SEEN AND HEARD

To enhance the public perception of our great institution, we need to reinforce our brand through the consistent use of words, images and graphics.

Imagine a symphony orchestra. Before the lights dim, before the conductor raises the baton, a discordant blend of strings, percussion, and woodwind instruments squeaks and groans from the stage. It is only when the musicians begin playing in unison that we can appreciate their talents.

Every piece of communication that features the Minot State University name represents an opportunity to tell our story to the world. For maximum impact, every program, department and college needs to tell the same story. We need to be playing the same tune.

If your job involves communicating with any of our many audiences – prospective and current students, faculty and staff, community leaders and the general public – you are a Minot State brand ambassador. That means you are in a position to influence how people perceive our university.

This guide is designed to help us strengthen our brand by consistently delivering messages that are clear, cohesive and compelling.

In doing so, we will maximize our ability to be seen, heard, recognized and valued.
WHO WE ARE

In determining how we want to present Minot State to our many audiences, we underwent a research-driven branding process in 2005 to understand what makes us different from other colleges and universities.

Through this process, it became clear that we value, believe in and aspire to be a “students first” institution. Putting students first is something we do well. It’s something we’re certain that we do better than many others. And we have a great desire to continually improve the service we provide our students.

So, we can confidently make this promise:

Minot State University maintains an unwavering focus on students — their wants, needs and aspirations. Our students excel through uncommonly strong, one-to-one relationships with highly-talented, energetic faculty and staff.

We are student-centric.

Over time, the look of our marketing materials may evolve, but our brand does not. This is our essence, what we are known for, and the reason parents, prospective students and donors should choose us.
OUR PERSONALITY

Our brand personality reflects the traits that distinguish us from other colleges and universities. It describes how we behave, how we fulfill our promise. In all our communications, we should aim to:

Speak with the authority of a mentor – confident, caring and committed to helping others; pragmatic, but inspirational.

Chances are good you know people like this on campus. It may describe you. Our communications should strike the appropriate tone to reinforce these characteristics. For more on tone of voice, see page 17.
KEY MESSAGES

Stressing our student-centered nature is just a start. To strengthen our brand, we need to illustrate the benefits and impact of our approach. Every time you share an impressive story about your students, program or department, you reinforce the brand and bring our story to life.

There are many different reasons that people choose Minot State, but the ones we want to focus on above others are:

**Academic excellence**
Students want success and fulfillment in a competitive world. We prepare them well.

**Great faculty**
Students want to work closely with faculty. We give them unmatched opportunities to do so.

**Small class settings**
Students want opportunities to shine. They are available in abundance here.

**Supportive environment**
Students want a sense of community. They feel it here.

**Outstanding value**
Students want access to a great education at a fair price. They find unbeatable value here.
KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

For most of the people we’re trying to reach, our communications serve as a window to the Minot State educational experience.

We want to motivate audiences to take action – enroll for class, attend an event, apply for a job or make a donation. To create compelling communications, we must tailor our messages to specific audiences. Ask yourself:

What do they care about most?
What is relevant to them?
What questions do they need answered?

Research indicates that most choices are influenced by feelings more than facts. Strive to engage your audience on an emotional level first by making a personal connection. Go beyond what a story is, and focus on why this information matters to your audience.

For example, having an admirable student/faculty ratio is a fact – a number – but conveying a story about how that improved the experience of a specific student creates a feeling. A working adult may care little about having fun with friends at the Beaver Dam, but ease of registration or flexible class schedules is important. Why? She wants to be a good parent to her young children.

Don’t try to be all things to all people.

If you don’t know enough about your audience, do some research. Working with even limited anecdotal knowledge is better than taking shots in the dark.
HOW WE LOOK

All communications will reinforce our brand position, personality and key messages through your choice of stories, photos and headlines. By consistently using our logo, colors, typography and graphics, Minot State’s visual identity will become established and recognized.
It’s imperative that our website reinforce the same messages and visuals that audiences are seeing in print and around the region.

