BRANDING THE
CAL POLY TRANSFER CENTER

Standardized brand guide and workflow for a newly established academic center

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PROJECT ISSUED: 06.02.2022
IRB STATEMENT

This project uses research from Cal Poly students as subjects, but the data does not reveal the identify of subjects, nor is the data identifiable to any subject. Users will not be associated with any data points, and therefore this project does not need to be reviewed by the California State Polytechnic University Review Board.
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ABOUT ME

Hello! My name is Ryann Swift and I am a fourth-year majoring in Graphic Communication, and concentrating in Design Reproduction Technology. I’d like to say I’ve always had a passion for design; whether it was in the form of a Magna Doodle, or in a project like this. With that, I will let the pages speak for themselves... thank you.
ABSTRACT

The Cal Poly Transfer Center was established in 2020 in the midst of an ongoing pandemic; naturally, this led to the challenge of building recognition and engaging Transfer students with the center. As the first and only graphic designer, I saw an opportunity in creating the visual foundation for this organization, one that could be well understood and built upon by future designers. This is important as the Transfer Center is quite unique in its specific demographic of transfer students; they fall under an older age group and I want to create said foundation that reflects this; mature, professional, modern. Unlike other centers that are well established, the Transfer Center must really show who they are these beginning years in order to retain longevity—which makes the center’s brand that much more crucial in terms of making a name and face for ourselves. On the other hand of this is the importance in making this foundation a standardized guide, one that could be viewed and well understood. This ensures brand consistency and a strong, cultivated standard for all Transfer Center graphic designers.
PROBLEM STATEMENT

Due to the recent development of the Transfer Center, there is challenge in brand creation within a virtual turned in-person space and audience; building recognition is vital in ensuring longevity of the center.

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

By the end of Spring Quarter, I, the sole graphic designer, will utilize a realistic work breakdown and timeline to ensure the first standardized brand and workflow for the Cal Poly Transfer Center, that will be used by future graphic designers.
SCOPE OF WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Guide</th>
<th>Marketing Templates</th>
<th>Workflow Standard</th>
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<td>Adapt to University branding</td>
<td>Analysis of current state</td>
<td>Develop Strategy</td>
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<td>Color scheme</td>
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<td>Typography</td>
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<td>Brand voice</td>
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<td>Communicate with future designer</td>
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<td>Brand logo</td>
<td>Work with mentor to emphasize brand values</td>
<td>Establish file storage for proper output</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand graphic elements</td>
<td>Distinguish what to alter within overall brand for each yearly and quarterly event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create editable files for fixed projects</td>
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</tbody>
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| Physical mediums | Digital mediums |
## WORK TIMELINE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Start</th>
<th>End</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>April '22</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Brand Guide</td>
<td>04/11/22</td>
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<td>04/11/22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing Templates</td>
<td>04/25/22</td>
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<td><strong>May '22</strong></td>
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<td>Full scope of events</td>
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<td>Develop structure of fixed projects</td>
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**PAGE 5**
DELIVERABLE 1: BRAND GUIDE
ABOUT THE TRANSFER CENTER

MISSION STATEMENT

“Empowering and supporting transfer students to succeed and thrive at Cal Poly while advancing institutional support for transfer students.”

CENTER GOALS

Resources:
Provide and connect students to on- and off-campus resources.

Community:
Foster a sense of belonging and community for transfer students within and across colleges.

Advocacy:
From application to graduation, advocate for more transfer inclusive policies, practices, events, and language. Increase campus-wide awareness for how to support and include transfer students within the Cal Poly community.
ADAPTING TO UNIVERSITY BRANDING

Designing for a University is designing under parameters of an existing brand. Based on this, I utilized the aspects of what makes a transfer student as a cornerstone for brand choices.

CENTERED IN CALIFORNIA.
CENTRAL TO THE WORLD.

TYPOGRAPHY CHOICE
Source Sans
= professional, mature

COLOR CHOICES
Poly Green
Farmer’s Market
Poly Canyon
= boldness, strength
RESULTING LOGO

San Luis Obispo is quite notable for its scenery—specifically, the three main peaks of the Cal Poly “P”, Cerro San Luis Obispo (Madonna) and Bishops Peak.

With this, I combined my “slocal” knowledge with my already triangular design to create a logo that showcases both a personal homage to the city of SLO, as well as the growth and transition that enriches the Transfer Student experience.

On a technical level, university-branded colors were arranged in a gradient fashion to emphasize this growth, and the center’s official name is aligned below to allow for versatility in logo placement.

Given the adaptive nature, the Transfer Brand is simple: include logo that is University-approved and well-aligned. The graphic element subtask to be quite dependent on future deliverables...
SUCCESS MONITOR

The success of this logo was determined by an anonymous survey for Transfer Students in the center over the course of two weeks. Survey displayed a strong positive response.

Transfer Center Brand

Hello, I am the center’s graphic design student assistant and I want your opinion for my senior project! Below is a brand perception survey to understand how Transfer Center attendees and employees perceive the center’s brand. Please fill all required areas to ensure you’re considered in the center’s visual identity! Thank you.

SURVEY RESPONSE SAMPLE

How were you first acquainted with our brand?

20 responses

- 40% In-person, in the physical center
- 10% In-person, in an event setting
- 10% Virtually, on social media or website
- 40% Virtually, in an event setting

With all things considered, how much do you currently identify with the Transfer Center brand as a whole?

