



**Prairie State College**  
**Graphic Standards Guide**

**For Staff and Administrators**

## **The Prairie State College Brand**

An important part of an institution's branding is its visual identity. Creating a strong, positive, and consistent image for the College helps us attract students and faculty. It also affects the community support we receive. The College's image is established, maintained, and reinforced by its consistent use across all kinds of communications. The brand represents the values that are perceived by past, present, and future students, their families, as well as our employees. Our goal is to communicate to our many audiences a single, recognizable identity and image that conveys academic excellence and solidifies our image in a variety of venues. Strengthening and promoting that image will benefit all our programs and new initiatives.

In this publication, there are guidelines to help us maintain a consistent brand for Prairie State College. This graphic standards manual was developed to help answer questions and address issues regarding project procedures, branding, logo use, photo consents, writing, Web styles, and other information.

## **What Are Graphic Standards, and Why Are They Important?**

Graphic standards provide tips, policies, and procedures for achieving a high quality and consistent look in Prairie State's publications, advertising, and Web pages. Prairie State's graphic standards include things like how to use the College logo, number of fonts per document, College colors, and common design features for Web pages, flyers, posters, and ads.

## **Definition**

College publications are those written materials that use the College name or logo and include flyers, posters, brochures, postcards, schedules, catalogs, banners, booklets, and invitations.

## **Style Standards & Consistency**

All College publications, including their editorial content and design, must conform to the policies and standards described in this document. To maintain this consistency, we are asking that all communications materials, including those listed above, be reviewed by the Communications & Marketing Department before being circulated.

## **Creating Your Publication**

The first step in planning a publication is to decide what you really need. Communication objectives can be accomplished in many ways: a brochure, poster, letter, newsletter, open house, informational meeting, postcard (or direct mail piece), Web site, or advertisement. How do you decide what you want to accomplish? Answering the following questions may help:

- **What do you hope to accomplish?** What is your message, and what response are hoping to obtain? What problem do you want to solve?
- **Who is your audience?** The more specific you are in terms of who you are trying to reach, the better your marketing piece will be. What do you want your audience to do?
- **What is your budget?** Do you have money in your budget for printing, promotions, etc.? The Communications & Marketing Department pays for the printing of all program brochures. Other printing is typically paid by the individual departments.
- **What is your deadline?** For a printed piece, consider how long it will take to write, edit, design, and print the piece.
- **How will the material be distributed?** Will it be a direct mail piece like a postcard, letter, or mailer? Or will it be a handout or poster?

## **Process for New Marketing, Communications, and Web Site Projects – (Credit and Non-credit)**

The Director of Communications & Marketing is the initial contact for all new marketing and communication projects, both internal and external, including new Web pages. Once the job is received, a timeline is established and the job is completed either in the Communications & Marketing Department or in Institutional Support Services. Moving forward, all jobs will be tracked including the cost to produce each job.

### **Process for Faculty Flyers and Posters**

For faculty who want flyers for new classes, or new class sections, those requests should be taken directly to Institutional Support Services.

- For new classes or sections, flyers (not to exceed 8.5 x 11) are appropriate for individual classes.
- Posters are appropriate for programs, degrees, or new initiatives. Posters will no longer be produced for individual classes or sections.
- Each semester Institutional Support Services does Late Start posters.
- Team teaching flyers, LinC posters, and other related faculty projects are to be done by Institutional Support Services using the new graphic standards.

### **Forms**

- All printed forms such as registration, job fair registration, change of residency, add/drop, athletic events, and any other type of form is done by Institutional Support Services.

### **Student Clubs and Organizations Web sites and Brochures**

- All brochures, flyers, posters, banners, and Web sites for student clubs and organizations are done by Institutional Support Services.

### **Web Site Pages**

- The Director of Communications & Marketing is the initial contact for all new Web site page requests. (Please see separate Web site section in this manual.)

### **Updates to Current Web Pages, Home Page Changes, and Forms**

- Immediate updates to Web pages are to be taken directly to Institutional Support Services.
- Request for a home page change or new home page listing is to go to the Director of Communications & Marketing.
- Request for rotating slide on home page needs to go through the Director of Communications & Marketing.
- Forms on the Web site need to follow the Web site form template. Contact the Webmaster to add a form to the Web site.

