

UNC's Brand & the Impact of UNC COM



UNIVERSITY OF
**NORTHERN
COLORADO**

Elevating UNC's Brand

- ▶ Last fall, the Board challenged us to ensure that the launch of UNC's College of Osteopathic Medicine became more than the successful introduction of a new college. The opportunity was to **leverage this historic moment to elevate the UNC brand as a whole** in order to:
 - ▶ Increase awareness and public perception
 - ▶ Support undergraduate and graduate program enrollment
 - ▶ Engage alumni and donors
 - ▶ Strengthen the perceived value of a UNC degree
- ▶ Our strategy was intentionally built around that charge. The results demonstrate a significant **institutional halo effect**.

Elevating UNC's Brand, Continued

- ▶ Rather than market the College of Osteopathic Medicine in isolation, UNC created an integrated ecosystem of paid media, earned media, digital engagement and high-impact experiences designed to make the COM one of the most visible expressions of the broader UNC brand.
- ▶ The College of Osteopathic Medicine Put UNC in Front of New and Larger Audiences
- ▶ UNC began building the COM story years before the doors opened, using each major milestone to **expand awareness and position the university** in increasingly significant conversations.

Elevating UNC's Brand through Earned Media

- ▶ Since FY22, earned media surrounding the COM has generated:
 - ▶ **381 MEDIA STORIES**
 - ▶ **1.4B+ POTENTIAL REACH**
- ▶ The nature of that coverage evolved along with the college. Early stories focused largely on UNC's plans to establish a medical college. Over time, coverage expanded to legislative approval and state investment, accreditation, physician workforce needs, student recruitment and ultimately the opening of the college.
- ▶ By FY26, COM coverage generated **435 million in potential reach**.
- ▶ In just the first two months of FY27, that figure reached **910 million**.

Elevating UNC's Brand through Earned Media

- ▶ The July 24 Grand Opening and White Coat ceremony alone generated **31 stories across 21 unique outlets**, including
 - ▶ Colorado Public Radio, *The Colorado Sun*, *Denver Business Journal*, all three major Denver television stations, national medical trade media, Yahoo News local Spanish-language radio, and a national medical trade publication.
- ▶ The result was more than publicity for a new college. **UNC increasingly became part of larger statewide and national conversations about medical education, healthcare access, rural medicine and Colorado's physician workforce.**

Elevating UNC's Brand through Paid Media

- ▶ The COM and UNC Brand campaigns were deliberately distinct. The traditional Brand campaign primarily targeted prospective undergraduate students and their supporters. The COM campaign, launched in December 2025, had a different audience and message and introduced UNC and UNC COM to new audiences.
 - ▶ This included UNC's **first-ever major out-of-home presence at Denver International Airport**, putting the university brand in front of an enormous and highly diverse audience.
- ▶ Together, paid and earned media dramatically increased the number of people encountering UNC significantly.

A Measurable Halo for the UNC Brand

- ▶ Results are seen in the performance of UNC's existing Brand campaign which did **not** advertise the College of Osteopathic Medicine. After the COM campaign entered the market and earned-media visibility accelerated, the Brand campaign became substantially more effective.
 - ▶ **4.8M** Website visitors - Up 243%
 - ▶ **199%** More people taking action after searching UNC by name
 - ▶ **124%** Denver metro search inquiries
- ▶ People were increasingly arriving at our Brand advertising **already knowing who we were.**

A Measurable Halo for the UNC Brand

- ▶ General university inquiries increased **133%**.
- ▶ Health-program inquiries increased approximately **350%**.
- ▶ Broad awareness results increased **307%**.
- ▶ Direct visits to unco.edu increased **160%**.
 - ▶ **72% increase** in searches for UNC by name in July and **149% increase** in searches for UNC by name in August
- ▶ And the traditional Brand campaign became considerably more efficient.
 - ▶ Broad awareness campaigns reached **41% more people** and generated **250% more actions**
 - ▶ Cost Per Click **fell 6%** and Click Through Rates **improved 296%**

A Measurable Halo for the UNC Brand

- ▶ Paid & Organic Social results showed that:
 - ▶ 25% uptick in post engagements
 - ▶ 80% increase in post comments
 - ▶ 267% increase in post saves
 - ▶ Video views increased 489%
 - ▶ Link Click volume increased 121%
- ▶ Our existing marketing was working harder because it was operating in an environment of substantially greater awareness of UNC.

Engagement in Support of UNC's Brand

- ▶ Across the major events surrounding the grand opening, **more than 1,000 people experienced UNC in person**—including alumni, donors, students, families, community and healthcare partners, public officials and other influential stakeholders making the opening an experiential brand campaign of its own.
 - ▶ Those attendees didn't simply see an advertisement or read a news story. They **experienced UNC's people, facilities, partnerships and ambition firsthand**—and then carried those experiences into their own professional, civic and personal networks. That word-of-mouth amplification expanded the impact of the launch in ways traditional media metrics alone cannot fully capture.
- ▶ **The Result: A Brand Moment Bigger Than the College Opening Itself**

Growth in Brand Equity

- ▶ Earned and Paid Media together with Digital Engagement and Experiential Branding created a sustained period in which more people saw UNC, heard about UNC, searched for UNC, visited UNC and engaged with UNC. As a result, our existing Brand marketing became more effective at converting that increased awareness into action.
- ▶ That is the institutional return on the College of Osteopathic Medicine brand investment: we used the launch of a new college to elevate the visibility, relevance and strength of the University of Northern Colorado brand as a whole.

Thank you



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