

UNIVERSITY *of* MISSOURI

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

Date: June 20, 2014

To: Chancellor's Staff, Provost's Staff, Deans and Communication Directors

From: R. Bowen Loftin

Re: The Mizzou "Brand"

Since arriving at the University of Missouri four months ago, I have learned that the Mizzou brand is strong. I have met thousands of students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of MU. Everywhere I go, if I start a conversation with M-I-Z, I receive a resounding Z-O-U! The stacked black and gold MU reflects our history, traditions and academic culture, while the Tiger logo celebrates our proud mascot and athletic successes. For all audiences, we display our beloved icons—the six Ionic Columns and Memorial Union—that mark our campus as unique. All of this together constitutes our brand, one that depicts an AAU, model, public land-grant university.

The first true encounter with Mizzou for many is the university website or one of the many websites representing our units. I am concerned about the lack of consistency and confusion regarding these websites. Today, websites bring the world to Mizzou and, conversely, showcase Mizzou to the world. Our sites give us an opportunity to make a strong first impression on thousands of prospective students, faculty, supporters, partners and donors. However, if our websites are confusing, inconsistent, contain outdated or incorrect information, then that first impression may be negative.

The University of Missouri's University Affairs Division (soon to be the Division of Marketing and Communication) has established guidelines and standards for usability, brand consistency, and/or compliance with ADA requirements (see <http://identity.missouri.edu/about-mizzou-identity/index.php>). It is my understanding, however, that some websites have been developed and are being maintained using outside vendors, freelancers and/or consultants.

The Office of Web Communications is responsible for developing some of the most prominent and heavily trafficked websites at MU. This office also provides website development and maintenance service for units outside the Division of University Affairs. Therefore, in order to assure consistency of branding standards on MU's websites, effective immediately, I am asking Lori Croy, director of Web Communications, to approve all hiring of any external consultants who may be engaged to build or manage official University of Missouri websites or social-media accounts. Lori and her staff will work with each unit to ensure that consultants are aware of all university branding, usability, security and accessibility standards and that they are required to meet these standards in order to be compensated for their services.

I intend for these steps to move us toward a more consistently branded online environment and to improve the overall message and impression we convey to our audiences. All of us comprising this great university are stronger when we join together under the MU or Mizzou brand. Our Web presence must be cohesive, powerful and properly branded. We want everyone who visits us online to have a positive experience and see the best of Mizzou in the same way they do when they visit our beautiful campus.

Thank you for your cooperation.

