

The Opportunity Network Media Ambassador Program Pilot Report



Overview

The Opportunity Network Media Ambassador Program (ONMAP) began in August 2018 in response to the institutional commitment to center its student community more explicitly and authentically throughout the organization's external presence. The ONMAP was designed to amplify student voices and the unique experiences of Fellows throughout OppNet's branding. Through digital content creation and social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, selected Fellows were given the opportunity to share their OppNet stories while gaining resume-building experience in the field of marketing and communications.

Ambassadors created monthly on-brand content through various programmatic elements and points of support, including: individual production check-ins with OppNet's Communications team to brainstorm content and set production schedules and cohort-wide Publication Meetings that covered different "skillbuilders" focused on a particular communications-related knowledge area (copy-writing, graphic design, etc.). These components ensured Ambassadors were able to develop the skills necessary to create engaging media and content, while also building a community of learning with their peers that they can take beyond the ONMAP.

Goals & Objectives

The ONMAP was designed to meet the following goals and objectives, developed out of areas that comprise OppNet's strategic institutional focus:

- To deepen OppNet's commitment to elevating the voices and experiences of our Fellows community.
- To illustrate the power of storytelling as a means of connection and learning, and as a way to celebrate diversity.
- To encourage competency building around self-advocacy in Fellows.
- To expose Fellows to the professional field of marketing and communications and provide opportunities for Fellows to develop content for an early portfolio of work should they choose to pursue this field.

Inaugural Ambassador Cohort

The inaugural Ambassador cohort was made up of eight OppNet Fellows – four in high school and four in college. Of the Ambassadors in high school, three were in 12th grade and the other in 11th grade. The following schools were represented by Ambassadors attending college: University of Rochester, Alfred State College, The George Washington University, and Middlebury College. Most Ambassadors had not expressed an explicit interest in pursuing a professional path in the field of marketing and

communications, but rather, an interest in refining their interests, passions, and talents to see how they could intersect with a career. Those interests and passions include: photography, social justice and activism, business, dentistry, politics, dance, and social and cultural analysis. Through the content they created throughout the year, it is evident the inaugural Ambassadors are highly invested in their communities and schools, consistently investing time and energy into volunteering, taking on leadership roles, raising awareness and sparking change throughout their schools and neighborhoods. In sum, the inaugural Ambassador cohort personified OppNet's belief that identity, passion, and purpose are vital and interrelated elements for personal and professional success.

Ambassador Growth and Skill Takeaways

Based on an end-of-year survey aimed at gauging growing mastery of skillbuilder topics, it was evident all Fellows had a solid grasp of fundamental marketing concepts and principles. Upon completion of the program, Ambassadors exhibited the ability to exercise critical thinking in media credibility and content analysis, and soft skills such as empathetic interviewing and constructive criticism. Throughout the year, they grew creative and technical skills in copywriting, photography, and interview preparation. The survey also indicated Ambassador competence in key analysis skills related to audience and marketing strategy, advertising campaign motivations, and visual messages. Ambassadors demonstrated a solid understanding of how media, culture, and visual storytelling powers human behavior.


Ambassador Content Performance






From the social media and content developed by Ambassadors, some of the major themes explored included: personal development, identity, extracurricular life, school events, student life at college, and student self-care. For example, Fellows posted about their time fundraising through school clubs, advocating for underrepresented groups, and supporting in different political campaigns that align with their values. Many Fellows chose to create content relating to their hobbies such as photography and dance.

These posts and other Ambassador-created content performed over and above other types of media pushed through OppNet's social channels, not only based on post "likes," but post reach and views or "impressions." For a more detailed breakdown of social performance and metrics, click [here](#).



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 theopportunitynetwork April can be an overwhelming month for many high school seniors as they anticipate making their college choices next month. A huge part of that choice is weighing financial aid packages and costs from colleges. So, in light of #FinancialLiteracyMonth and this exciting time for our 12th grade Fellows, check out OppNet Fellow Jia's personal experience on navigating this moment: "I spent most of March waiting for my college decisions and celebrating them upon arrival. As I entered April, I knew I had to look at each school realistically – in other words, the financial aspects of attendance. While I received a full ride through Macaulay's Honor at Baruch College, many of my classmates






   
 Liked by goodnationadvisors and 125 others
APRIL 30
Add a comment... Post

OppNet Ambassador Jia's post about her college financial aid process and obstacles.



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 theopportunitynetwork "I am a current freshman @GWUniversity in our nation's capital. Moving to D.C. for school was the highlight of my 2018, and once I got here, I knew I wanted to be more politically active. One opportunity for me to do so was the annual #MarchForBlackWomen this past September. Some of the goals set for the march were to advocate for full reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act and the rights of intersectional women, like poverty relief, affordable housing, reproductive rights, and immigration protections. As a Black woman, I felt it more than necessary for me to participate in this march as I would be marching for matters that not only affect my life, but