## **Design Guidelines**

- **Keep it simple.** A well designed publication communicates quickly and clearly.
- **Don't use more than two different fonts in a publication.**
- **Use white space.** White space can make documents easier to read. Avoid cluttering your document with excessive items.
- **Limit use of clip art.** If a graphic is needed, generally photographs are more appealing. One strong photo is better than several small photos.
- **Use left alignment because it is easier to read.**
- **Use bold and italicized text sparingly.** Mainly use it for headlines and headings, not in the text.
- **Use high resolution logos and graphics for all documents.** Do not use logos or graphics pulled from Web sites because the resolution is too low.
- **Put only one space after a period between sentences.**
- **Avoid underlining if at all possible.** For Web sites, only underline if the item is a hyperlink.
- **Use upper and lower case when possible.** Avoid the use of all caps because it is harder to read.

## **Photography Guidelines and Photo Releases**

- **Use photographs when possible.**
- **Resize files and photographs appropriately so images are not distorted.**
- **Photo releases.** For individual shots, or group shots where the subjects are identifiable, a photo release must be signed. For candid shots, a photo release doesn't have to be signed, unless it is a close-up shot. Photo release forms are available in Communications & Marketing.
- **Photo request process.** All photo requests need to be made in advance with the Director of Communications & Marketing.

## **Web Document Design Standards**

All graphic standards outlined previously apply, but additionally the items listed below are important for Web documents. The most important item is to make sure Web documents upload quickly and efficiently.

- **Use white background color for Web documents.** Do not use solid background colors because they take too long to load.
- **Use photos or graphic design elements.** Limit use of clip art.
- **Optimize all photos for easy loading.**
- **Use properly sized photos so images are not distorted.**

## **Official Web Pages**

The Prairie State College Web site is the first point of entry to the College for thousands of people throughout the district and beyond. The Web site is the “front door” of the College. It provides extensive information for many audiences, including prospective students, current students, community members, alumni, the media, policy makers, the general public, and the internal campus community. The Web site allows individuals access to an extensive network of academic, administrative, and faculty and staff information. It also showcases College information including events, programs, activities, and employment.

The PSC Web site has been redesigned with the goal of ensuring accessibility, which allows equal access to information and functionality for a wide range of people with disabilities. Following these guidelines also makes it easier for our users to access our Web content. This is especially helpful for older users and those using different computer devices, including a wide variety of assistive technology.

The PSC Webmaster is a Certified Internet Webmaster (CIW), which includes knowledge of WC3 (World Wide Web Consortium) standards. The WC3 is the organization that sets the standard for Internet accessibility and usability. The Webmaster ensures the PSC site is accessible and meets WC3 standards.

## **How to Request a New Web Page**

- Contact the Director of Communications & Marketing to set up a meeting to plan a new Web page. Once the information is obtained, the timeline and designer will be determined.

## **Updates to Current Web Pages**

- Updates to current pages can be done by Institutional Support Services or the Webmaster.

## **Online Forms**

- Online forms must be in the template provided by Communications & Marketing Department that complies with the W3C's accessibility guidelines.

## **The Official Seal**

The primary components of the official seal are the college name, the credo, and a traditional representation of an open book. The official seal is a symbol reserved for official and legal college documents—including diplomas, transcripts, and certificates—and for formal decorative use as authorized by the President. The seal is not to be used interchangeably with the logo or as a readily recognizable graphic symbol in publications, advertisements, displays, or other promotional materials that describe or otherwise illustrate the College, its programs, or its services.

The seal is to be printed in hunter green (Pantone Matching System, or PMS, 349) or in black. Additionally, the seal may be reversed-out and printed in white on black or white on PMS 349. No other variations may be used, except in those instances where the seal is displayed in full color or when determined to be necessary by the President.

## **The Logo**

The College logo, the graphic image appearing on College stationery, signs, publications, merchandise, and related materials, may be reproduced in two versions. Both versions include the three-pronged open book symbol and the title of "Prairie State College," set in a bold Times upper- and lower-case typeface. One is with the set with the College name printed horizontally; the second has the name stacked vertically to the right of the three-pronged design.

*Note: The College logo is the book symbol and official typeface together, not just the symbol.*

The logo is to be printed primarily in black ink, hunter green (PMS 349) ink, or the reverse of either of these options.