Provide context when introducing profiles of students or faculty.

Ease of navigation says a lot about how we help our students reach their goals.

We’re here to help.

As someone considering colleges, you have a lot of questions. And you’re not alone. Every day, we help people just like you get the right answers to questions about Minot State, or college in general.
Even if your final exam is a solo, you’ll never feel alone at Minot State. Here you’ll find a supportive, collaborative community that always gives your education the attention it deserves.

Minot State University

Use an appropriate tone of voice to convey our brand personality. Direct readers to our website for more detailed information.
BECAUSE

OPPORTUNITY
knocks 24 hours a day, we’re ready when you are.

It’s never too late to further your education, even if you’ve already got a full-time job. Our Weekend MBA program is a convenient way to enhance your value in the workplace and increase your earning potential at the same time.

AskMSU.com/weekendMBA

WEEKEND MBA INFORMATION NIGHT
THURSDAY
DECEMBER 8
7:00 PM
SWAIN HALL – ROOM 130
To register, or if you have questions, call 701-858-3000 or go to AskMSU.com/weekendMBA.

Minot State UNIVERSITY

Use audience-specific benefits and images.
Graduate degrees for today's world

Our Master of Science in Management (MSM) program offers talented students the opportunity to enhance their expertise in a chosen management concentration.

Working alongside our dedicated faculty, participants in this program are able to customize their educational experience based on their academic and professional interests.

With an MSM degree, you’re prepared to assume greater management responsibilities in your career, or continue studying toward a doctorate degree.

APPLICATION DEADLINE

June 1, 2011

- Finish the program in 22 or 24 months
- Evening classes one or two nights a week
- All students pay in-state tuition regardless of residency

CONTACT

Dr. Gary Ross  PROGRAM DIRECTOR
1-800-777-0750, ext. 3291

Sarah Walker  PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
1-800-777-0750, ext. 4157

Keep copy brief, highlighting only the information most important to your audience.
PUTTING IT TOGETHER

Our brand is used in many ways: in printed publications, on signs, posters, apparel, in videos, and on the internet. Each offers an opportunity to share our story on campus, in the community, and around the world. Consistent use of this guide and our graphic standards strengthens the perception of who we are and helps each individual piece work harder for us.

Details make the difference.

While it’s always important to look for new and innovative ways to reach our audiences, when someone chooses different fonts, changes our colors, or uses the logo incorrectly, the perception of our school is diluted. To get the most from our brand, we need to work together to present a cohesive and compelling story – in images and words.

On the following pages, you’ll find some tips for using the photos, graphics, and typography that distinguish our visual identity. To guide your choices, always remember to:

Provide a central focus.
Lead with emotion. What does the experience feel like?
Ask yourself: Why does this matter to my audience?
Convey confidence.
Using Photos
A good picture is worth a thousand words. Because we are bombarded by so many messages and so much visual clutter, it’s never been more important to choose photos wisely.

Ask yourself: Does the image enhance our story? Does it reflect our brand personality? Can we make it simpler or more compelling?

Find the emotional core of an image and eliminate unnecessary detail.

Look for the action in an image to reduce visual clutter.
Using Photos

Could someone mistake the image as belonging to another university? Make it distinct to reinforce key messages.

Shoot from unusual angles to make familiar images more interesting.

Portraits can often look posed. Seek out authentic, emotional experiences to connect with our audiences.
Using Photos

Multiple photos should be grouped together, with one image more dominant than the others.

Using Graphics

The Minot State logo is the primary graphic element in most designs. For more information on the logo and its proper use, please refer to the graphic standards manual.

Emphasize our primary and secondary colors in all communications. Avoid prominent use of our competitors’ colors. For more information on the color palette, please refer to the graphic standards manual.
Using Graphics

A visual reference to the logo shield may be used to shape feature photo boxes, but only with our logo in close proximity.

