PIERPONT COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE
BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Advancement and Public Relations Committee Meeting

Tuesday, September 23, 2025
1:30 PM

Pierpont's Advanced Technology Center (ATC)
500 Galliher Drive
Fairmont, WV 26554
Room 216A

AGENDA

I.   **Call to Order**

II.   ***Approval of Minutes – May 13 and June 17, 2025**   *Tab 1*

III.   **Foundation Update**
        (Kathy Hypes, Pierpont Foundation Director)

IV.   **Day of Giving Planning**
        (Kathy Hypes, Pierpont Foundation Director)

V.   **Website Vendor Proposal**
        (Stefanie Moore, Director of Marketing)

VI.   **Marketing Plan Update**
        (Stefanie Moore, Director of Marketing)

VII.   **Adjournment**

*Denotes possible action item

Tab 1

<p style="text-align:center; color:brown;">**PIERPONT COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE**
BOARD OF GOVERNORS</p>

Advancement and Public Relations Committee Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 2025
1:30 PM

Pierpont's Advanced Technology Center (ATC)
500 Galliher Drive
Fairmont, WV 26554
Room 216A

MINUTES

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the Pierpont Community & Technical College (Pierpont) Board of Governors Advancement and Public Relations Committee was held on May 13, 2025, beginning at 1:30 PM. The meeting was conducted in person at the Advanced Technology Center in Fairmont, WV. Advanced announcement of this meeting was posted on the WV Secretary of State's Meeting Notices Webpage.

Committee Members Present: Lisa Lang – Committee Chair, Christine Miller, Juanita Nickerson, and Joanne Seasholtz

Committee Members Absent: Jessica Killon

Other Board Members Present: Thomas Cole, Vickie Findley, David Hinkle, and Jeffrey Powell

Others Present: Members of the President's Cabinet, faculty, staff, and others

I. Call to Order

Lisa Lang called the meeting to order at 1:34 PM.

II. Approval of Minutes – February 18, 2025

Joanne Seasholtz moved to approve the February 18, 2025 meeting minutes. Christine Miller seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

III. Marketing and Branding Update

Stefanie Moore introduced Alex Casey as the new Assistant Director of Marketing and presented the Marketing and Branding Update (**Attachment A**).

Discussion included the importance of allowing sufficient lead time for marketing and event promotion, with a recommended timeframe of 3–4 weeks in advance. Invitations should follow a similar timeline. Additional items discussed included program-specific billboards,

highlighting two-year educational pathways such as dual enrollment that allow students to graduate and enter the workforce earning competitive wages, and the potential to partner with local businesses for joint advertising efforts. A monthly spotlight segment on WDTV was also suggested as a promotional opportunity.

IV.   Adjournment

There being no further business, Christine Miller moved to adjourn the meeting. Joanne Seasholtz seconded the motion. All agreed. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted by Amanda N. Hawkinberry

Mission Statement: To provide accessible, responsive, comprehensive education that works
Vision: To empower individuals and strengthen communities through exceptional training and educational pathways
Tagline: Education that works!

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MARKETING AND BRANDING REFRESH
AT PIERPONT

Empathy-Driven Marketing and Branding Strategy

1

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Higher Education is at a crossroads. Everyone has different perceptions of it, and prospective students debate whether college is worth it. There is an opportunity to make a larger impact, be innovative, and show that college matters.

One way is through the brand, marketing, and communications. Showing the community empathy. Empathy is one of the most powerful tools for building relationships.

Pierpont Community & Technical College has progressed a lot in its 51-year history. Pierpont is now where it can establish itself as Pierpont Community & Technical College, a college focused on the community it serves.

With a focus on empathy in the branding, marketing, and communications, Pierpont can stand out of a loud, crowded market with a brand that is authentic, distinctive, and personal.

2

EMPATHY-DRIVEN BRANDING

Branding is more than a logo and tagline: "It's how people feel when they think about the brand. It's the story they tell themselves about who you are and what you stand for." (Heart over Hype, 2025).

We need to build a brand that means something and makes people feel something they won't forget. To do so, we have to start with our audience. What do we currently mean to them and how can we improve that or enhance it?

3

EMPATHY-DRIVEN BRANDING

Empathy-driven branding replaces shouting the loudest with showing your audience that you actually get them. Higher education is an emotional decision. It's personal.

