



Diversity LB
Long Beach State University 2019 Bateman Entry

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Only one in every seven public relations (PR) professionals in California is a person of color (A1) – a number that does not accurately represent the growing diversity of the local and national community. A group of Long Beach State University (LBSU) students partnered with the PRSA Foundation to launch the Diversity LB campaign to engage Long Beach and surrounding Los Angeles and Orange counties to raise awareness about the lack of diversity in the field and motivate the community to spark change. Diversity LB accomplished this through developing a mentorship program and business coalition, making lasting impressions with key publics and encouraging those from diverse backgrounds to share their story.

The LBSU Bateman Team focused the Diversity LB campaign around three goals: **Educate**, **Motivate** and **Participate**. Adopting this approach, the campaign sought to **educate** the community on the issues surrounding the lack of diversity in the workforce, **motivate** the community to support the PRSA Foundation by purchasing *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership*, and encourage others to **participate** by empowering them to make a change in the ethnic diversity of the workforce.

The city of Long Beach, as well as the LBSU campus, is proud to be home to a diverse community. This pride inspired our campaign name—Diversity LB—because as a community we celebrate and value the many benefits diversity brings. Highlighting diversity in our name is also a reflection of the diversity found naturally on our campus (A1). Many local initiatives and campaigns use the format of including “LB” in their name or slogan, making our campaign name recognizable and easy to find. Our logo embraced LBSU’s pride by using an inversion of our campus landmark—the Walter Pyramid—as the “V” in Diversity. This shining pyramid situated on campus is celebrated across Long Beach and is recognizable across the city as a symbol of LBSU.

To complement the promotion of the PRSA Foundation’s book *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership*, we shared the stories of our own group of diverse students, alumni and local PR professionals and compiled them in an e-book, *Stories of Diversity* (A11). These stories revealed personal and vulnerable experiences about diversity in the workforce, gained the support of LBSU President Jane Close Conoley and fostered a sense of connection among our students, staff, faculty, alumni and the working community. These stories were also hosted on Diversity LB’s website as a blog (A16) and shared by the authors on LinkedIn. One student’s story reached more than 1,000 accounts on LinkedIn and the “stories” page on Diversity LB’s website received the majority of the website’s page views (A8).

Diversity LB’s campaign stood not only to raise awareness of the white-dominated workforce, but also to motivate, empower and grow the 13 percent of minorities that stands proudly, representing people of color in an underrepresented field. Our campaign successfully exceeded all campaign goals, encouraging rising talent and celebrating the strength in differences.

Situation Analysis.....

Diversity LB was a community-oriented movement working toward solutions to help educate others on the lack of diversity within the PR and communications workforce. PR is a growing field, but it still lacks racial and ethnic representation. In fact, only 11 percent of the PR and communications workforce are practitioners of color: 5 percent are black or African American, 4 percent are Hispanic and 2 percent are Asian (A1).

The PR profession is often unbeknownst to the public, and we discovered through primary research that many of our interviewees found out about the profession after graduation and while working in other fields, largely journalism (A3). Despite this obstacle, LBSU has maintained a strong PRSSA chapter that is actively engaged on campus and supported by the Orange County and Los Angeles PRSA chapters. As a result, Diversity LB was able to leverage these relationships and the current diversity of the campus to support its campaign.

Secondary Research (A1).....

To better understand both our audience and the lack of awareness of diversity in the PR field, our team analyzed peer-reviewed articles, websites and books. We conducted secondary research based on our audience, focusing on Long Beach college students and PR professionals.

EDUCATE

Our secondary research indicated that our target audience exists within an already highly diverse population. However, while the majority of the LBSU student body is diverse, a need for more diversity awareness and understanding was expressed during Beach 2030—a unique re-visioning process LBSU implemented in 2018 to discover what students and faculty envision for the future of the university. Many students expressed their desire for more diversity training for faculty and staff to better understand the student body.

