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Branding & Style Guides: Editing for Usability (A Project for Lake Land College)

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This research is a product of the graduate program in English at Eastern Illinois University. Find out more about the program.

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Branding & Style Guides: Editing for Usability

(A Project to Lake Land College)

(TITLE)

BY

Baylor D. Gardner

THESIS

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
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YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

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Branding & Style Guides: Editing for Usability

(A Project for Lake Land College)

Eastern Illinois University
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To Jessica, who motivated me, supported me, and served as my personal editor throughout graduate school.
**Foreword:** This text analyzes the documents I edited and created while also illuminating the decisions I made in the process for my applied thesis in professional writing.

Though the document I have edited for Lake Land College is officially titled *Branding, Graphics, & Editorial Standards*, I will refer to it as a branding and editorial style guide—or simply style guide—throughout this text.
Branding & Style Guides: Editing for Usability
(A Project for Lake Land College)
Baylor Gardner

Lake Land College is a two-year accredited academic institution located in Mattoon, Illinois. As an accredited institution, Lake Land has presence in more than just the local community—it is nationally recognized and ranks among the top community colleges in various programs. In addition, students from afar attend the university, and its online student population grows by the year.

With such a far-reaching presence, Lake Land College must establish and maintain a professional image. Just three years ago, the college developed its first branding and editorial guide in order to uphold its presence as a postsecondary academic institution. The guide was created primarily for Marketing & Public Relations employees to adhere to when creating communications materials for both internal and external uses; however, its purpose was also to guide other Lake Land employees in maintaining consistent use of branding and language.

Following my professional writing internship placement last semester in Lake Land’s Marketing & Public Relations (MPR) department, I was approached by Kelly Allee, the MPR director, about helping to revise the style guide. (Though I interned in and became a part of that office, I had not worked on the style guide at any point prior to my thesis semester.) Based on the rapport I had built within the department and my familiarity with Lake Land’s marketing and writing standards, I felt I would have a sufficient understanding of this project to revise the guide to meet the client’s needs—this ultimately proved true during my time spent editing the branding and style guide.
In order to satisfy the requirements of the applied thesis in professional writing, I edited Lake Land College’s branding and style guide and created an online quick reference style sheet to accompany it. This project was two-part in nature:

- I thoroughly edited and reformatted Lake Land College’s branding and editorial style guide to enhance usability. The guide was a 57-page softbound manual at the project’s start. I applied relevant research concerning style guides, user-friendliness, branding guidelines, and document design in the professional communication field. The work I carried out ranged from basic copy editing and proofreading to substantive editing and formatting suggestions.

- In addition, I created an online quick reference style guide that provides users with common branding and editorial guidelines concerning Lake Land College. This guide acts as a compressed version of the more comprehensive physical manual. I was granted access to Lake Land College’s website via WordPress to create this online guide.

**Student and Client Needs**

The branding guide was initially created in 2016 by a hired consultant for the college’s employees to check when making decisions regarding marketing and communications. However, Lake Land College had a specific need for a new version of the style guide that would be more accessible to the user. The college’s Marketing & Public Relations (MPR) department noted that many other departments around Lake Land College’s campus have difficulty locating and even understanding specific branding or editorial guidelines within the manual. Applying relevant revisions concerning layout, language, specific guidelines, and overall accessibility to the manual would allow users at
Lake Land to be able to locate information more easily while understanding and abiding by important guidelines.

Additionally, the MPR office noted that an abbreviated web style sheet would benefit employees around the college. A move to an easily accessible digital branding and style web page would allow easier and quicker access for users of the document rather than consulting the physical document itself.

By applying up-to-date research to this manual and creating the online branding guidelines web page, I would be able to make it useful to Lake Land College while simultaneously increasing my own professional writing skills through application.

Relevance of Style Guides for Organizations and Colleges

A branding and style guide’s primary purpose is to create branding and editorial consistency within an organization. Whether internal or external communication is concerned, having consistent style helps to create a professional image for an organization—contrarily, using images and language which follow no standards depicts an unprofessional or even divided image of an organization.