Authenticity, distinctiveness, and resonance are the backbone of any strong brand.

4

EMPATHY-DRIVEN MARKETING

Empathy-driven marketing focuses on customers by seeking to understand their emotional needs and viewpoints. This approach requires businesses to step into the customer's perspective, recognizing their challenges, and customizing marketing strategies to align with their values and feelings. By showing true concern and understanding, this method cultivates deeper connections and enhances loyalty.

This allows us to:

• Connect with audiences on their values and feelings.

• Understand the audience's needs and values.

• Understand the deeper context of their actions.

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THE OPPORTUNITY

• Improve brand consistency.
• Create better awareness touchpoints for prospective students.
• Deepen student connections through empathy.
• Promote all of Pierpont's offerings.
• Refresh the institutional image.

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THE GOALS

- Increased enrollment.
- Improved student retention.
- Increased awareness of Pierpont and all of its offerings.
- Stronger alumni engagement.
- More effective marketing spend.

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STUDENT MESSAGING

- Prospective students need to see themselves. They need to see real stories, struggles, and triumphs.
- Messages need to reflect the nuanced reality of your audience's lives.
- We need to forge deeper, more authentic connections with our audiences and avoid using empty buzzwords.
- We need to find out what truly sets us apart and connect those strengths to the people who want and need them.
- They're worried about choosing the right program and calculating how to juggle work, parenting, and school. Instead of "Flexible class schedules available," it's "We know balancing school with work and family is challenging. That's why we offer evening and online classes designed to fit your life, not disrupt it."
- Personalization is more than just adding their name; it's making them feel like you're speaking to them personally.
- Timing matters. Tone matters. Volume matters. And most of all, understanding matters.

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STUDENT JOURNEY **MAP**

- Explore the student's journey, from brand awareness to graduation and beyond.
- Review how students are experiencing Pierpont at every turn.
  - What messages are they receiving?
  - What feelings were they left with?
  - Were we making them feel like they belonged, or were they just another number?
- It's about how you make your audience feel at every step.
- It's also making sure there is the right might, not overwhelming them with too many emails, mailers, calls, etc., but establishing a mix that will address their concerns and provide support without pushing them away.

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BRAND REFRESH

Pierpont has an opportunity to refresh its brand in a way that builds on its student experience and community impact. A brand is campus-wide. It's not just Pierpont's story; it's how the community sees our brand.

Brand Refresh Steps:
- Conduct focus groups
- Interview prospective students, current students, parents, alumni, faculty, and staff.
  - Why did you choose this institution?
  - What's been the most meaningful part of your experience here?
  - How do you describe this college to others?
  - What sets this school apart?
  - What would you say if you had sixty seconds to convince someone to come here?
  - What do you believe makes Pierpont unique?
  - Why did you choose to work, study, or stay here?
  - What stories stand out to you as proof of our impact?
- Use the data from the surveys for quantitative and qualitative feedback.

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MARKETING PLAN

Some focuses, outside of the brand refresh:

- Produce high-quality content and remove low-quality content that could drive students away.
- Create a content marketing plan to boost SEO and organic reach.
- Prioritize the message in advertising with very targeted audiences in an omnichannel approach.
- Build out personas for key programs within each school.
- Create a social media plan utilizing user-generated content and community building.
- Build simpler touchpoints for prospective students to note their interest.
- Strategically work with local news companies for advertising for better public reach.
- Re-engage alumni and create a plan for capturing their contact information before they graduate.
- Highlight current student's stories, showing it is possible and highlight alumni's successes to show outcomes.
- Local sponsorship and advertising to reach the 13-service region community.
- A student ambassador program and a refresh of the use of the mascot.

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NEXT STEPS

- Audit the messaging through an empathy lens.
- Map out the student's journey from brand awareness to graduation.
- Create a campaign for current students to enroll in classes.
- Conduct focus groups and surveys among the different Pierpont Community audiences.
- Based on the data collected, build out a brand refresh. Data + Empathy = Impact.
- Create the brand personality and voice, crafting Pierpont's story in this voice.
- Review the website for usability and accessibility.
- Create a campaign around "I got in!"/admission to Pierpont.
- Record videos for the different touchpoints across the student's journey and find stories to tell.
- Build the Annual Marketing Plan for FY26.

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CONCLUSION

We have an opportunity to create a brand that reflects where Pierpont stands today and where it aspires to go. By understanding and aligning with its students' aspirations, we can authentically connect with its current and future students.