- The majority of Long Beach students are Hispanic at 35.3 percent, followed by whites at 23.3 percent.
- The city of Long Beach ranks 13th out of 501 U.S. cities in ethnic and racial diversity.
- LBSU is considered “far above” the national average in overall diversity.

MOTIVATE

Our secondary research showed that LBSU students’ financial status might affect their motivation to donate or purchase *Diverse Voices*. According to research, Long Beach residents have minimal disposable income, so obtaining donations or book purchases from the student community would be challenging.

- 50 percent of undergraduate students at LBSU are considered low-income.
- 71 percent of full-time undergraduates at LBSU receive some need-based financial aid.
- The cost of living in Long Beach is 43 percent higher than the national average.
- The average income of a Long Beach resident is \$27,014 a year, which is lower than the national average.

PARTICIPATE

When reviewing in-depth interviews with PR specialists and managers, our secondary research found that even at organizations where diversity and inclusion initiatives exist, employees don’t feel that their employers are doing enough. The LBSU Bateman Team also researched previous diversity campaigns and found that the diverse talent pool often goes unnoticed.

- In one study, one-third of employees felt that their employer was not committed to diversity and one-third felt that their organization needed more work to be committed to diversity.
- Diversity programs need to nurture an inclusive culture to attract and retain a diverse workforce.
- Employers only spend an average of seven seconds on a resume, further contributing to the barriers that minorities face when entering the workforce.

Primary Research.....

While secondary research was able to provide information about diversity and PR on a national and global level, we wanted to understand what diversity looks like on the local level. We distributed surveys targeted at students and professionals, conducted focus groups with LBSU PR and journalism students and attended the PRSA-LA State of the State of PR: Diversity and Inclusion panel discussion at the University of Southern California.

A few key insights we learned during the PRSA-LA State of the State of PR: Diversity and Inclusion panel is that many students and young professionals don’t have a mentor or trusted colleague “who looks like them,” and that many hiring managers don’t know where to look to find the diverse talent that already exists.

EDUCATE

We began our primary research by conducting 17 in-depth interviews and surveying 190 PR professionals and LBSU students to gather more insight into the importance and awareness of diversity in the workplace or classroom. Our survey results revealed that there is little conversation about diversity in the classroom and almost little to no discussion in the workplace.

- 39 percent of students and 43 percent of professionals placed diversity in the top three most important aspects to look for in a career (A2).
- 85 percent of students said diversity is important to them when looking for a job (A2).
- 65 percent of students said they would like to be better informed about diversity (A2).
- Most of our interviewees stated that diversity initiatives in the workplace are mere “lip service” and lack follow-up action (A3).

MOTIVATE

We conducted two focus groups with 14 LBSU PR, journalism and communications students to better understand this demographic’s financial barriers. The focus groups revealed that students would not be receptive to purchasing *Diverse Voices*.

- Participants stated they would not spend the money to purchase *Diverse Voices* (A5).
- Most of our participants are receiving financial aid to pay for school while also working at least part-time (A5).
- Participants confirmed they would purchase *Diverse Voices* if their cost of living was not so high or if they worked more than part-time (A5).

Primary Research cont'd.....

PARTICIPATE

Our in-depth interviews with PR professionals provided invaluable insight as to what diversity looks like in the workforce on a local level. During our attempts to find in-depth interview subjects, we discovered that there is a discrepancy between people's interest in the issue of diversity and their willingness to take action toward a solution.

- Many of our interviewees cited lack of diversity at the management/executive level as the reason behind the difficulties to create a multiculturally-competent staff (A4).
- The majority of our interviewees stated education on a college and youth level as important in promoting diversity in the future workforce (A4).
- All of our interviewees expressed importance in having a mentor in college that looked like them (A4).
- Some of our interviewees mentioned that hiring managers should look for talent that is not only diverse, but also has experience working on diversity campaigns (A4).

Campaign Goals.....

Educate the LBSU campus and greater Long Beach community about the diversity and inclusion challenges in the PR and communications professions, **motivate** PR firms and agencies in the community to purchase *Diverse Voices* and encourage students and professionals to **participate**, empowering them to join the mentorship program, share their stories and become champions of diversity.