The horizontal version is the preferred logo designs. The vertical version, however, is preferred when design dictates that a stacked rather than elongated graphic image is needed.

The logo is to be printed in a prominent location on all official College publications and printed materials, unless it is deemed necessary, and with the approval of the College President, that the seal be used in its place.

# Prairie State College



## **Pioneer Logo**

In 2006 the Department of Physical Education & Athletics introduced a new Pioneer logo. This symbol is used by that department, Institutional Support Services, and Communications & Marketing to promote PSC's intercollegiate athletics programs and teams.



## Colors

The official colors of Prairie State College are hunter green and white. For printing and reproduction purposes, the shade of green used is Pantone Matching System (PMS) 349. A shade of purple, PMS 521 is also used as an accent color.



## Word List

This is a partial list concerning spelling, hyphenation, capitalization, etc., to promote professionalism and consistency. It is a work in progress. In general, we use the first entry in *Webster's*, with a few of our own idiosyncrasies.

advisor

a.m., p.m.

bilingual

co-author, co-chair, co-worker

the College (when referring to PSC); never refer to the college as a school.

composed of [to be made up of]; comprise [to include or contain]: *The College Council is composed of representatives from various student and employee groups. District 515 comprises Chicago Heights, Olympia Fields, and several other suburbs.*

coursework, classwork, fieldwork

database

download, upload

e-commerce

e.g., [“for example,” followed by a comma]: *The colors available for the brochures are the primary ones; e.g., red, blue, and yellow.*

e-mail; electronic mail. Use hyphen.

flier [one who flies]; flyer [small poster or advertising circular]

full-time, part-time [adj. or adv.]

healthcare

home page

i.e., [“that is,” followed by a comma]; *That brochure embodies everything we stand for at the College, i.e., academic excellence, diversity, and affordability.*

Internet

Kids@College

lifestyle

-like: e.g., catlike, childlike, bell-like, alligator-like, Truman-like [hyphenate before this suffix when the noun has more than one syllable, ends in the letter *l* or is a proper name]

-long: hourlong, daylong, weeklong, yearlong, semester-long [hyphenate before this suffix when the noun has more than one syllable or ends in the letter *l*]

mid: Midterm, no hyphen is used unless a capitalized word follows; e.g., *mid-America, Mid-Atlantic, mid-1990s, mid-20th century, mid-20th-century literature.* But use a hyphen when *mid* precedes a figure; e.g., *mid-30.*

multicultural, multidisciplinary

non-credit

on campus, off campus [adv.]; on-campus, off-campus [adj.]: *The lecture will be held on campus. Rich East High School is an off-campus location for non-credit classes.*

online, off-line

pre-concert, pre-law, pre-med

résumé

Social Security number

spreadsheet

theatre

URL, URLs [Web site address]

vice president [not hyphenated; capitalized if referring to a PSC administrator, see section “Names, Titles, and Offices”]

voicemail, voice-mailbox

Web site [often seen as *website*, especially on the Internet, but the majority of style manuals still recommend this as the standard for publications and other non-Web references]

workforce, workplace

World Wide Web, the Web

## **Style Guidelines**

Here are a few tips to avoid common language errors and to foster consistency. *The Chicago Manual of Style* is a good general reference, with some modifications. For relevance and conciseness, it is still hard to beat *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. Press releases should follow Associated Press Style (AP).

## **Academic Degrees and Class Years**

Full names of degrees are uppercased; more casual references to degrees are lowercased and take an apostrophe, abbreviations are uppercased and take periods:

- Associate in Arts in Business, Associate in Science, Associate in Fine Arts, Associate of Arts in Teaching, Associate in Applied Science degree; associate's degree; A.S. in Chemistry
- Bachelor of Arts; bachelor's degree; B.A. in Sociology
- Master of Arts, Master of Business Administration; master's degree; M.B.A., M.S., M.A.
- Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Medicine; doctorate; Ph.D., M.D.

If the year is not written out fully (i.e., 2008) the abbreviated version is '08 should have an apostrophe, not an opening single quotation mark, with no space between degree and year. A person's name is followed by a comma, then the degree and year.

