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For Immediate Release

Assistant vice president for the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences used the land grant campaign as an example to present public relations to students.

Using a multistep planning process, Ruth Borger utilized the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act celebration to explain how a public relations campaign is developed from research to evaluation.

“There is a perceived lack of understanding of the land grant university,” Borger said.

The campaign was designed to educate stakeholders on the importance of the land grant university. Research was completed to assess the public’s knowledge of the land grant system. These results were used to help communicate to the public why the land grant mission and the university are unique, she said.

“Doing this type of planning is what makes you different, it brings you ahead of the class and distinguishes yourself as a public relations professional,” Borger said.

Planning the target audience and the key message were the first steps in the implementation of the campaign. One of the main goals of this year’s celebration was to incorporate all colleges and departments at UF, Borger said.

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The strategy communicates how the entire university was impacted by the Morrill Act, and that it was not limited to improving agriculture and mechanical arts, Borger said.

The campaign is being used to reflect on the past, celebrate the present and focus on the future of UF. The message shows that the land grant institution is constantly changing to bring higher education to meet all citizen needs through teaching, research and outreach in today's society, Borger said.

"The outcome is having a greater awareness and understanding of what it means to be a land grant institution," Borger said.

The message was included in multiple media platforms to show the importance of UF as a land grant university. The land grant logo was designed to demonstrate the identity of the campaign. It was incorporated in special events, various media, university publications and multiple seminars, Borger said.

"The real way that we will make a difference is in 3 or 4 years from now," Borger said. "People will say, 'that is the University of Florida, the land grant university of our state.'"

By evaluating public perceptions of this, campaign managers are able to analyze how people's knowledge of the Morrill Act and the land grant institution have changed throughout the duration of the campaign. The campaign should produce an impression on people so they will recognize UF programs and use their resources, Borger said

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