Target Audiences.....

PRIMARY AUDIENCES

- LBSU PR, journalism and communications students, staff and faculty.
- PR and communications firms and agencies in Los Angeles and Orange counties.

SECONDARY AUDIENCES

- PR, journalism and communications students at surrounding universities.
- Members of the media.

ANCILLARY AUDIENCES

- Influential members of LBSU and the surrounding communities.

Key Messages.....

EDUCATE

- There is a lack of racial diversity in the PR and communications workforce.
- Only one in every seven PR professionals in California is a person of color.
- The emerging majority will outnumber whites by 2060.

MOTIVATE

- While the PR field has lacked diversity in the past, initiatives such as Diversity LB are ensuring there is an opportunity for everyone in the future.
- *Diverse Voices: Profiles in Leadership* is a useful tool that will help PR students, educators and professionals better understand why diversity and inclusion are so important.

PARTICIPATE

- Together, we can show how the workforce benefits from diversity and inclusion.
- Engage with Diversity LB and professionals in the field during events and on social media and share your story.
- Join our Coalition for Diversity and continue improving diversity and inclusion in your workplace.

Educate.....

CHALLENGE: LBSU is a commuter school with the majority of students only staying on campus for their scheduled classes and appointments. This presents a challenge in engaging with the LBSU student body who rarely spend their leisure time on campus (A6).

OPPORTUNITY: To capture students' attention and inform them about our campaign and events, we tabled during heavily trafficked passing periods, presented in classrooms and launched a social media campaign to reach our audience where they already were, often off campus or on the go.

Motivate.....

CHALLENGE: At LBSU, 71 percent of students receive grants and/or loans based on the income level of their overall household. An estimated 35.2 percent of students' total household income is less than \$30,000 a year, which is considered low-income. Students' lack of disposable income made it difficult to gather donations and book purchases on campus among the student community (A6).

OPPORTUNITY: As our primary audience spends their time and money in the community, we partnered with the LBSU baseball team, the Dirtbags, who are highly popular among both LBSU students and the Long Beach community and whose games yield high attendance, and a local small business frequented by LBSU students to reach our audience where they already were.

Campaign Hurdles (A7).....

- The city of Long Beach is the seventh most populated city in California, with a population of 462,257, and is part of the Los Angeles media market. Los Angeles is the largest city in California with a population of more than 4 million. The large size of this market made it difficult to canvas media coverage due to massive market competition.
- The cost of living in Long Beach is 43 percent higher than the national average, and 71 percent of students receive financial aid based on income level and need, which caused difficulty in selling *Diverse Voices*, a book that was not an explicit requirement for class material (A7 and A3).

Participate.....

CHALLENGE: Primary research efforts indicated our primary target audience struggles with busy schedules and limited free time due to their heavy course load as full-time students, making them difficult to activate (A6).

OPPORTUNITY: To further capture the attention of our busy audience, we hosted fundraising events in partnership with PRSSA-LB and launched an engaging social media campaign as many students are more active online than on campus.



Educate.....

OBJECTIVE I: Raise student and community awareness about the importance of creating a more diverse PR workforce by generating 1,000 connections and 100,000 cumulative impressions through earned, owned and shared media between Feb. 11 - March 11, 2019.

Strategy I - Create original content for students, PR professionals and the community through Diversity LB that complements the *Diverse Voices* initiative by bringing a local and personal perspective.

Rationale: The Diversity LB website was meant to act as a safe space where PR students and professionals can share experiences that they have had pertaining to diversity within the workforce.

- Tactic A: Create a website, www.DiversityLB.com, to serve as an informational hub for the campaign and provide information about the *Diverse Voices* initiative (A8).
- Tactic B: Develop informational resources for businesses and educators on how to improve inclusion efforts and promote diversity in the classroom and workforce (A10).
- Tactic C: Encourage students, alumni and PR professionals to submit personal essays on their experiences with diversity and inclusion in the field of PR to be posted on the website (A16) and compiled into an e-book, *Stories of Diversity* (A11). Launch *Stories of Diversity* e-book during the last two days of the campaign so as not to detract from potential sales of *Diverse Voices*.