   
 Liked by rvargaspalmer and 127 others
JANUARY 24
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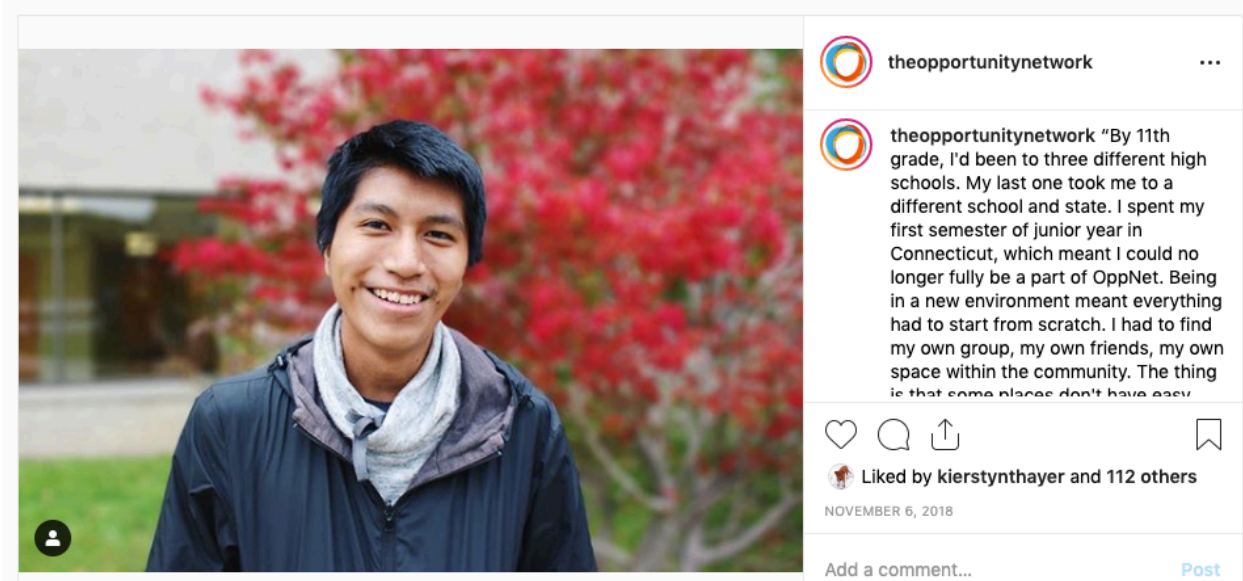
OppNet Ambassador Kareemot's post about her experience at #MarchForBlackWomen in D.C..



OppNet Ambassador Tanzim's post about student clubs on campus as a Freshman in college.

Additionally, posts with a narrative point of view performed well. This insight was piloted in a more concerted way through OppNet's first social campaign, #MyOppNetStory, which was led by Ambassadors. Inspired by Humans of New York, #MyOppNetStory helped to highlight the gravity of our work and the unique human experiences that help to make it happen.

Here is an example of a #MyOppNetStory post from a college Ambassador:



Ambassador Feedback and Statistics

Based on a free-response exit survey, Ambassadors noted the helpfulness of the monthly 1:1 and cohort meetings, and the use of meeting technology that allowed for virtual participation from different college campuses across the country. Through the meetings, they cited the value of being able to talk through ideas and gather feedback and insights on possible techniques to help create better content. They particularly noted the helpfulness of the skillbuilder activities that allowed them to practice applying the skills they learned in real-world case studies.

While the interest of most Ambassadors in the field of marketing and communications was low to moderate before participating in the program, **more than half noted that their interest grew to above 50%** in the exit survey. All Ambassadors agreed they gained valuable insight and experience through the program; although not all of them stated they wanted to continue in the communications field. But what is worth noting is that many Ambassadors saw how the fundamental marketing knowledge proved highly useful for their own personal and professional development (i.e. how to market themselves professionally). Many Ambassadors mentioned the helpfulness of the program in supporting future business ventures and summer opportunities in school, and at work. There was a large consensus around the helpfulness of learning about marketing analysis and being able to analyze the advertisements they come across on a daily basis – the key messages and intended and unintended effects of the campaign.

All Ambassadors showed interest in returning if given the opportunity, particularly because there was more they wanted to accomplish with the knowledge and skills they gained through their experience in the program.

According to the survey, Ambassadors noted their most valuable lessons were about tying goals to their content and grasping key messages in order to accurately convey their stories. It was evident Ambassadors have a strong grasp of the core concepts of marketing and communications, since it is a field centered on conveying values and forming and maintaining relationships through messages.

80% of Ambassadors recalled fundamental marketing principles

87.5% of Ambassadors recalled more than two different visual marketing formats

100% of Ambassadors have a grasp on analyzing marketing collateral and motivations

100% of Ambassadors understand concepts of and can create questions that lead to empathetic interviewing

87.5% of Ambassadors understand the fundamental differences between advertising and marketing

100% of Ambassadors said they would be likely to return to the program

Next Steps for ONMAP FY20

The inaugural year of the ONMAP provided many rich insights and considerations for building out the program in the upcoming year. All of the iterations and programmatic enhancements that will be implemented will help to deliver a better experience for Ambassadors.

One major structural change that will take place in the upcoming year is to implement a “functional team-based model” that will allow Ambassadors to engage in deeper learning on key communications and marketing skills – from copywriting and editing to design and layout. This programmatic shift will also provide more opportunities for Fellows to collaborate and hone in on skills like leadership, self-advocacy, and accountability, which are understood as critical drivers of college and career success.

It is clear that continuing the ONMAP will have significant value for strengthening OppNet’s Fellows community and expanding the organization’s external audience and presence.