The marketing, communications, and branding of the college as a whole will be grounded in the community with a consistent, authentic, and empathetic lens.

The refresh will be based on our community and 13-county service region with a campus-wide effort.

As we look to move forward with this, we want to involve the community and help them feel as though they are part of this decision.

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QUESTIONS & CONCERNS?

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<p style="text-align:center">**PIERPONT COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE**
BOARD OF GOVERNORS</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**Advancement and Public Relations Committee Meeting**</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**Tuesday, June 17, 2025**
1:00 PM</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**Pierpont's Advanced Technology Center (ATC)**
500 Galliher Drive
Fairmont, WV 26554
Room 216A</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**MINUTES**</p>

Notice of Meeting

A meeting of the Pierpont Community & Technical College (Pierpont) Board of Governors Advancement and Public Relations Committee was held on June 17, 2025, beginning at 1:00 PM. The meeting was conducted in person at the Advanced Technology Center in Fairmont, WV. Advanced announcement of this meeting was posted on the WV Secretary of State's Meeting Notices Webpage.

Committee Members Present: Jessica Killon, Juanita Nickerson, and Joanne Seasholtz

Committee Members Absent: Lisa Lang and Christine Miller

Other Board Members Present: Thomas Cole and Nathan Weese

Others Present: Members of the President's Cabinet, faculty, staff, and others

I.   Call to Order

Joanne Seasholtz called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM.

II.   Approval of Minutes – May 13, 2025

A quorum was not present. Therefore, the minutes from the May 13 meeting could not be approved.

III.   Marketing Plan FY 2026

Stefanie Moore presented and reviewed the Marketing Plan FY 26 presentation (**Attachment A**) and provided a high-level overview of current marketing strategies and tactics, emphasizing an empathy-driven approach.

The goal of the marketing plan is to position Pierpont as a leading higher education option by promoting an empathetic brand that enhances enrollment and overall presence. The four primary marketing objectives are:

1. Increase enrollment
2. Boost brand awareness
3. Host and participate in events
4. Increase website traffic

The primary target audience includes first-time freshmen and adult learners. Secondary audiences include parents, high school counselors and educators, workforce partners, and displaced workers. Tertiary audiences include alumni, community leaders, media, and press.

The marketing team is in the process of updating Pierpont's brand personality and voice to humanize the brand and foster deeper connections with stakeholders. As part of the brand refresh, the team will update the brand style guide and provide training for faculty and staff. The rollout will be strategic and gradual, prioritizing lower-cost but high-impact initiatives. Focus groups will be conducted over the summer to gather feedback.

Regarding the Day of Giving, there was discussion about moving the event to April 1 to align with the college's independence and allow more time for campus engagement. The goal is to raise $65,000. Plans will be announced during the August Meet and Confer, with a finalized plan in place by the end of August.

IV.   Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Amanda N. Hawkinberry

Mission Statement: To provide accessible, responsive, comprehensive education that works
Vision: To empower individuals and strengthen communities through exceptional training and educational pathways
Tagline: Education that works!
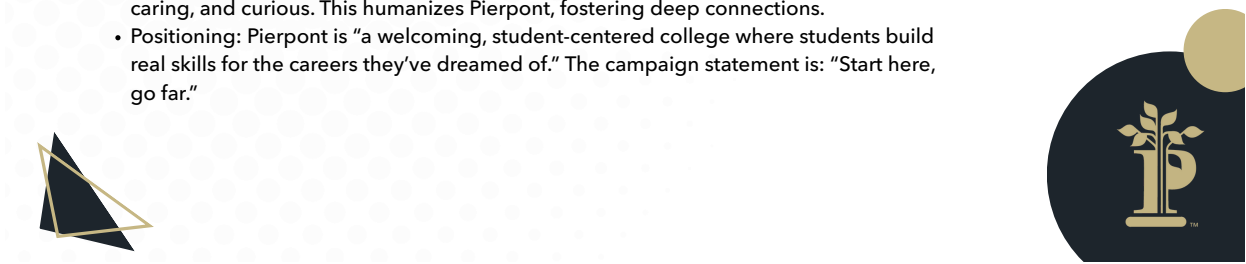
PIERPONT
COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE™