Strategy II - Pitch traditional media and post social media content that educates our target audience about the lack of diversity in the PR workforce and establishes a connection between the student population, community and client.

Rationale: During our secondary research, we found that Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn have the highest following among college students. We felt it would be beneficial to use these media outlets because adults spend roughly 11 hours per day watching, reading, listening to or interacting with media.

- Tactic A: Develop and distribute a media kit that includes press releases, media advisories, a backgrounder and fact sheet (A12).
- Tactic B: Launch @DiversityLB on Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn and use channels daily to document campaign activity and drive traffic to www.DiversityLB.com (A14).
- Tactic C: Create and post video content including an introduction video with students of diverse backgrounds ("To Us, Diversity Is..."), interviews with University President Jane Close Conoley and Associated Students Inc. Student Body President Genesis Jara and a conclusion video ("United, We Are...") (A15).
- Tactic D: Share individual student and professional essay submissions to all social media platforms and encourage contributors to share on their social media (A16).

Strategy III - Conduct classroom visits, host or participate in events to increase student and community knowledge about the importance of diversity and inclusion and share information about the *Diverse Voices* initiative.

Rationale: We found a considerable amount of value in face-to-face communication and participatory events. These events and promotions in the local area provided stories and visuals worthy of media attention and social buzz.

- Tactic A: Present the *Diverse Voices* initiative and supporting data to LBSU classrooms within the College of Liberal Arts, encouraging students of diverse backgrounds to explore a career in the field of PR (A14).
- Tactic B: Break a world record on campus for the longest string of pasta under the theme: "If it's so easy to bring diverse people together to do something as simple as string pasta, why is it so hard to do so in the workforce?" (A18).
- Tactic C: Host a networking event for PR professionals and students at an LBSU Dirtbags game that included an overhead announcement with Diversity LB's key messages and screen takeover on the scoreboard (A19).
- Tactic D: Host a roundtable discussion in partnership with PRSSA-LA about diversity and inclusion with PR professionals and students from LBSU and California State University, Los Angeles (CSULA) (A22).
- Tactic E: Table at on- and off-campus events, including on Valentine's Day (A20) and at Long Beach Opera's "Equity and Diversity in the Arts" Community Conversations series (A21), providing business-card size handouts with a link to purchase *Diverse Voices* at tabling and events.
- Tactic F: Designate six PR students as "Diversity LB Ambassadors" and provide them with education and tools needed to help broaden Diversity LB's reach during classroom visits and at events (A24).

Motivate.....

OBJECTIVE II: Sell five copies of *Diverse Voices* through fundraising and organic sales between Feb. 11 - March 11, 2019.

Strategy I - Partner with PRSSA-LB to host fundraising events on campus and in the community, and use money raised to purchase a copy of *Diverse Voices* to donate to local college campuses.

Rationale: LBSU has a strong PRSSA chapter that is active in the LBSU and surrounding communities. We have solid ties with our five local PRSSA chapters and sharing *Diverse Voices* with them would expand our reach beyond our university to other local colleges.

- Tactic A: Partner with LBSU Athletics to host “Dirtbags for Diversity” networking event during the opening week of the LBSU baseball season, and with Caffe Bene, a small business near campus, to host a fundraiser with 50 percent of “Dirtbags for Diversity” ticket sales and 20 percent of Caffe Bene fundraiser sales donated to PRSSA-LB and used to purchase copies of *Diverse Voices* ([A19](#) & [A23](#)).
- Tactic B: Partner with PRSSA-LB to sell homemade candy grams at a table in a central area at LBSU on Valentine’s Day with proceeds donated to PRSSA-LB and used to purchase copies of *Diverse Voices* ([A20](#)).

Strategy II - Create connections with local PR agencies and broaden Diversity LB’s existing network of students, faculty and professionals.

Rationale: With the current issue of a diminished diverse talent pool, we saw this as an opportunity to connect diverse aspiring PR professionals with professionals in the field.