The importance of style guides in companies and colleges goes beyond just prescribing guidelines concerning internal writing, however. Effective style guides “can create a distinct and unified presence for a company’s brand in addition to generating quality documents” (Adhya 192). Unity, consistency, and distinction are important for organizations to progress in financial growth, branding, public relations, and internal affairs. Style guides can even “save money by enabling document consistency, promoting an ethos of professionalism in communication, serving as an effective training tool for
new hires, and setting policy for document creation within an organization” (Allen qtd. in Adhya 184).

Style guides require frequent updating for a multitude of reasons. Adhya found that the topmost reason technical writers believe frequent updating of branding and style guides is needed “is for maintaining consistency across different design teams” (187–88). I was asked to update Lake Land College’s style guide specifically for this problem—other departments were consistently failing to abide by guidelines set in place by the guide’s first edition, revealing that it was either confusing, not user-friendly, or not consulted at all due to other issues such as accessibility to the document.

Adhya’s study also revealed that over 40% of technical writing respondents said that style guides are updated to create new branding opportunities (188). Marketing & Public Relations informed me that Lake Land College initially created this style guide primarily for branding reasons—as can be identified by the title of the document, “Branding, Graphics, and Editorial Standards.” This prompted me to suggest revising the guide, allowing branding guidelines to be cleaned up and new branding opportunities to be created. For example, Kelly Allee and other employees at Marketing & Public Relations just recently introduced the “Duck Blind” student cheering section for Lake Land College athletic events. Their continual creation of marketing materials and branding tasks led them to consider coining a new name for the student cheering section at athletic events. By having an updated style guide with consistent branding standards, Lake Land can look to create other new branding opportunities for the college.

One recent trend in the creation of style guides is that of online style guides. Intranet style guides within companies and organizations are far easier to find and search
for relevant information: “People are less and less likely to use hard copy references when they are working on a computer; therefore, it is beneficial to have a style guide available online. It is cheaper and easier to update an online style guide rather than constantly reissuing a hard copy” (Wimer 52). Hard copy iterations are being phased out because online versions are quicker, easier, and cheaper to revise. While I did create an online companion guide to accompany the hard copy manual, undertaking the project of an online style guide that could replace the print version was beyond the scope of this project. Additionally, Lake Land College specifically wanted to retain the physical version of the manual as its primary style guide for the time being, so the majority of my time was spent primarily on the print version. There is no doubt, though, that future style guides at Lake Land will move online and will include hyperlinks, be easily accessible, and be amendable at any time (Wimer 63). Designing a compact and quick-reference online style guide for Lake Land College was a step in the direction of current trends in professional communications.

**Audience**

When updating a document to be more usable, audience is one of the most important aspects of document design to consider. Though the main audience I catered to in recreating this style guide were its users—the “primary audience”—I also kept in mind both “secondary” and “immediate” audiences (Mathes and Stevenson 181). It false to assume “that the audience is a group of specialists in the field” or “that the audience is familiar with the assignment” (169). The first edition of the manual made it seem as if users should know where to find specific items. Specifically, information was not clearly
laid out in the table of contents for a first-time user to pick up the guide and find the
general section that may direct them in the right direction. Rather, headings seemed
vague and without page number in the table of contents, leading to a disorganized
manual. By streamlining important material and being more directive with content and
rules, I guided the document towards a more prescriptive tone that still allowed users
freedom of design so long as guidelines are considered.

My primary audience was employees of Lake Land College who make branding
and editorial decisions. The employees at Marketing & Public Relations make up the
primary users of this document, and they also act as the design center for other
departments to request specific material to be revised, created, or printed. Thus, every
department on campus would do well to use this document in order to understand Lake
Land College’s branding and editorial standards, allowing all departments to be on the
same page.