MARKETING PLAN FY 26

Summary for Advancement and Public Relations Committee

MARKETING PLAN SUMMARY

The 2026 FY Marketing Plan focuses on empathy-driven marketing and branding to stand out, build trust, and address key insights:

- Industry Trends: Over the last year, WV's community colleges have been stabilizing with short-term credentials and dual enrollment growth. High demand for healthcare, energy, and advanced manufacturing aligns perfectly with Pierpont's offerings.
- Brand Perception: Many still link us to FSU. We need to clearly define Pierpont as an independent, workforce-focused, accessible, and student-centered institution.
- Brand Personality and Voice: We're passionate, authentic, collaborative, optimistic, caring, and curious. This humanizes Pierpont, fostering deep connections.
- Positioning: Pierpont is "a welcoming, student-centered college where students build real skills for the careers they've dreamed of." The campaign statement is: "Start here, go far."

MARKETING GOAL

The overarching goal is to position Pierpont Community & Technical College as the leading accessible, community-rooted, and career-ready higher education option in North Central West Virginia by fostering an empathetic, authentic brand that boosts enrollment, enhances community trust, and raises awareness of Pierpont's value and impact. We'll achieve this through four key objectives.

MARKETING OBJECTIVES

Objective 1
Increase new student enrollment by 6% by Fall 2026 (based on the strategic plan) by targeting adult learners and high school graduates through omni-channel campaigns and local partnerships across the 13-county region.

Objective 2
Boost brand awareness by 20% by June 2026 through an empathy-driven storytelling campaign using social media, local media, and alumni/student testimonials.

Objective 3
Host or participate in at least 15 community events by June 2026 to deepen relationships and reinforce Pierpont's role as a trusted, community-rooted institution.

Objective 4
Increase website traffic by 20% and inquiry form submissions by 10% by March 2026 through a mobile-first website redesign, SEO improvements, and targeted digital ads.

TARGET AUDIENCES
PRIMARY

The primary audience will be focused on the two primary categories of prospective students, first time freshmen and the non-traditional adult learner.

First-Time Freshmen (Ages 16–24)
Profile: High school juniors/seniors and recent graduates in the 13-county region, often from middle to lower-income households.

Adult Learners (Ages 24–45)
Profile: Working adults, career changers, and caregivers seeking flexible education options.

TARGET AUDIENCES
SECONDARY

The secondary audience will be focused on the four primary categories, parents, high school counselors and educators, employers and displaced workers.

Parents & Guardians (Ages 35–60)
Profile: Parents of high school students or recent grads, often first-generation college families.

High School Counselors & Educators (Ages 28–60)
Profile: Advisors and instructors guiding students toward college and career paths.

Employers & Workforce Partners (Ages 30–65)
Profile: HR leaders and economic developers in key industries like healthcare, IT, and manufacturing.

Displaced Workers (Ages 30–60)
Profile: Recently unemployed individuals seeking new career paths.

TARGET AUDIENCES
TERTIARY

The tertiary audience will be focused on the three primary categories, alumni, community leaders, and media.
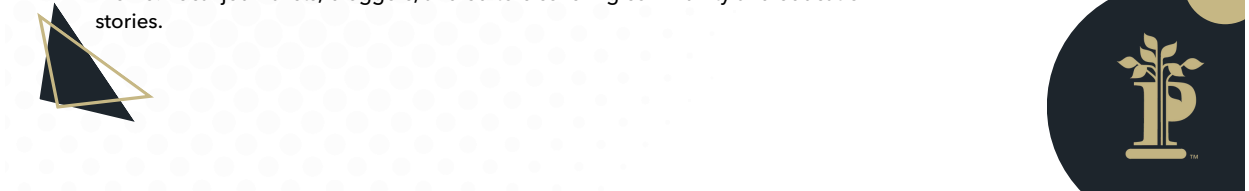
Alumni (Ages 25–65+)
Profile: Graduates with certificates, associate degrees, or transfer credits—mostly local, some national.

Community Leaders & Local Organizations (Ages 35–70)
Profile: Civic leaders, nonprofit directors, and chamber members invested in regional development.

Media & Press (Ages 25–60)
Profile: Local journalists, bloggers, and editors covering community and education stories.

