Dear Mr. Daniels,

Branding is a management concept that has gained increasing popularity in higher education institutions over the last decade. In the face of increased national and international competition, universities and colleges in all parts of the world have begun to search for a unique definition of what they are in order to differentiate themselves and attract students and faculty. A new vocabulary such as branding, corporate communications, identity, and reputation has emerged in academia, making higher education organizations more aware of the link between what they “stand for” in terms of values and characteristics, and how they are perceived.

The branding of higher education institutions occurs within a context that is characterized by an increasing transfer of “good” business practices from the private sector. Practices such as performance management, managerialism, entrepreneurialism, and new models of finance and governance are only some of the reform waves that contribute to the transformation of higher education institutions. As a result, the higher education sector now functions like an industry and the modern university now seems more like a “stakeholder university” than a “republic of scholars”.

To be clear, more than a look, logo, or letterhead, a brand is a promise that we make – and strive to keep – to our most important audiences. It is a promise that is valued to the degree that:

• Students will pay for it with tuition dollars

• Donors will support it with donated dollars

• Faculty and staff will commit their careers to it

It is this idea of promises – made and kept – that is the heart and soul of branding.

Sincerely,

First and Last Name, Title