Secondary audiences are “those persons other than primary decision makers or
users who are affected by the information the report transmits into the system” (Mathes
and Stevenson 181). Other employees not making editorial and branding decisions, as
well as the student body at Lake Land College, would comprise this group. Similarly, the
surrounding community and other communities with ties to Lake Land are also
considered secondary audiences that I kept in mind. By valuing secondary audiences just
as much as primary audiences, institutions have a better chance of establishing a
professional presence. In the scope of the style guide, this means focusing on
professionalism and unity. By keeping community, students, faculty, and staff in mind
when creating or updating academic style guides, practitioners make it easier for primary
audiences—PR and marketing employees—to use the style guide and style sheet web page. I specifically considered the style guide’s secondary audiences by revising the table of contents, reorganizing section headers, and reformatting page headers. These steps help the firsthand users to more quickly and easily find the information or guidelines they are seeking, which only further perpetuates a sense of brand unity.

Finally, my immediate audience, or those who might be a supervisor or another management person (Mathes and Stevenson 181), was my liaison, Kelly Allee, and the Marketing & Public Relations department. All of these parties saw to it that branding and editorial decisions I considered, implemented, revised, or removed were reviewed and appropriate.

**Limitations of First Edition**

Though Lake Land College’s style guide was first created in 2015 by an outside consultant, routinely updating the style guide is vital if it is to remain effective within the organization. More than half of organizations revise their style guides every 6 to 12 months, while at least three quarters of all organizations update theirs within 1 to 2 years (Adhya 189). Since the majority of organizations in Adhya’s study understand that their style guides need revised at least every two years, it came as no suprise that Lake Land College’s style guide was due for an update.

In its initial edition, the document was visually busy and lacked user-friendliness. The first thing I noted when flipping through the manual was the presence of high-quality imagery when new sections were introduced. The quality of the images were reminiscent of marketing graphics. Likewise, there was was too much white space within the manual.
Chunks of information were relegated to corners of pages that left the text small and cornered off.

Additionally, minimalist writing is better in promoting task-based content topics (what to do and not to do) rather than conceptual topics. The lack of user-friendliness within this style manual was in part due to unclear organization of content and sections of writing that seemingly did not belong in a guide (e.g., explaining the exact dimensions of a wordmark not to be altered). Other organization and formatting issues included inconsistent usage of headings, a table of contents with unparallel ordering, and uneven bulleting alignment in the Editorial Standards section.

Finally, minor issues with images needed to be corrected, such as pixilation by means of blowing an image up, uneven alignment of nearby images, and lack of text to
accompany images. These design issues, however, did not stand out as major problems, so tending to them was secondary to the global issues of the text.

**Changes to the Branding and Style Guide**

Perhaps the most important change I suggested to Lake Land’s branding and style guide was removing extra content. Often throughout the early sections of the manual, sections would include theoretical information regarding what a brand is, how the current style guide came about, and motivational paragraphs to employees to help maintain the brand. While I chose to leave a few pieces of information in these initial sections, I was able to trim chunks of text that employees outside of the MPR office would likely never read. After all, this guide answers questions regarding what employees can and cannot do in branding and editorial contexts. Employees use this manual to be told what to do and no further. The style guide is meant to be used as a manual with instructions and guidelines rather than a document rationalizing how things were selected within the manual. An example of such text I recommended to be removed read:

> The branding elements in this style guide were selected through market research with a variety of Lake Land College stakeholders including employees from various work groups of the college, students, alumni, board members, workforce and educational partners, and community members.

By cutting back on these instances of extra information, I was able to steer the document towards a more straightforward approach with quick access to practical information. I also advised reducing images by at least half their size when introducing a section’s guidelines (rather than dedicating an entire page to a high-resolution photo), as it would
benefit the user in being able to find information more efficiently while simultaneously saving Lake Land College extra printing fees.