- Tactic A: Develop an extensive email campaign to distribute information about Diversity LB, targeting local PR agencies, professionals and LBSU students, staff and faculty. Include resources such as an educational guide for both employers and educators, a request that firms and agencies purchase *Diverse Voices* for their employees and for educators to adopt the book into their syllabi as recommended reading ([A13](#)).
- Tactic B: Dedicate a page on the Diversity LB website directing visitors to donate to the PRSA Foundation or purchase *Diverse Voices*, and use social media channels and media opportunities to promote donations to the PRSA Foundation and sale of *Diverse Voices* throughout the campaign ([A9](#)).

Participate.....

OBJECTIVE III: Provide opportunities that allow for a minimum of 50 students, alumni, professionals and PR agencies to take action in support of creating a diverse workforce between Feb. 11 - March 11, 2019, and beyond.

Strategy I - As an extension of the *Diverse Voices* initiative, encourage students, alumni and professionals to share their personal stories and learn from others’ experiences with diversity in the workplace.

Rationale: During our primary research, the panelists at PRSA-LA’s State of the State of PR and the majority of our interviewees stated they either benefited or would have benefited from hearing about others’ experiences or having a mentor who “looked like them.”

- Tactic A: Create a mentorship program for LBSU students, in which they are partnered with a PR professional who “looks like them” and are provided with opportunities for resume review, office tours/job shadowing and general advice on starting a career in the field. ([A30](#))
- Tactic B: Host a roundtable discussion for LBSU and CSULA students to hear from PR professionals on their experiences with diversity and inclusion, and encourage open dialogue on how we can create a diverse future. ([A22](#))
- Tactic C: Use social media channels and events to encourage LBSU students and professionals to share their personal story on www.DiversityLB.com and to be compiled into the e-book, *Stories of Diversity* ([A11](#) & [A16](#)).

Strategy II - Establish a coalition for PR agencies that are aware of the diversity and inclusion issues in the field of PR to pledge to work toward a solution.

Rationale: One of the challenges facing the PR industry is retention in the workforce of employees with a diverse background because of a lack of understanding in PR as a career option for people of color.

- Tactic A: Create a coalition page on the campaign website where local PR agencies can publicly declare that they are committed to improving diversity and inclusion ([A31](#)).
- Tactic B: Provide agencies with information about the *Diverse Voices* initiative, ask them to join the diversity coalition and add their agency logo to the coalition page on the website ([A31](#) & [A13](#)).
- Tactic C: Provide members of the coalition with a business resource guide with information to help improve diversity and inclusion in the workforce ([A10](#)).

OBJECTIVE I: Exceeded

We aimed to create 1,000 connections and 100,000 cumulative impressions through earned, owned and shared media during our campaign. We exceeded our goals by acquiring 2,402 connections and 115,064 impressions through 1) original and informative content on our website, 2) distributing informational resources to businesses and educators, 3) collecting personal essays for Diverse Stories on the website, 4) earned media, including a guest appearance on LBSU's 22 West Radio, and 5) engaging with our audience on social media and at events on and off campus.

- Our website reached 489 visitors and yielded 2,741 pageviews, with 456 views of the Diverse Stories page ([A8](#)).
- We received 25 personal essay submissions, 22 of which came from current LBSU students ([A16](#)).
- We published the personal essays and informational resources in a free e-book, *Stories of Diversity*, which was downloaded by 128 people in only 48 hours. We waited to publish our e-book until the last weekend of the campaign so as not to detract from potential sales of *Diverse Voices* ([A11](#)).
- We reached 40,610 people through owned social media, classroom presentations and events ([A35](#)).
- Out of 169 surveys taken directly after classroom visits, 89 percent of the respondents said it increased their awareness of diversity in the field of PR and 75 percent said the presentation provided valuable information ([A36](#)).
- In a follow-up evaluation survey, 75 percent of respondents said the Diversity LB campaign provided very valuable information and 25 percent said the campaign provided somewhat valuable information. In the same survey, 50 percent of respondents said their awareness of diversity had increased greatly as a result of the Diversity LB campaign and 37 percent said their awareness of diversity has somewhat increased ([A37](#)).

