

# Storytelling Framework (revised 1-14-25)

As LSU's Marketing & Communications team, we provide leadership, strategy, and support in the telling of LSU's story. This framework outlines our goals, audiences, priority areas, and guidelines to standardize and align storytelling across campus.

## Our Guiding Principle: We Build Teams That Win

A team must successfully overcome a challenge to become a winning team. Our stories identify societal needs, opportunities, or problems to be solved and report how LSU is rising to those challenges and involving students, faculty, researchers, and strategic partners in finding solutions.

Our stories use a tone that is confident and consistently optimistic, using clear and concise language that is understandable to all. The challenges and LSU's solutions are always at the forefront of our stories. LSU is not the hero of the story but the force that makes the heroes — our winning teams — succeed.

Our stories comprise long and short written pieces, videos, photos & galleries, social media posts, graphic designs, and web elements. All areas and disciplines are at the table and contribute throughout the story-planning process.

## Brand Areas of Focus

Our stories reflect our Brand Areas of Focus:

- **Academic Reputation & Differentiation** (Theme: Only at LSU)
- **Research & Pentagon Priorities** (Theme: The Problems We Solve)
- **Desire to Attend LSU & Affiliate with the Brand** (Theme: LSU Aligns with My Goals & Values)
- **LSU's Value to the State** (Theme: LSU Is the Engine for Growth and Prosperity in Louisiana)

## Finding Stories

- **Outreach Across Campus:** Our communications team works collaboratively with campus communicators from strategic departments and divisions to identify research and other stories. Key components of these collaborations include:
  - Fostering a consolidated storytelling plan that includes the partners' key objectives, aligned with LSU's overall Brand Areas of Focus
  - Identifying differentiators that set each department or division apart.

- Collaborating on stories that advance key priorities, creatively building on department-level content to reach larger audiences.
- **Other Avenues for Identifying stories**
  - Review LSU websites and media mentions.
  - Review social media for relevant topics.
  - Explore the research stories other institutions are sharing.
  - Pair story ideas with Awareness Months, Weeks, and National Days, Observances, Federal Holidays, etc.
  - Find trending topics or news items and interview faculty members for LSU Experts Q&As.

## Strategic Storytelling

### **LSU Stories is where our AUDIENCES**

- Prospective Students & Families
- Current Students & Families
- Donors
- Alumni
- Internal
- Legislators
- Board of Supervisors

### **FIND STORIES THAT ...**

- highlight problems and solutions, including showing how LSU students are part of the work and the value the work has on the state;
- highlight how the work being done elevates the state and its people, thereby impacting the world;
- highlight the teams, people, motivations, and results behind the headlines;
- drive understanding, pride, and appreciation of what LSU stands for and its contributions to our communities, state, nation, and world.

### **AND SHOW PROOF THAT ...**

- our research solves problems;
- we provide a unique education experience and academic excellence;
- we offer value to Louisiana that can also be applied to the world;
- we foster a thriving campus and support students;
- LSU is more than athletics.

## Types of Stories

- **Research Stories** - Faculty and student research that addresses societal issues, meets market needs, and impacts the state, nation, and world.  
Stories should:
  - Address the problem and the solution and showcases the impact of the solution and how it benefits the state and world;
  - Highlight student involvement;
  - Be written in an understandable, relatable, and interesting way to the general audience of non-experts;
  - Focus on impact and value to the state;
  - Not be a research report.
  - **EXAMPLE:** [The Future of ADHD Treatment? LSU's VR Research Aims to Help Students Focus and Succeed](#)
- **LSU Experts** – Insights on current events; often in a Q&A format for efficiency, readability, and to help open doors to media placement.
  - **EXAMPLE:** [Early Sales, Economic Stress, and 'Doom Spending': LSU's Dan Rice on 2024 Holiday Shopping Trends](#)
- **Community Impact Stories** – Non-research ways LSU teams positively impact our students and communities, as well as the state, nation, and world.
  - **EXAMPLE:** [LSU Helps Preserve Louisiana French Through Hands-On Student Initiatives](#)
- **Faculty & Staff Profiles** - Stories of passionate, highly acclaimed faculty and staff, the teams they're part of, and their impact on students, Louisiana, and the world at large.
  - **EXAMPLE:** [At LSU, Steve Caparotta Instructs the Next Generation of Coastal Meteorologists](#)
- **Student Profiles** - Stories of diverse, engaged and successful students.
  - **EXAMPLE:** [In Football and Sepsis Research, LSU's Jake Davis Finds Precision and Teamwork Equal Success](#)

## Storytelling Checklist

- Have a Purpose** for telling the story, based on our Brand Areas of Focus
- Identify Your Audience(s)** and make your story meaningful to them
- Have a Plan to Reach Your Audience(s):** Identify the channels best suited to reaching your specific audience(s)
- Make It Matter:** Explain the challenge or problem to be solved, why it matters, and LSU's role in helping address it.
- Make It Personal:** Make an emotional connection with your audiences through personal stories that go beyond the facts and incorporate the motivation, inspiration, and humanity that drive your subjects and their work.

- ❑ **Prove It:** Provide proof points and concrete evidence of success — or a clear progression toward future success. Give your audience(s) a reason to believe.
- ❑ **Differentiation:** Reveal how and why the work being performed is inherent to LSU, and how we can meet the need unlike anyone else.
- ❑ **Tell What Happens Next**
- ❑ **Have a Call to Action:** Determine what you want your audience to do next and provide a path or link to do it. (To learn more, contact us, share with others, donate, engage with us, etc.) MarComm has made two CTA assets available in Omni to go at the very bottom of your stories:
  - Blog CTA – Next Step SFA Main Site (“Visit the Scholarship First site”)
  - Blog CTA – Next Step Admissions (“Learn how you can become an LSU Tiger”)