Removing white space, extra or irrelevant information, blank pages, and reducing large picturesque marketing images allowed me to shorten the document to a smaller, more manageable manual. In editing the document, however, there were times I would too-quickly suggest removing a large chunk of white space. While the large expanses of space seemed to take up too much of a page, other smaller portions had actually served a purpose. One of Kostelnick’s guidelines of applying modernist design to professional communication is to “[i]ntegrate visual and verbal language to achieve the purpose of the document” (21). He mentions that things such as spatial arrangement of text and other graphic elements “complement[s] the purpose of the document.” Likewise, Ding references Brockmann’s claim that “designers [should] use ample white space and margins because they bring aesthetics to a document” (39). While ample here is not defined, I realized that only the vastest expanses of white space in the manual should be filled with content on the next page. Other pockets of white space, however, would lend to the aesthetics of the manual while not overcrowding pages.

By reorganizing sections of the manual and accordingly revising the table of contents, I increased the manual’s accessibility. For example, “Stationary Set” and “Signage” were major sections listed previously in the table of contents. However, they were not parallel to other major sections such as “Marketing Pieces” or “Typography.” Accordingly, I subordinated the “Stationary Set” and “Signage” sections beneath the “Marketing Pieces” section in the table of contents, considering these were subsections of information in the chapter “Marketing Pieces” within the manual.
Other limitations of the original guide included inconsistencies in formatting and punctuation within the Editorial Standards section. As mentioned before, Kostelnick proposed guidelines for applying modernist design to professional communication. Another of those guidelines invoked in my editing was “Use visual language that the audience is accustomed to, but adapt this language to the context of the document” (21). When looking at the Editorial Standards section, I felt too much was going on in the Mechanics subsection and that reorganization of elements might make the section more straightforward for users. However, the Mechanics section was already set up in a similar method to the AP Stylebook—alphabetical order with rules, usage, and spelling sprinkled throughout. If I were to change this structure, users would be less familiar with a “newer” arrangement of the items than what they may already be familiar with. Leaving it as it was but updating the bullet formatting seemed to be a better option to allow the text to remain in a conventional standard that would be easily recognizable by employees. Other changes I had suggested in the Editorial Standards suggestion included the numbering and bulleted items. When items contained samples and had multiple incorrect/correct examples, the numbering would run 1 through 4. This seemed cluttered and like all items had parallel structure. An example of this structure as it was originally structured can be seen below:
Instead, I suggested formatting the numbering as such:

Example:

1. The Board last night voted unanimously. The Trustees all agreed.  \(\rightarrow\) **Incorrect**

   - The Lake Land College Board of Trustees approved the request to hire. The board voted unanimously.  \(\rightarrow\) **Correct**

2. The Lake Land College Board of Trustees plan to attend the legislative event in Springfield.  \(\rightarrow\) **Incorrect**

   - The Lake Land College Board of Trustees plans to attend the legislative event in Springfield.  \(\rightarrow\) **Correct**
By keeping paired incorrect/correct items to a single number, multiple examples can be given in comparison. This avoids redundant renumbering or a list of numbering that continues even when a new paired item example begins.

In addressing a few stretched or blown up images that were a bit pixelated, I made marginal comments in the document suggesting that the image may come off as unprofessional to users. In the same vein, Hassett mentions that “Technical writers discussed how using clip art can sometimes give technical documents, such as instruction manuals, credibility problems by appearing to be cheap and unsophisticated” (Hassett 66). While these professional images I mentioned are not close to the “cheapness” of clip art, my comment in the margin of the style guide remains that this sort of pixilation of an image can appear quickly put together, cheap, or careless to users who expect high quality from a manual providing guidelines for branding.

In the style guide I also often made comments suggesting that the heading at the top of each page should be the subsection heading and not the entire chapter’s heading. According to Adhya, around 40% of organizations consider format and structure a substantial reason for updating a style guide (189). Both the headings and the bulleting in the Editorial Standards section were definitely reasons for updating this style guide. For example, the Marketing Pieces and Editorial Standards sections have their names placed at the top of each page in the highest-level heading. However, if users were to flip through pages, it would be of no help seeing the chapter title and not the subsection heading they may be seeking. By placing the subsection headings at the beginning of the page, flipping through the manual to search for information becomes easier. I also recommended these heading changes in order to maintain consistency within the
document because other sections followed the format I suggested. Additionally, a manual with direct, more consistent headings suggests a level of persuasion to get users to better recall guidelines: “Headings can (and should) be used to encourage the reader to remember material in a particular, persuasive fashion” (Hassett 66–67).

