

Brian Muys

Associate Vice President of Public Relations
American Public University System



PR Measurement Summit
May 16-17 • Washington, D.C.

Presented by:  Ragan  PR Daily  PRSA

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American Public University System

- Founded 1991 as American Military University to serve active-duty, veterans
- Nearly 100,000 fully-online students in all 50 states, 100 countries
- Six schools, 190+ degree/certificate programs
- Largest provider to military; #2 overall
- NOT a career/vocational college
- Part of for-profit American Public Education, Inc. (Nasdaq: APEI)
- Competitors: blended learning for-profits; non-profits, traditional on-ground, MOOCs



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A Highly-Regulated Environment

- Declining online enrollments
- 2013 govt. sequester/shutdown
- DoD reforms/cutbacks
- 2016 election, ED transition/reforms
- High-profile failures; consolidation
- Perceived recruiting abuses by some players tarnishing sector reputation
- *Gainful Employment*: Requires that most for-profit programs prepare students for career in a recognized occupation.
- *90/10 Rule*: Bars for-profits from receiving > 90% of revenues from ED Title IV FSA, including student loans, Pell, tuition assistance
- *Recruitment*: HEA bans colleges from paying commissions, bonuses or other incentives based on success in securing enrollments or financial aid
- *Substantial Misrepresentation*: Covers any marketing or admissions rep. making misleading statements re: career prospects, etc.



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...Drives APUS Innovation and Differentiation

- Primary referral-based vs. traditional outbound marketing model so low spend (< 20% budget) to drive RFI's
- Integration of PR with measurable social media channels to directly and more effectively engage prospects
- Comp plans tied to annual student satisfaction, retention and placement survey vs. enrollments
- Going viral with content curation to elevate share of voice in disruptive media environment



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...and Data-Driven Decision-Making

- Reciprocal content-sharing partnerships with successful and emerging channels, i.e. Homeland Security Today, Military1, RallyPoint, others
- Large-scale promotions program to drive organic blog awareness, subscriptions, leads
- Balance original/curated content, partner mix, SEO requirements, optimized promotions, etc.
- Increased conversations, referrals, and RFIs from articles published on public web
- Digital Measures: Mine weighted faculty output to identify events, awards in support of key programs and leverage accomplishments

Celebrating all 50 states on
The Academic Minute
with our most represented
universities in each state.
Thank you all!

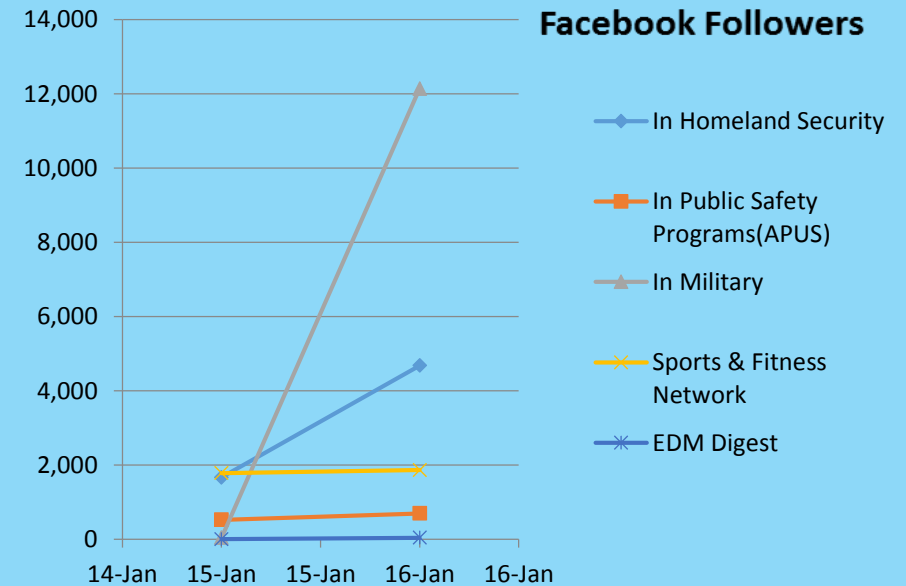


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Our Evolving Social Model

- 2010-14: partner-focused content model, supplementing and supporting partner outreach
- 2015: Transitioned to consumer, brand and growth-focused social channels
- 2016: Generating low-cost awareness for prospects; reallocating higher-cost lead gen from other channels