Out of the five copies purchased from fundraising, PRSSA-LB will donate one book to each of the following Universities:

**OBJECTIVE II:** Exceeded

Our second goal intended to motivate our audience to donate to the PRSA Foundation or purchase *Diverse Voices*. Our goal was to sell five copies of *Diverse Voices* through fundraising and organic sales. We achieved this by partnering with our local PRSSA-LB chapter to host events and tabling on campus to raise \$214 to purchase five copies and donate the additional \$14 directly to the PRSA Foundation. We also sold three copies organically through outreach efforts and promotion of the purchase link on our website and social media channels.

OBJECTIVE III: Exceeded

Our goal was to encourage 50 PR and communications students and PR professionals and firms to take action in support of creating a more diverse workforce. We achieved this, with 64 people agreeing to take action through 1) creating a mentorship program with PRSSA-LB, 2) hosting a roundtable discussion with PRSSA-LA, 3) encouraging students and professionals to share their personal stories on our blog, and 4) creating a coalition for diversity for local PR and communications firms and agencies to declare their commitment to improving diversity and inclusion.

- Paired five students with mentors from diverse backgrounds, with the intent of continuing this program through the PRSSA-LB chapter ([A30](#)).
- Collected 25 personal stories to post on Diversity LB's blog, share on social and publish in our e-book ([A16](#)).
- Outreached to 109 local PR and communications firms and agencies, informing them about the campaign and the *Diverse Voices* initiative, resulting in nine firms that joined Diversity LB's Coalition for Diversity ([A31](#)).

Diversity LB’s campaign was centered on accomplishing our client’s goals and was rooted in our primary and secondary research findings. We successfully **educated** the community about the lack of diversity in the PR and communications fields by accumulating more than 115,000 impressions through earned, owned and shared media during our campaign. We **motivated** our audience to be an active part of the change and take action by raising over \$200 to purchase *Diverse Voices* and donate to the PRSA Foundation. We gathered a powerful community that desired to **participate** in the movement to improve the racial diversity in the workforce by creating a mentorship program, hosting networking opportunities and empowering students to use their voice in sharing their personal stories of diversity.

This campaign was more than working with a client to accomplish a goal. We saw it as an opportunity to educate, motivate and empower our Long Beach and surrounding communities to play a significant role in evolving the field of PR and communications. We aimed to create a program with an impact that would last longer than the duration of our campaign—which will be sustained by continuing the mentorship program through our PRSSA-LB chapter with the goal of increasing diverse rising talent.

Budget.....

We successfully remained under budget by spending \$279 on out-of-pocket expenses and receiving \$962 of in-kind donations.

Expenses	
Item	Cost
Domain Name	\$22.00
Printing	\$20.00
Facebook Sponsored ad	\$30.00
Candy and props for Valentine's	\$7.00
T-Shirts	\$29.00
T-Shirt printing	\$42.00
Valentine's props	\$9.00
Table-top decorations	\$10.00
Pasta for world-record event	\$30.00
SurveyMonkey	\$35.00
Starbucks giftcards	\$25.00
Snacks for roundtable	\$20.00

Total: \$279.00

In-Kind Donations		
Item	Donor	Cost
49er Shops Swag	49er Shops	\$45.00
100 Stickers	Long Beach Graphix	\$100.00
Banner	Long Beach Graphix	\$62.00
Catering for Dirtbags game	Naples Rib Co.	\$150.00
Tables and chairs	Party Coast Rentals	\$300.00
Aquarium tickets	Aquarium of the Pacific	\$60.00
Ralphs giftcard	Ralphs	\$20.00
Cake for Dirtbags game	Porto's	\$30.00
PRSSA-LA Panel costs	PRSSA-LA	\$20.00
Diversity in PR Panel Tickets	LBSU JPR Department	\$175.00

Total:

\$962.00