Creating a Branding Guidelines Web Page

MPR noted that a “quick style sheet” web page highlighting the most important branding and editorial guidelines would allow employees to access what they need in a quicker and more accessible fashion. I figured that implementing this on Lake Land’s website would likely be the best course of action considering most employees would have immediate access to a computer: “Technology has vastly influenced the accessibility, role, and content of style guides. Ease of maintenance, availability, and accessibility have led to the migration from traditional paper bound guides to online media such as intranets, compiled HTML files, XML files (such as DITA), and Web sites” (Adhya 187). Many organizations are making the move to online style guides, and Lake Land College’s MPR department realized it was time that the college would benefit from making a similar move.

Much like keeping the overall structure of the Editorial Standards section in the physical manual as it was, I knew that the accordion structure suggested by Kelly for the web page would be recognizable by users. Hassett calls this ability to recognize a text’s layout rhetorical alignment: “Rhetorical alignment means making a document look like other documents that are familiar to the reader” (65). While the accordion structure is far different from the physical manual’s layout, it is commonly used on Lake Land College’s
website and saves space on the web page itself as not to clutter the entire page. By minimizing the space used, users can more quickly access the information they need in the accordion drop downs. Similarly, Hasset’s idea of “invitation” examines how the design of a document either invites or discourages users from reading a document (66). A slimmer, more streamlined web page is more inviting to a Lake Land user who is searching for a particular guideline and wants to save time in doing so. If all the information were to be spread throughout the page, locating information may be more difficult than clicking the appropriate dropdown section and then scanning the bulleted items that appear.

Likewise, a user may feel overwhelmed or even be unable to commit to memory all items presented to them at once: “By understanding the size of the list that must be held in working memory, we can seek ways to minimize the burden” (Hart 2). Hart likens working memory to the available physical space on a desk: only so many books can occupy the desk at once. If a new book is to enter the space, one must be removed. Similarly, users of a manual can only focus on so many things in front of them at once. Too much information crammed into a paragraph may leave the reader uncertain of what they just read. However, when separated into bullets within accordions as I did for the web page, users can quickly locate the section that pertains to their question, click the drop down, and find the guideline that best suits their need. A user may only be able to take in so much information on the web page at once—by reducing that number to a handful of bullets for a specific guideline section, users may not feel as overwhelmed by all the guidelines Lake Land’s branding guide actually contains.
In terms of the trend of schools’ move to online style guides and branding standards, Lake Land College will benefit from this first step toward moving its style guide to the digital medium. Eastern Illinois has similar examples of online documents that are quick and easy to access, such as its “Visual Identity Guide” and “Publications Style Guide.” Similarly, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville’s Editorial Guidelines, Mizzou’s Identity Standards, and the University of Iowa’s Brand Manual all served as contemporary online branding and style guides. I referred to these documents when creating Lake Land College’s quick reference companion sheet, finding many elements useful, such as . . .

In all, the transition of style guides “from a monolithic hard copy to a searchable online document” is becoming increasingly common (Adhya 190). While the quick guide I created to accompany Lake Land College’s style guide is not quite a searchable online document that completely replaces the hard copy as Adhya mentions, it is a step in the right direction for such a transition. Online documents are far more accessible and quickly consulted in comparison to physical manuals, so I hope for this piece to be the first building block to such a usable document in the future.

Conclusion

The branding and style guide has become more streamlined and to-the-point, a guide after which other universities and businesses can model their own school or company style guides. More importantly, the updated style guide will have practical use in allowing organizational members within Lake Land College to reference and apply the guide much more easily than before. In refocusing and editing the style guide and
website, I consulted research in professional communications, marketing materials from other universities, and the guidance of employees in the Marketing & Public Relations office.