20 responses

When you see our brand logo, what comes to mind? (In the form of a short sentence or list of adjectives)

20 responses

- Growth and support
- Very green and yellow, nature
- Same answer
- Cohesive, sleek, comforting
- Multilayered, simple
- Resources, helpful, graduating
- Cal poly colors
- Considerate and passionate
- Helpful, creative, kindness, and safety
DELIVERABLE 2:

MARKETING TEMPLATES
ANALYZING CURRENT STATE

Given the short-life of this center, there has been a trial-and-error approach to events for this first in-person year, resulting in too many events including:

- National Transfer Student Week
- Weekly Transfer Talks
- Weekly Social Events
- Study Breaks
- Transfer Hangouts
- Partnerships
  + more
CONSOLIDATION STRATEGY

With all of these events considered, I worked with my mentor and boss, to focus on how we can consolidate these events into marketed materials that are QUARTER-SPECIFIC.

The idea is simple:

3 Quarters (Fall, Winter, Spring)
10 weeks each quarter with finals week
1 event/week

With heavy-information for content, engagement of transfer students became priority—for this, I decided to brand each quarter within the Transfer Center Brand.
RESULTING TEMPLATES

FALL QUARTER

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

WEEK 5

WEEK 6

WEEK 7

WEEK 8

WEEK 9

WEEK 10

FALL'23 TRANSFER EVENTS

LEGEND

SOCIAL

TRANSFER TALK

ACADEMIC

PROFESSIONAL

FINALS WEEK

WINTER QUARTER

Winter 2023 TRANSFER EVENT SCHEDULE

LEGEND

SOCIAL

TRANSFER TALK

ACADEMIC

PROFESSIONAL

SPRING QUARTER

TRANSFER SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEEK 1

WEEK 2

WEEK 3

WEEK 4

WEEK 5

WEEK 6

WEEK 7

WEEK 8

WEEK 9

WEEK 10

FINALS WEEK

TRANSFER 2023
SUCCESS MONITOR

While subjective, the success of these marketed templates was measured by the likeness of my boss and mentor, Heather Domonoske— the Transfer Center Coordinator.

In addition, I presented these new graphics to survey responders for design preference. Out of 20 responses, the preference for minimalist and maximalist was split, and equally favored.

SURVEY RESPONSE SAMPLE

The Transfer Center has annual events that call for numerous marketing materials. Below are flyers from various events, showing various design styles. Please choose your desired preference.

- Minimalist approach with lots of white space and few graphic elements
- Maximalist approach with great use of color and graphic elements

50% Minimalist approach with lots of white space and few graphic elements
50% Maximalist approach with great use of color and graphic elements
DELIVERABLE 3:

WORKFLOW STANDARD
FOR THE FUTURE

While the work presented has given a new center a reliable brand, my position as a graduating senior means this brand and approach to projects needs to be not only used, but learned.

A standard is needed, detailing the design process from ideation to output for various projects.
PROJECT APPROACH

Under the assumption that there is a new graphic designer to train, there needs to be a standardized workflow process to follow for fixed and variable projects.

**Fixed:**
Predetermined, consistent design

**Variable:**
Undetermined, inconsistent design

**FIXED PROJECT APPROACH**

1. Obtain necessary information from coordinator
2. Input information into fixed marketing template
3. Make adjustments as needed for sake of text flow
4. Output to physical and digital mediums depending on needs

**VARIABLE PROJECT APPROACH**

1. Obtain necessary information from coordinator
2. Design several iterations for feedback
3. Go through iteration process until satisfied with resulting design
4. Output to physical and digital mediums depending on needs
DELIVERABLE ISSUE/MITIGATION

Following the timeline of this project unfortunately doesn’t align with the timeline that is set by the budget and faculty of Academic Advising. Simply put, the center doesn’t have a new designer that I can train.

To mitigate this, we are strongly pushing our designer job posting and awaiting applicants to interview.

Until a new designer is hired, I will continue working through some of the summer to ease the transition and establish a storage solution that is conducive with system changes.
PROJECT REFLECTION

WHAT WENT WELL

**WBS/ Gantt chart:**
It really helped me to see a visual structure of my project, one that could be compartmentalized so that your are having micro completions that follow one another. While doing this, seeing a set timeline for each of these enabled me to take this project day-by-day, allowing me to optimize my energy for each task.

**Success Monitors:**
The idea of having specific units of measurement was something I was a little ignorant of; but it makes all the difference to see genuine progress rather than just believing it is there. Through various forms of monitors including survey response and weekly meetings, I was able to track the effectiveness of my work, which served as a motivator.

**Outside Perspective:**
As someone who was a non-transfer student, designing for a transfer audience, it was crucial to satisfy this smaller sample size to ensure much-needed perspective that could keep me going on the right track.
WHAT COULD HAVE GONE BETTER

Creating graphic elements in addition to my logo under my first deliverable of a brand guide. I realized that because of my strict parameters of Unviersity Marketing, that the Transfer Center’s brand guide wouldn’t look too different from Cal Poly’s. Logo aside, I struggled to come up with elements that could be present within all marketing materials, without the consistency creating a monotonous tone that could lose engagement. As said in my presentation, this challenge became very present when designing templates where I wanted to create three distinct sub-brands for each quarter.

Collecting survey response. Due to the fact that I was designing for a transfer student demographic, I really wanted to cater to their needs which required their thoughtful feedback on my work. Although the responses I received were very insightful, I found myself struggling to receive more than twenty responses on my form as it was difficult to reach out to solely transfer students outside of the center.

Training a new designer. This subtask of my third deliverable was simply impossible to achieve in time and that was out of my control, unfortunately. What comes with working for a new center with no staff turn-around procedure, is instability. The center was simply not in a position to hire quite yet, which led me unable to train or familairize a new designer with my brand creation.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank the Graphic Communication department for four years of enriched education, and for the opportunity to connect with friends and faculty. I am leaving Cal Poly with a network to last a lifetime.

And of course, a thank you to my loving family for their unwavering support. As this chapter closes, the mantra remains: Why not me?