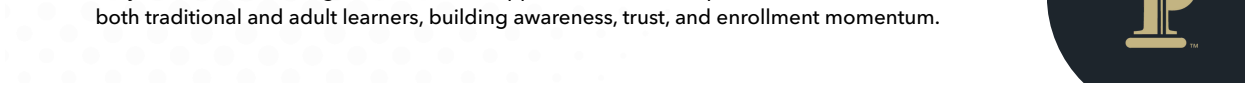# OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS

Objective 1 Summary: Grow Enrollment by 6% by Fall 2026

Goal: Increase new student enrollment by targeting adult learners and high school students across the 13-county region.

Key Strategies:
- Digital Advertising
  - Multi-platform campaigns (Google, Meta, TikTok, YouTube, Spotify, Hulu)
  - Geofencing around schools and events
- Co-Branded Content
  - Collaborate with 10+ high schools and five workforce partners
  - Share flyers, videos, and toolkits through trusted local channels
  - Highlight dual enrollment and career training programs
- Traditional Media
  - Newspaper, radio, and billboard ads in key locations
  - Align placements with enrollment cycles and community events

Why It Matters: This integrated, full-funnel approach ensures Pierpont reaches and converts both traditional and adult learners, building awareness, trust, and enrollment momentum.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS

Objective 2 Summary: Boost Brand Awareness by 20%

Goal: Strengthen Pierpont's identity and visibility through a refreshed brand, compelling storytelling, and community engagement.

Key Strategies:
- Brand Refresh
    - Update logo, colors, and messaging
    - Launch a cohesive brand style guide
    - Train faculty and staff on the new brand identity
- Storytelling & Social Media
    - Share monthly video profiles of students, alumni, staff, and faculty
    - Launch "Get to Know Pierpont" and "Why I Chose Pierpont" campaigns
    - Increase engagement with interactive content and live Q&As
- Earned Media & PR
    - Secure 20+ media placements with local outlets
    - Pitch human-interest stories and sponsor community-focused segments
    - Distribute a professional media kit and branded content calendar

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS

Key Strategies (cont.):
- Alumni Engagement
    - Allocate 7% of the media budget to re-engage alumni
    - Launch "Where Are They Now?" video series
    - Collect contact info before graduation for ongoing connection
- Student Ambassadors
    - Launch referral and ambassador programs
    - Use pop-up events and branded merchandise to build buzz
    - Highlight student voices in newsletters and campaigns

Why It Matters: A strong, consistent brand builds trust, drives recognition, and connects emotionally with students and the community. Empowering students and alumni as advocates amplifies Pierpont's reach and reinforces its role as a community-rooted institution.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS

Objective 3 Summary: Strengthen Community Engagement

Goal: Host or participate in at least 15 community events across the 13-county region to build visibility, trust, and local partnerships.

Key Strategies:
- Event Participation & Sponsorship
    - Attend or sponsor local fairs, expos, and seasonal events
    - Set up interactive stations like the "Future You" photo booth
    - Collaborate with nonprofits for co-hosted events tied to academic programs
    - Offer branded giveaways
- Content Capture & Promotion
    - Assign content leads to capture content at events
    - Share real-time updates and post-event recaps on social media
    - Use QR codes to drive traffic to program pages and newsletter sign-ups
    - Create highlight reels and tag community partners to expand reach

Why It Matters: Community events are a powerful way to build face-to-face relationships and demonstrate Pierpont's value. Capturing and sharing these moments extends their impact, reinforces the college's presence, and strengthens its role as a trusted, community-rooted institution.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES, TACTICS

Objective 4 Summary: Strengthen Digital Conversion

Goal: Enhance Pierpont's digital presence to drive more prospective students to the website and increase inquiry form submissions.

Key Strategies:
- Website Refresh
    - Optimize the website for mobile and SEO-optimized by December 2025
    - Simplify navigation and improve user experience and improve program-specific pages
- Content & SEO
    - Publish high-quality, relevant content (e.g., blog, program insights)
    - Remove outdated or low-performing pages
    - Implement a content marketing plan to boost organic traffic
- Paid Search & Retargeting
    - Launch targeted Google and Meta ad campaigns by September 2025
    - Use tracking pixels to retarget users who visited but didn't convert
    - Personalize messaging based on user behavior and program interest

Why It Matters: The website is a key conversion point. A modern, mobile-friendly design paired with targeted digital marketing ensures Pierpont captures and converts high-intent visitors.