This project confirmed my desire to make way into the field of editing. Upon entering Eastern Illinois University, I felt that committing to editing seemed too practical. I considered the path of a doctorate degree for quite some time, but it was not until Dr. Fredrick’s ENG 4765—Professional Editing course that I realized pursuing editing may be in my best interests. That inkling led to prove true as I made my way through Lake Land College’s branding and style guide—I found myself enjoying the process. I felt a sense of accomplishment in editing a manual for my graduate degree.

As I maneuvered in and out of my comfort zone while taking on this project (i.e., deferring to the client’s wants, creating new sections on my own such as the style guide web page, and learning new software to edit PDFs), I saw growth in my own editing abilities. The term editing was once simple to me—I always thought of it as just tidying language and making things “better.” However, my time spent working on this document has definitely proven that editing comprises a much more robust definition: reorganizing; consistency, consistency, consistency; tending to the client’s wants and needs; constantly learning new technologies; medium switching; and an intimate knowledge of multiple other style guides.

I am confident moving forward as I transition from this program into the field of editing, much thanks in part to this capstone project—without it, I would not have as strong a grasp on the theory behind document design or what a real relationship with a client may entail. My experience editing Lake Land College’s branding and style guide
served not only to meet the requirements of my professional writing thesis but also to fortify and exemplify the editing skills that I have gathered during my two years at Eastern Illinois University.
Works Cited


BRANDING GUIDELINES

These branding guidelines serve to present the college as a cohesive unit that represents the assets of the college rather than individual offices.

To access the communications and marketing services of Marketing & Public Relations, fill out the project request form found on the "S" drive under "Campus Forms," include all finalized informational material, and submit it to mrap@lakelandcollege.edu four weeks in advance to accommodate production.

- LLC WORDMARK
- LAKE LAND LAKERS LOGO
- COLOR PALETTE
- FONTS
- APPAREL & PRODUCT ORDERING
- EDITORIAL GUIDELINES
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- EMAIL SIGNATURES
- BUSINESS CARDS & NAMETAGS
Lake Land College’s wordmark fosters brand recognition and recall. The wordmark distinguishes the college as a leader in higher education.

Wordmark Guidelines:
- Acceptable colors include black on white background, white on black background, white on gray background, and white on red background.
- The wordmark may be co-branded with specific departments, such as the Lake Land College Foundation and Alumni — requests for a co-branded logo may be submitted to the Director of Marketing & Public Relations.

Unacceptable Wordmark Usage:
- Do not typeface the wordmark yourself, even if what you create looks close to the official wordmark.
- Do not change the colors or distort the art by stretching it.
- Do not use the wordmark on top of cluttered backgrounds.
- Do not print the wordmark in the color red.

LAKE LAND LAKERS LOGO
COLOR PALETTE
FONTS
APPL Apparel & Product Ordering

Lake Land College uses Mission Pro as a serif font and Avenir as a sans serif font.

Font Guidelines:
- Type the most important words in Mission Pro Bold with secondary words in Avenir in combination titles.
- Place headline text in all caps.
- Set body copy text in Avenir and no smaller than 10 point font.
- Alternate specialty fonts can be used for materials that promote special events as designated by Marketing & Public Relations — however, anchor the specialty font text with Avenir and Mission Pro fonts.

Unacceptable Font Usage:
- Do not underline or italicize text.
- Do not use WordArt.
- Do not use text in other colors outside of black, gray, white, or Lake Land red.

APPAREL & PRODUCT ORDERING
EDITORIAL GUIDELINES
CRIMINAL HISTORY
APPAREL & PRODUCT ORDERING

Giveaway items, apparel and merchandise must present a quality image of the college.

Giveaway Guidelines:
- Giveaways must be coordinated and approved by Marketing & Public Relations.
- Acceptable colors are black, white, dark gray, light gray, silver, and Lake Land red.
- The Lake Land College wordmark and the Laker logo will be the only elements on giveaways.