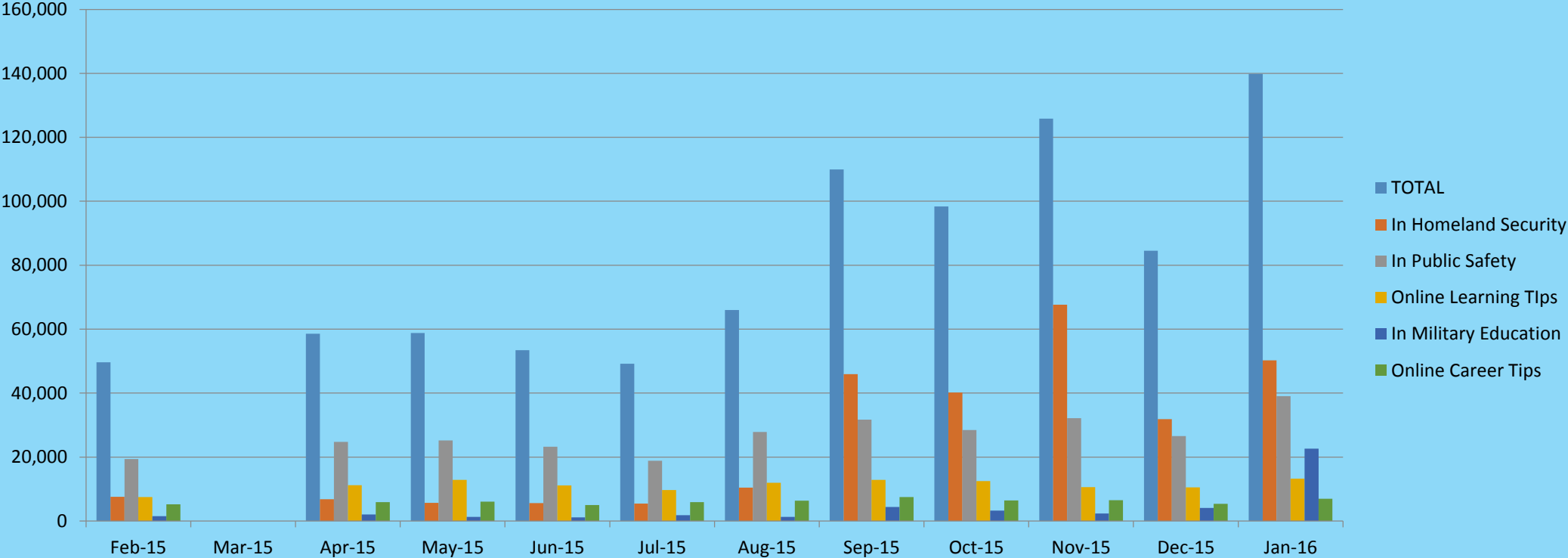


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The Viral Barometer



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Measurable Outcomes = Reputation + Referrals

- 96% of seniors rated their experience as positive; 95% would choose us again (*National Survey of Student Engagement, 2012*)
- 95% of alumni would recommend to friend/colleague; 2 out of 3 say degree helped them obtain new job (*APUS Alumni Survey, 2015*)
- 88% of employers would hire another grad; 94% say grads possess field-specific academic skills (*APUS Alumni Employer Survey, 2010-15*)



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Brian Muys

bmuys@apus.edu

571-358-3145

@BrianatAPUS

www.linkedin.com/in/bkmuys



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