department name in title case.

Position titles are lowercase with informal department names in lowercase.

The department offers several options.

Dr. Stephanie Erdmann is the chief executive officer of the college.

Position titles are uppercase for formal titles or when they precede the name. They are lowercase elsewhere.

Dr. Stephanie Erdmann, CEO/dean of Great Falls College

The college departs from Associated Press style to include the title for those who have doctorate degrees.

Hyphenate:

two-year program, grade-point average, lower-division, upper-division, 15-hour, hands-on

Don't hyphenate:

premedicine, predental, preforestry, preveterinary

Any adverbs that end in -ly: Recently appointed dean. Newly completed arena.

Non prefixes:

Use no hyphen: nonmajors, nonresidents, nondegree, nonacademic

Use hyphen: non-Greek, non-College

College:

Informal references to the college are lowercase.

Miscellaneous

coursework (one word, like homework)

Email or e-mail

Fire fighter (2 words)

four-year (hyphenated)

home page

Internet (always capitalized)

Med Prep (2 words, each capitalized)

one-credit course

online (one word, not hyphenated)

postsecondary

two-year (hyphenated)

web page

web site (used as an adjective, web should be lower case)

workforce (one word)

Communications and Marketing Services**Letterhead and Envelopes**

All college stationary and envelopes follow the approved college standards as outlined in this guide. The Marketing and Community Relations team designs and sets print specifications.

- Digital letterhead banners in both color and black and white are available for your use. in Teams < College Council < Files < Communication Resources.
- Please order all preprinted letterhead and envelopes through the Printing Center.
- Color stationery is designed for formal correspondence. Since it is a more expensive option, it is not advised for internal communications or for those messages which are likely to be copied or faxed. Please use the envelopes that coordinate with the stationery, both color and black/white envelopes are available.

- Pre-printed envelopes with the college's bulk mail permit stamp may be available through the Printing Center.

Large Envelopes and Labels

Large catalog or manila envelopes are available on order through the Printing Center.

Notecards

Great Falls College notecards and envelopes are available for your use from the Printing Center.

Folders

Great Falls College folders are available for your meetings from the Printing Center.

Business Cards and name badges

- Work with your manager to order personalized business cards and name badges. An order form is in the marketing forms on the college website.

Website Design

It is in the best interest of the college to have its web presence reflect its high standards. Web requests need to go through marketing or the Webmaster by submitting a request via webrequest@gfcmsu.edu.

Media Relations/News Releases

Marketing and Community Relations is to be kept fully and promptly informed about events, incidents and developments in which there is current or potential media or public interest. In the event of controversy as well as in routine matters, it is the responsibility of the communications team to work closely with those involved to coordinate release of news items, respond to inquiries and to offer counsel as requested or required.

If you are contacted directly by a media representative for an interview, please inform and/or refer the media representative to a member of the communications team, specifically the executive director of Community Relations when possible. This will ensure accuracy and consistency in all external college contacts with print and broadcast media.

Information with reference to students will not be released unless the information qualifies as "Directory Information" as legally authorized under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Buckley Amendment).

College Spokesperson

The CEO/dean of Great Falls College is the primary spokesperson and in his/her absence, it is the executive director of Community Relations.

News Releases

The communications team coordinates appropriate release information relative to college events, activities and employee recognition with departments and/or officials. Releases are designed (1) as the

initial contact for media to use as reporting background and/or (2) to be filed as articles for publication: subjects to include faculty, staff students, events and other newsworthy items. All news items or leads are to be reported to the communications department and will be reviewed for appropriate dissemination for internal and external distribution. Proper lead time is required in planning and disseminating all information.

News Release Distribution

Releases are distributed to appropriate media by the communications team using appropriate news release format. Distribution includes radio, TV and print, including weekly and daily papers, as well as online news sources. Contact names and information for appropriate faculty, staff or students are often given (with permission) to allow the media to easily reach the primary source of information.

Photography

The communications team, specifically the social media marketing specialist, coordinates photography and videography to capture college events and activities. Please call the communications team in advance with photo requests. Digital and print photos are the property of the college and are housed by the communications department. Photo releases are required prior to publication.

Advertising

All advertising for the college must be coordinated through the communications department, specifically the executive director of community relations when possible, to keep all college communication consistent.