Merchandise and Apparel Guidelines:
- The wordmark may be used on merchandise (but not in red).
- Clothing and other merchandise must be in the college's primary color palette whenever possible.
- When ordering shirts, the college's wordmark or Laker logo will always be on the front — department names or other text can appear on the back.

Shirt & Thread Colors:
- Lake Land red shirt = black or white thread
- Black shirt = white thread
- Dark gray shirt = white thread
- Light gray shirt = black thread
- White shirt = black thread

EDITORIAL GUIDELINES

Lake Land College follows the Associated Press Stylebook (AP) for all print and online materials targeted at external media audiences. For other internal publications, Lake Land College follows a modified AP style.

Tone and Focus

Our voice is approachable, friendly, knowledgeable, confident, assuring, honest and clear. Our focus is student-centered, so statements should be positive and in an active voice.

Example of Passive vs. Active Voice:
1. The exam was completed by the student. — Incorrect (Passive)
2. The student completed the exam. — Correct (Active)

Example of Negative vs. Positive Tone:
1. If it wasn't for Student Life opportunities, she would have missed a lot from the college experience. — Incorrect (Negative)
2. Student Life opportunities enriched her college experience. — Positive (Positive)

Narrative Voice

Since we have a student-centered focus and culture at Lake Land College, all materials addressing current or potential students will use the first-person or second-person narrative voice.

Example of First-person Voice:
1. Lake Land College recognizes the importance of leading a student-centered culture. — Incorrect
2. We at Lake Land College recognize the importance of leading a student-centered culture. — Correct

Example of Second-person Voice
LOGO/WORDMARK

PROPER SIZING - WORDMARK

The Lake Land College logo follows a rule of thirds:

• From the top of the capital L to the baseline of the small caps is one third (X).

• From the baseline of the small caps to the baseline of the word COLLEGE is one third, and an equal distance to the vertical unit (X) above.

• The required clear space is a distance equal to the vertical height (X) between the baseline of the small caps in Lake Land to the baseline of the word COLLEGE.

PROPER SPACING - WORDMARK

What? What unit of measurement?
ATHLETIC UNIFORMS

COLORS

All athletic uniforms will be either Lakers red, black, white or gray.

Thread colors will be the following:
- Red shirt - black or white thread, depending on how deep of a red
- Black shirt - white thread
- Dark gray shirt - white thread
- Light gray shirt - black thread
- White shirt - black thread

WORDING/NAMING

- Uniforms will use the official type treatment of either “Lakers” or “Lake Land.”
- Warm ups and practice uniforms can use the mallard, the Lakers logo or the type treatments.
- The “L” insignia is reserved for the Baseball team’s caps only.

ATHLETIC MARKETING PIECES

- Laker Louie will be used at the bottom with the red bar.
MARKETING PIECES

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs will lead the design, encompassing 2/3 to 100 percent of the visual space.

A full page bleed photo focusing on an individual or individuals illustrates committed, supportive, accessible.

The emotional connection of the image draws the viewer in, leading the eye through the message down the piece, seeing the call to action and drawing final attention to the logo.

PHRASEMARK

"Define Success Your Way" is the college's phrasemark and will be used on marketing pieces as needed.

LAKE LAND COLLEGE WEB ADDRESS

LAKELANDCOLLEGE.EDU will be used when the address is on its own. Within the body of the text it will be in lowercase, within the body of the text.
MARKETING PIECES

VIDEO AND AUDIO

STANDARDS

The ending for registration ads, Laker Visit Day, and all other ads will be "For more information visit us at lakelandcollege.edu!"

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

VIDEOS AND RADIO ADS

Introduction is "Be one of the Lake Land College graduates who is succeeding in the growing field of INDUSTRY NAME."

The ending for academic program radio ads will be "Visit us at lakelandcollege.edu to learn more about PROGRAM NAME."

STUDENT LIFE

Lake Land College Student Life organizations recognized by the college are free to create their own unique logos. However, official college wordmarks and logos MAY NOT be used—in part or whole—to create the logo.

Organizations may indicate a connection to Lake Land College by incorporating the following new logo.