BRAND REFRESH

Branding goes beyond logos and taglines; it's about how people feel when they think about Pierpont. Higher education is an emotional, personal decision. Our brand needs to resonate deeply. This empathy-driven approach allows us to connect by showing prospective students that we "get them." It creates a brand that is authentic, distinctive, and resonant.

The brand refresh will be implemented in a phased approach, working closely with Services and Academics on a mutually agreed-upon timeline. We'll also conduct focus groups over the late summer and early fall to capture feedback from our internal audiences.

1. Research and Discovery.
2. Refresh the Brand Colors.
3. Define the Brand Perception, Voice, and Personality.
4. Creative Exploration and Concept Development.
5. Seek Input from the Campus Community.
6. Refresh the Brand Image and Finalize Brand Guidelines.
7. Prioritize Low-Cost, High-Impact Areas.
8. Broader External Rollout (Mid-Cost).
9. Review Needs Based on the 1-3 Scale and Budget.

BRAND PERSONALITY

Passionate
Energetic, enthusiastic, mission-driven

Authentic
Honest, transparent, down-to-earth

Collaborative
Inclusive, team-oriented, respectful

Optimistic
Hopeful, encouraging, forward-looking

Caring
Compassionate, warm, student-centered

Curious
Inquisitive, open-minded, intellectually engaged

EVALUATION PLAN

To assess the success of the marketing plan, key performance metrics will be tracked and evaluated on an ongoing basis, allowing for modifications if the plan is not performing as desired.

Key Metrics:
- Enrollment headcount
- Inquiry form submissions
- Conversion rates
- Social media engagement
- Earned media placements
- Brand perception surveys (pre/post refresh)
- Number of events hosted/attended/sponsored
- Event engagement
- Content marketing performance
- Website traffic
- Keyword rankings

COLLABORATION

This plan requires cross-departmental buy-in and active collaboration to succeed. Your support is critical for:

- Encourage faculty/staff to suggest feature ideas for programs, student success stories, and career paths.
- Identify opportunities for faculty/staff/students to be willing to be on video for profiles and short features (building this out with the Orientation Videos for each program as well).
- Help us identify the various social media accounts currently managed by different schools and programs, ensuring alignment.
- Actively share Pierpont's content on your professional and personal networks to amplify our message.
- Ensure brand consistency with the updated branding, positioning, and voice. Ensuring every interaction reinforces our mission and vision.
- Encourage your teams to actively participate in community events (e.g., staffing booths, sharing expertise) to deepen our relationships.

When we rally together, we can genuinely connect with our community and workforce, making it clear that Pierpont is the go-to resource for our community.

DAY OF GIVING

Pierpont plans to host its next Day of Giving on April 1, aligning with the anniversary of the college's full separation from Fairmont State University. This symbolic date reinforces our independent identity and supports ongoing brand awareness efforts.

Originally considered for Fall, the event has been moved to Spring 2026 to allow more time for planning, campus engagement, and a stronger return on investment. The goal is to raise $65,000, an increase from the previous $52,000.

Key Details:
- The full announcement to campus will occur at the August Meet and Confer.
- The theme and project plan will be finalized by the end of August.
- Marketing will fund the $8,000 platform and promotion costs as part of the brand awareness strategy.
- Campus-wide involvement will include training on campaigns and challenges.
- Collaboration will include creating a dedicated Day of Giving working group.

This initiative not only supports fundraising but also strengthens Pierpont's visibility and community connection.
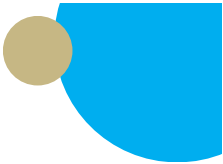
CONCLUSION

Pierpont Community & Technical College stands at a pivotal moment, ready to define its identity, deepen its community roots, and lead with purpose. This marketing plan provides a clear, actionable roadmap to increase enrollment, elevate brand awareness, and strengthen trust across the 13-county region.

By focusing on empathy-driven storytelling, strategic digital engagement, and authentic community connections, Pierpont will not only reach more prospective students but also reinforce its role as a vital, accessible, and career-focused institution.

As part of this effort, the Day of Giving on April 1 will serve as both a fundraising initiative and a powerful brand awareness campaign, celebrating Pierpont's independence and engaging the entire campus and community in a shared mission.

Through consistent evaluation and collaboration, this plan ensures that every message, event, and campaign moves the college closer to its mission to provide accessible, responsive, comprehensive education that works.

QUESTIONS &
FEEDBACK