- A.A.'04, A.A.S.'06, Certificate '05: *Jim Smith, A.S.'99, transferred and earned a bachelor's degree.*
- the Class of 2007, the Class of '07

## **And Versus the Ampersand**

In most cases, the word *and* is preferred to the ampersand (&). When a term—such as a title, department or division—has two elements, the ampersand aids clarity:

- *The new program is a collaboration between the Divisions of Community & Economic Development and Academic Affairs.*

## **Capitalization**

- In titles of works, capitalize the first and last words, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and subordinate conjunctions; lowercase articles, coordinate conjunctions, prepositions of any length, and the *to* in infinitives: *Cole Porter's song, "I've Got You under My Skin"*

## **Commas**

- Include the final comma in a series: *The student has talent in drawing, painting, and sculpture.*
- Insert a comma before and after *Jr.* or *Sr.* but not before a numeral designating, for example, “the third”: *Wallace Bailey, Jr., is an enrollment advisor. Alvin Paul III is an adjunct professor of mathematics.*
- Use a comma when addressing a person or people: *The president said at the end of the speech, “Congratulations, Graduates!”*

## **Courses and Programs**

- COMM 101: Principles of Communication; COMM 101-01
- the Graphic Communications Program; the graphics program

## **Italics versus Quotation Marks**

- Use italics for titles of books, movies, large musical works, plays, newspapers, magazines, other periodicals. Use quotation marks for poems, short stories, television shows. Some e-mail programs are limited in the use of features such as italics.
- When a whole block of text is italic, use roman (not italic) to signify what would normally be italicized: *The novel Gone with the Wind was made into a movie in 1939.*
- Use quotation marks to specify academic grades.
- Note that periods and commas *always* go inside closing quotation marks, even when the sense of the sentence seems to indicate otherwise: *Her favorite short story is “The Gift of the Magi,” and her favorite song is “My Favorite Things.”*

## **Numbers, Numerals, and Dates**

- Spell out numbers one through nine and their corresponding ordinals, and use numerals for larger numbers: *She made the second out of the 10th inning.*
- When a number begins a sentence or a course title, always spell it out.
- If the same category contains numbers both above and below nine, use numerals within that category: *The two College Bowl teams had each won 14 matches and lost 7.*
- Use numerals for percentages. The percent symbol (%) may be used in tables, but in non-scientific running text, write out the word: *Only 6 percent of the residents replied.*
- For times on the hour, omit the colon and zeros in most running text: *The workshop starts at 9 a.m. and ends at 3:30 p.m.*

- For phone numbers, in most cases we enclose area codes in parentheses, followed by one space, and use a hyphen after the prefix: *The main number of Prairie State College is (708) 709-3500.*
- Use commas to set off the year when using full dates: *She was born on Jan. 19, 1977, in Chicago.*
- Do not use commas when using only month and year constructions: *Planning began in September 1985.*
- Do not use 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, etc., with dates: *July 21, April 2, etc.*
- Dollar Amounts. Use a dollar sign followed by a numeral. Do not use .00 with dollar values: *\$250, \$12,200, \$5.3 million.*

### **Plurals and Possessives**

- For Latin-based words: singular is *alumnus, alumna*; plural is *alumni, alumnae* (*alum* or *alums* should be used only in informal contexts); *curriculum, curricula, professor (or director) emeritus or emerita, professors (or directors) emeriti or emeritae.*
- When a generic term is capitalized as part of an official name, the plural used with another name also is capitalized:

*Lakes Michigan and Huron*

*The Departments of Business Services and Physical Plant & Facilities*

*The Chicago and London Symphony Orchestras*

*Mounts Baker and Rainier*

*The Chicago White Sox and the Boston Red Sox Outfielders*

### **Names, Titles, and Offices (document specific)**

- *President Eric C. Radtke; Eric C. Radtke, president of PSC*
- *Professor of Biology Marian Kelly; Marian Kelly, professor of biology*
- *Vice President of Business & Information Services J.R. Dempsey; J.R. Dempsey, vice president of business and information services.*
- *Assistant Dean of Student Life & Multicultural Affairs Angela Winters-Harmon; Angela Winters-Harmon, assistant dean of student life & multicultural affairs.*
- *Enrollment Advisor Beth Wyack; Beth Wyack, enrollment advisor.*