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UD's Mission Statement

It's funny that we are analyzing UD's mission statement, since that was on my list of potential statements to analyze for our last weekly writing on the subject. If you remember, the other members of that list were Nestlé, Boeing, and Raytheon, so I think you can infer which option I will be taking for this assignment. Regardless of how well or poorly one's experience at UD has gone, I think we can look past our own anecdotal experiences and objectively measure the authenticity of their mission statement.

'Their' - I originally used that word very unintentionally, but once I thought about it, it has become an intentional decision. University is a place that is made by its students. Not to say that faculty, professors, and everybody else that comes together to run this place aren't important, but without the students, you wouldn't have a University. In a sense, each student is 1/~24,000th of the school as a whole, so why is it 'their' mission statement and not 'our' mission statement?

The folks that are paid the buku bucks to write up these mission statements really do a good job to craft something that sounds really nice if you just read it, but the niceties fall away under scrutiny. When we take a closer look at UD's mission statement, we see there are a lot of words used to say not a whole lot. The statement is full of rhetorical padding, from "...exists to cultivate learning, develop knowledge, and foster the free exchange of ideas", to "...encourages intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, free

inquiry, and respect for the views and values of an increasingly diverse population.”

While these statements are all good things, it is entirely unnecessary to include all of these. When we are presented with eight different ways to say essentially the same thing, it creates a sort of misdirection, almost as if the writers want to just stuff you full of words until you are satisfied.

Looking at the statement from the perspective of being a ‘customer’ of UD, things only get worse. There is a surprising amount of content in the statement that doesn’t actually imply any value for the average student, or customer, and seems more tailored towards donors or grant organizations. “State-assisted yet privately governed, the University has a strong tradition of distinguished scholarship, which is manifested in its research and creative activities, teaching, and service, in line with its commitment to increasing and disseminating scientific, humanistic, artistic, and social knowledge for the benefit of the larger society.” This feels more like a brag for higher up rather than a draw for students. Overall, this mission statement is far too lengthy, throws words at you that don’t mean quite anything, and seems to appeal to donors more than the ‘customer’.