In Otter News

In Otter News is an internal publication generated monthly and distributed through email. Its purpose is to inform stakeholders of newsworthy information, including new employees, Awesome Otters, campus events and accomplishments. Information is encouraged and welcomed from the entire campus community. Reach out to the executive director of community relations with items to be considered for inclusion.

Directories

Maintained by Student Services, a printed one-page directory that shows staff names, room and phone number is available on Excel from the front desk administrative associate in Student Central. A searchable directory is available on the college's website.

Organizational Chart

Maintained by Human Resources, the organizational chart is available on the website on the CEO/dean page.

Signage

Communications and facilities work together to monitor and update internal way-finding signs. Postings are also monitored by this department in collaboration with HelpDesk personnel.

Compliance Statements

The following compliance statement should be included in all publications that are distributed to the general public.

Equal Opportunity & Non Discrimination

Great Falls College Montana State University is committed to the provision of equal opportunity for education, employment, and participation in all College programs and activities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, creed, service in the uniformed services (as defined in state and federal law), protected veteran status, gender, age, political ideas, marital or family status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. The Equal Opportunity Officers are the Human Resources Director and the Associate Dean for Student Services, 2100 16th Avenue South, Great Falls, MT 59405 Telephone: 406-771-5123 or 406-771-5133.

Affirmative action in employment

Great Falls College MSU is a Disabled/AA/EEO/Vet Preference Employer. All qualified individuals are encouraged to apply. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to their veteran status or on the basis of disability. Please contact the director of Human Resources for more information on veterans' preference and equal opportunity or to arrange accommodations for a disability.

Gainful Employment Statement

Information on the Gainful Employment Program can be found at: <http://catalog.gfcmsu.edu/>.

Accreditation Statements

Great Falls College Montana State University is accredited by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, a regional postsecondary accrediting agency. Regional accreditation assures the quality of the educational experience and facilitates the transfer of credit to state and national colleges and universities.

Great Falls College Montana State University is accredited through NWCCU, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Educational Programs

All educational programs offered by Great Falls College are approved by the Montana Board of Regents, United States Department of Education, United States Department of Veterans Affairs and Montana Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

Describing the college

Short version

About Great Falls College

Great Falls College is a comprehensive community college offering degrees and certificates that prepare students to enter high-skill, high-demand careers or to transfer to a bachelor degree program. The college sustains community relationships that ensure that its educational programs support local and state economic development. Student enrollment is approximately 1,500 students per semester in credit-bearing courses. The Continuing Education and Training department continues to add professional trainings such

as commercial drivers license, certified nursing assistant and structural welding to prepare a workforce to meet community needs in high-wage, high demand industries.

Medium-length version

About Great Falls College

Great Falls College is a progressive public college offering two-year transfer degrees as well as degrees and certificates that prepare students to enter high-skill, high-demand careers. The college is located in the city of Great Falls, which is located at the convergence of the Missouri and Sun rivers. It has a population of about 58,000 and a moderate climate with clean pure air. Founded in 1969, Great Falls College has continued to adapt and transform itself to the needs of the community and a changing world. The college continues to add programs as workforce needs are substantiated. Many articulations are in place to ensure that students earning associate's degrees will transfer smoothly to four-year colleges or universities. During the academic year, over 3,000 students take courses at the college. The full-time enrollment equivalent is approximately 900 students.

Longer version

About Great Falls College

Great Falls College is a two-year college that fosters the success of its students and their communities through innovative, flexible learning opportunities for people of all ages, backgrounds and aspirations resulting in self-fulfillment and competitiveness in an increasingly global society. Great Falls College will continue to play a leading role in transforming the lives of its students, their communities and the economic prosperity of Montana by responding to learner and community needs through the use of partnerships, innovation, outreach and technology.

Great Falls College offers challenging, high-demand programs in the areas of Health Sciences, Business, Technology, Trades and General Education. Associate of Applied Science degrees, the Associate of Arts degree and the Associate of Science degree along with certificate programs and professional certifications provide students with choices to achieve their educational goals. For those planning to transfer to four-year colleges, they will find numerous courses that will allow them to complete the Montana University System general education core prior to transfer. Many courses are offered in a variety of formats to provide students with flexibility in scheduling.

The college boasts a dynamic Continuing Education and Training Department that proactively addresses workforce training needs with validated skills trainings in areas such as commercial drivers license, certified nursing assistant and structural welding.

The college, which was founded in 1969, is located in southeast Great Falls on a beautiful 39-acre campus and serves approximately 3,000 students a year.