Notes on VIMS Branding for Graduate Students (6/18/18)

Please note that this is NOT official VIMS policy because there is not yet an official policy at this time. There is no specific policy for the student body.

VIMS must always be viewed as impartial to the general public. After talking to Susan Maples from advancement, below are some guidelines for doing events with VIMS branding that were sent to faculty:

“Events hosted by and branded as VIMS are a reflection on the Institute. One of the Outreach office’s goals is to position your event for success by ensuring that all VIMS events have event and marketing plans that address the following areas:

1. specific objectives that aligned with the VIMS’ mission
2. audience is determined
3. the event is marketed effectively
4. VIMS brand is properly promoted
5. the venue and setups are correctly reserved
6. logistics are managed effectively
7. event is accurately evaluated

All faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to contact Susan Maples as soon as a lecture or any other event that may be open to an external audience of non-VIMS individuals is under consideration in order to have an initial planning conversation as early as possible. Thanks for your assistance in making sure that VIMS is represented as well as possible at all times.”

If you are planning on hosting a community-wide event, manning a booth at a main campus event, or planning an outing inviting more than just VIMS affiliates, please contact Susan Maples at least 12 weeks (3 months) in advance.

Otherwise, please be considerate in the title and advertising of your event, choosing wording such as “Gloucester Point community event” or “Grad-student led activity” instead of “VIMS event.”

If that direction is not clear, here is an example.

If you are an expert mushroom hunter it is fine to do whatever you want in your free time, i.e. give talks, have booths, and present. However, in doing so, you should not in any way affiliate yourself with VIMS, and VIMS signage and supplies should not be used. You can casually say you work at VIMS, but the Advancement team does not want anyone calling VIMS for help with mushroom hunting. This is because mushroom hunting is not something that VIMS (as a brand) actually does. The advancement team does not want people to be confused on that matter. (A lot of outside folks are confused on what VIMS actually does. Unfortunately, we are not as well-known as say, Pepsi.)
If you really want to be involved in outreach, then Susan encourages all students to talk to her about events that are already planned that you can be involved in. If you have a stellar new event idea, that involves outside people, you are strongly encouraged to talk to Susan right away about the planning of that event so she has time to decide if VIMS marketing can and should be used in that event. She may choose to bring the topic to higher up in the institute to see whether this should be VIMS affiliated or not. Remember, if you are doing anything internally within the VIMS community, then branding is not typically an issue.

Sometimes the point can be muddled. If someone contacts you primarily because they found you through VIMS, then usually the VIMS brand (including style) should be used. But if you volunteer for something on your own volition, that is not quite the same thing. We realize this does have a grey area and encourage students to contact Susan Maples or the GSA execs team if there are any questions.

VIMS has a styling brand which can be found here:
VIMS style guide: http://www.vims.edu/intranet/pubs/_docs/vims_style_guide.pdf

And W&M has a branding website here: https://brand.wm.edu/

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