



CUPRAP

CUPP Awards Submission Guide

The CUPP Awards recognize outstanding creative excellence in higher education marketing and communications. When submitting your work, select the parent category that best fits your entry. Within each category, you'll find specific subcategories for specialized projects.

Parent and Subcategories

DIGITAL MEDIA

Showcasing creative and strategic use of digital platforms.

- AI Generative Design
- Email Design/Campaign
- Interactive Media
- Long-Form Video >2:00 min
- Podcast
- Short-Form Video <2:00 min
- Social Media Campaign
- Standalone Post
- Website - Redesign/Refresh
- Website Feature

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Recognizing excellence in messaging from senior leadership.

- Opinion/Op-Ed/Blog
- Speech Writing/Remarks

MARKETING / ADVERTISING

Honoring strategies designed to attract, promote and persuade.

- Comprehensive Brand Campaign
- Digital Advertising Campaign
- Environmental Design
- Outdoor
- Print
- Promotional Item

OUTREACH

Recognizing work that builds connection and promotes engagement with specific audiences.

- Admissions Communications
- Advancement Communications
- Athletic Communications
- Campaign Communications
- Covers
- Magazines

PRINT

Highlighting creativity and excellence in printed materials.

- Brochures
- Postcards, Posters and Flyers

PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNICATIONS

Celebrating strategic storytelling, reputation management and audience engagement.

- Public Relations Campaigns
- Special Events/Virtual Events

VISUAL COMMUNICATION / DESIGN

Showcasing visual creativity and brand storytelling through imagery, design and layout

- Feature Photo
- Illustrations and Mixed Media
- News/Event/Sports Photo

WILD CARD

Creative, innovative or unconventional communications and marketing projects that do not fit neatly into another CUPPIE category that demonstrate a clear objective and exceptional execution.

WRITING

Honoring excellence in written storytelling, clarity, and tone.

- Long Form Story (more than 1,000 words)
- Short-Form Story (less than 1,000 words)

Tips for a Strong Submission

- Choose the category that best reflects the project's primary goal or medium.
- Clearly describe your objectives, strategy, and the measurable results you achieved.
- Upload high-quality visuals or links that demonstrate the final product.
- Keep your entry narrative concise.

Category	Description
Digital Media	Showcasing creative and strategic use of digital platforms.
AI Generative Design	Creative work where generative artificial intelligence played a significant role in developing the final visual, written, audio or multimedia product.
Email Design/Campaign	Individual emails or coordinated email communications designed and distributed in HTML format, including newsletters, marketing emails, recruitment communications, invitations or other audience-focused email content.
Interactive Media	Interactive digital experiences designed for active audience participation or engagement, including user-navigated features, tools, maps, multimedia presentations or other interactive content.
Long-Form Video >2:00 min	Video content longer than two minutes created to inform, engage, educate or tell a compelling story.
Podcast	A podcast episode or series produced to inform, educate, entertain or engage.
Short-Form Video <2:00 min	Video content under two minutes created for social media, digital campaigns, institutional storytelling, promotion or audience engagement.
Social Media Campaign	A series of social media content developed around a shared objective, audience, message or initiative, demonstrating strategy across multiple posts rather than a single piece of content.
Standalone Post	A social media post that demonstrates exceptional creativity, storytelling, engagement or strategic execution.
Website - Redesign/Refresh	A significant redesign or refresh of an institutional website or major section of a website, including improvements to design, user experience, navigation, content strategy and/or functionality.
Website Feature	A specific website feature, microsite, landing page, interactive element or digital experience (beyond feature writing) developed to accomplish a particular communications or marketing objective.

Category	Description
Executive Communications	Recognizing excellence in messaging from senior leadership.
Opinion/Op-Ed/Blog	An opinion piece, commentary, op-ed or blog written for or by an institution's senior leader that effectively communicates a point of view, advances an institutional priority or contributes to a broader public conversation.
Speech Writing/Remarks	Prepared speeches, addresses (video or public), talking points or formal remarks by an institution's senior leader, demonstrating clear messaging and effectiveness for the intended audience and occasion
Marketing/Advertising	Honoring strategies designed to attract, promote and persuade.
Comprehensive Brand Campaign	A coordinated effort to establish, evolve or strengthen an institution, unit, program or initiative's brand through strategic messaging, visual identity and/or audience engagement.
Digital Advertising Campaign	Paid advertising created for digital channels, including display, search, social, streaming or other online platforms as a single placement or coordinated initiative.
Environmental Design	Design created for physical spaces, including signage, displays, exhibits, installations, wayfinding, campus environments or other place-based experiences.
Outdoor	Advertising or promotional creative designed for outdoor placement, including billboards, transit advertising, banners, digital displays and other out-of-home media.
Print	Advertisements created specifically for placement in printed publications or other print advertising channels.
Promotional Item	A branded physical item created to promote an institution, program, campaign, event or initiative, demonstrating creativity and effective integration of brand or message.

Category	Description
Outreach	Recognizing work that builds connection and promotes engagement with specific audiences.
Admissions Communications	A campaign, viewbook, initiative or coordinated set of communications designed to recruit, engage, inform or influence prospective students and their families.
Advancement Communications	Communications created to engage alumni, donors and other advancement audiences, including fundraising, stewardship, alumni engagement and donor communications, but excluding magazines.
Athletic Communications	Communications or marketing created to promote collegiate athletics, student-athletes, teams, events or athletic programs and engage fans or other key audiences.
Campaign Communications	Communications and marketing supporting a major institutional fundraising initiative or campaign, including case materials, donor communications, digital content and supporting collateral.
Covers	A cover created for a magazine, publication, report or other institutional piece that demonstrates exceptional visual concept, design and ability to engage the audience.
Magazines	A recurring or standalone institutional or divisional magazine.
Print	Highlighting creativity and excellence in printed materials.
Brochures	A printed brochure or booklet created to communicate information, promote an institution or program, support recruitment or fundraising, or engage a specific audience.
Postcards, Posters and Flyers	Individual printed postcard, poster or flyer or a series created for promotional, informational, recruitment, fundraising or engagement purposes.

Category	Description
Public Relations and Communications	Celebrating strategic storytelling, reputation management and audience engagement.
Public Relations Campaigns	A strategic communications or media relations campaign designed to build awareness, influence perception, manage reputation or engage key audiences around an institution, issue or initiative.
Special Events/Virtual Events	Communications and marketing supporting an in-person, hybrid or virtual event. Entries may include the overall event communications strategy and supporting materials used to attract, inform and engage participants.
Visual Communication/Design	Showcasing visual creativity and brand storytelling through imagery, design and layout
Feature Photo	A photograph created primarily for storytelling or feature purposes that demonstrates strong composition, creativity, technical quality and ability to convey a compelling moment or narrative.
Illustrations and Mixed Media	Original illustration or design created to communicate an idea, enhance storytelling or support an institutional communications or marketing project.
News/Event/Sports Photo	A single photograph documenting a newsworthy moment, campus event, athletic competition or other real-time activity.
Wildcard	Creative, innovative or unconventional communications and marketing projects that do not fit neatly into another CUPPIE category that demonstrate a clear objective and exceptional execution.
Writing	Honoring excellence in written storytelling, clarity and tone.
Long Form Story (more than 1,000 words)	A feature, profile, narrative or other written story of more than 1,000 words that demonstrates exceptional storytelling, reporting, organization, voice and audience engagement.
Short-Form Story (less than 1,000 words)	A feature, profile, news story or other written piece of fewer than 1,000 words that demonstrates concise, compelling storytelling and effective communication.