This logo may appear in black or may be reversed in white on a solid background.

The mark should appear as a footnote on the bottom of printed material such as flyers.

Please do not recreate the logo. You do not need the approval of the Marketing & Public Relations office when using this logo. If you do have a question, please call Marketing & Public Relations at 217-234-5233.

STUDENT LIFE

ORGANIZATION

LAKE LAND COLLEGE

Never have had 2 columns of text up until this point

Redundant.

This could be said about every single guideline in this manual.
EDITORIAL STANDARDS

INTRODUCTION

A successful brand identity focuses not only on what it says, but also how it says it. The brand is expressed through a style of writing—a tone—that conveys the brand positioning statement and is most appropriate for its audience. In short, what differentiates Lake Land College's brand is a distinctive voice that connects in a personal way.

American English is a richly varied language, full of choices. This style guide serves as a standard to ensure consistency in messaging and communication on behalf of Lake Land College. It is not designed to project that there is only one "correct" way to speak or write the English language. Rather, it notes specific rules and usages to be followed by authors and editors in the Marketing & Public Relations office and all college communicators.

Please note that this style guide is not meant to govern academic publications or everyday internal communications.

TONE AND FOCUS

Our Lake Land College voice is approachable and friendly, knowledgeable, confident, assuring, honest and clear. The focus of Lake Land College communications is student-centered. Statements are positive and use an active voice.

Example: Passive vs. Active Voice:
Passive: The exam was completed by the student. → Incorrect
Active: The student completed the exam. → Correct

Example: Positive Statements:
Negative: If it wasn't for Student Life opportunities, she would have missed a lot from the college experience. → Incorrect
Positive: Student Life opportunities enriched her college experience. → Correct

STYLES

NEWS AND MEDIA PUBLICATIONS:
WRITING STYLE
Marketing & Public Relations follows the Associated Press Stylebook (AP) for all print and online materials targeted at external media audiences. This includes press releases, public service announcements and advertisements. In addition, the Lake Land College Magazine and other publications follow a modified AP style.
EDITORIAL STANDARDS

ACADEMIC DEGREES
For clarity and succinctness, make general references to a degree, unless specifically referring to transfer degree details. Do not capitalize general degrees such as “bachelor’s degree.” Capitalize detailed degrees, but again, only when referring to specific transfer information.

Remember:
• Use “associate degree” (note there is no possessive)
• Use “bachelor’s degree”
• Use “master’s degree”
• Use “doctorate degree”
• Use “Ph.D” but only after someone’s name such as “Josh Bullock, Ph.D”

Only use the full Associate in Applied Science or Associate in Arts when referring specifically to a degree program in which the distinction of the type of degree is necessary.

Do not use a possessive when describing a degree. Refer to it with a simple article such as “a” or “an.”

Examples: Academic Degrees
1. She earned her B.S. at Southern Illinois University. Incorrect
2. She earned a Bachelor’s degree at Southern Illinois University. Correct

ALUMNUS, ALUMNA, ALUMNI, ALUMNAE, DR.
• Use “alumnus” when referring to a man who has attended a school and in singular references (alumni is the plural).
• Use “alumna” when referring to a woman who has attended a school (alumnae is the plural).
• Use “alumni” when referring to a group of men and women who attended a school.
• In college programs, use “Dr.” as a title.

ANYWAY
The correct word is “anyway.” There is no “s” on the word.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
The official name is the Lake Land College Board of Trustees. Use this upon first reference to the group. Thereafter, refer to it as “the board.” The Board of Trustees is a singular subject and therefore a singular verb should match it. The term “of Trustees” modifies the singular subject “Board.”

Examples:
1. The Board last night voted unanimously. The Trustees all agreed. Incorrect
2. The Lake Land College Board of Trustees approved the request to hire. The board voted unanimously. Correct
3. The Lake Land College Board of Trustees plan to attend the legislative event in Springfield. Incorrect
4. The Lake Land College Board of Trustees plans to attend the legislative event in Springfield. Correct