To reduce distractions, our tagline will often be downplayed, used with transparency in the corner of a photo (at left), or in light gray in the upper or lower corner of a page (at bottom).

Boxes with an outline similar to the logo shield may be used for photos (at left) and headlines (at bottom), or to feature important information (see page 9).
Using Typography

Using our fonts consistently – and exclusively – will go a long way toward establishing a recognizable visual identity. For more information on our recommended fonts, please refer to the graphic standards manual.

I feel like this is my HOME away from home.

Highlighting key words in headlines provides both a point of focus and layered meaning for the audience, while prompting a deeper understanding of our brand.

Our learning COMMUNITY extends well beyond campus.

Use words that reinforce our brand position and personality.

Use active words that build on our logo and tagline.
Be inspired. Be confident.
Be proud. Be a leader.

Use meaningful words that emphasize the audience’s point of view.
TONE OF VOICE

In all our communications, our tone of voice should be friendly and approachable, not formal or academic. That means:

> Copy sounds conversational.
> Speak to your audience as if they were a friend.
> Be inclusive – often using “we” and “our” instead of “Minot State University” or “MSU.”

We are top-notch educators with a down-to-earth demeanor. We are pragmatic and professional, but always with a heart.

Engage your audience on an emotional level. Focus first on why this story is important, then provide details about what they need to know. We are:

Personal, genuine, caring, committed;
Friendly, approachable, down to earth, likable;
Pragmatic, capable, hardworking, inspirational.
Burr Paints Murals at MSU
In February 2008, Ryan Burr, an artist and powwow dancer, painted the mural with a native theme on the wall between the entrances of the pool and bookstore on the lower level of the Student Center. The painting features regional buttes, a sunset sky, prairie grass, a Native American village, buffalo, a beaver hut and a beaver dam. It also includes two portraits: one of an idealized Native American man in his late 20s or early 30s and another of a Native American man in traditional dress. Burr also painted the pillar below which is located in the Beaver Creek Café.

Burr Mural: Celebrating Our Native American Culture
North Dakota’s history has been enriched by its Native American heritage, past and present. In 2008, we commissioned Ryan Burr, a world-renowned artist and powwow dancer from the nearby Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, to paint a mural on the lower level of the Student Center. It features regional buttes against a sunset sky along with a Native American village, buffalo, and two portraits: one of an idealized Native American young man and another of a Native American man in traditional dress. “All of my murals deal with the proud history of the Three Affiliated Tribes [Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara],” says Burr. He also painted a pillar located in the Beaver Creek Café.
NO VOICE

Wellness Center Nears Completion
Construction continues on the new Wellness Center located on the west side of the Dome. The Center was requested and funded by MSU students which is slated for completion by spring 2012. To improve services to students, it will house the Fitness Center, a rock climbing pillar, fitness classes, multi-purpose spaces, student health, disability services, testing and counseling services in a centralized location.

MINOT STATE VOICE

Wellness Center: By Students, For Students
We heard our students loud and clear: they wanted one central location where they could get all of their health and fitness needs met. The new, student-funded Wellness Center will be the place for regular workouts, with challenges like a rock-climbing pillar and plenty of fitness classes. At the Center, students can also take advantage of student health appointments along with disability and counseling services. Currently under construction on the west side of the Dome, the new Wellness Center will open its doors to students in spring 2012.
Obtaining electronic files

We want to make it easy to use this guide and the graphic standards manual to create communications for our university.

Artwork for the Minot State logo, as well as many of the graphics found in this guide, may be obtained through Printing Services. Contact:

Doreen Wald
Minot State University Publication & Design Services
Pioneer Hall, Lower Level
doreen.wald@minotstateu.edu
701-858-3499

Additionally, the Marketing Office maintains an online gallery of professionally shot Minot State University photos. To view and search for photos for your next project, go to:

http://www.minotstateu.edu/marketing/gallery.shtml