

BRAND GUIDELINES

 College of DuPage

Welcome to the New School of Thought.

Here, at College of DuPage, we're all about doing things differently—and that's reflected in every class we teach, every building we erect, and every decision we make.

Our brand is as unique as our college. Because, in essence, our brand *is* our college. It's what we say, how we sound, how we look, and even how we act—and it all adds up to create an authentic representation of who we really are.

And while we pride ourselves on being a different kind of educational experience, we also take pride in keeping our brand as clear and consistent as possible—because that's how we can make the College of DuPage story even more compelling.

And that's exactly what this guide will show you how to do.

WHO WE ARE

Before you tell our story, it's important to know who we are and what we stand for.

Positioning

This statement represents who we are at our very core, and can be used as a reference for any high-level communications.

We represent the New School of Thought:

A way of thinking about higher education that proves that it's possible to balance an affordable education with a successful career, and high-quality academics with high-impact experiences.

A way that raises the standard of higher education.

And, at the same time, raises important questions about its place in the world.

A way that's smarter,
more responsible,
more accountable,

and more aligned with the realities of the future.

Personality

If College of DuPage were a person, these are the traits that would define its character. Use them as a filter to help set the tone for everything you create.

Rational

(how we want people to **think** about our brand)

FORWARD-THINKING

Visionary; always asks what's next.

RESPONSIVE

Committed to creating solutions to meet the needs of those it serves.

SMART

Challenging, but with a practical purpose.

Emotional

(how we want people to **feel** about our brand)

OPEN

Approachable and welcoming.

EMPOWERING

Encouraging and supportive in helping you reach your goals.

CONFIDENT

A natural leader; not afraid to chart its own path.

WHAT WE SAY AND HOW WE SOUND

Our words are incredibly important. They do more than communicate our messages—they express our identity and help our audiences connect to us in a more meaningful way.

Core Message

The highest-level expression of what we offer and what it means to our audiences

College of DuPage provides a progressive approach to higher education so that students have a practical way to achieve their goals.

Our Attributes and Benefits

We provide **an accessible post-secondary education**, so our students have **more control**.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT AT A HIGH LEVEL:

When it comes to your degree, we believe that you should never have to compromise quality for convenience or cost. That's why we take an approach that combines all three—so you can have more control over your education and your future.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT IN GREATER DETAIL:

- We provide an education that's affordable and high-quality, so our students get a good return on their investment.
- We have an open admissions policy, so more people have the opportunity to explore their interests through our wide range of programs and subjects.
- We offer convenient and flexible class options, so our students have the ability to balance work, life, and school.

Our Attributes and Benefits

We provide **relevant and challenging academics**, so our students are **more confident**.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT AT A HIGH LEVEL:

The world is moving quickly, and so is our college. Our curriculum is designed to adapt to the needs of the modern workforce, and our professors are experienced industry experts as well as teachers. We keep up with the evolving marketplace, so our students can be confident as they take their next steps toward a career or an advanced degree.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT IN GREATER DETAIL:

- Our programs and degrees are based on the needs of today's businesses, so our students gain skills that are practical and in demand.
- We offer a quality education that can transfer to four-year institutions, so students are prepared to excel in the classroom.
- Our professors have deep academic and industry experience and are committed to teaching, so our students are ready for a career or to complete a degree.

Our Attributes and Benefits

We provide **abundant experiential learning opportunities**, so our students are **more capable**.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT AT A HIGH LEVEL:

Here, we're all about learning by doing. We give our students plenty of opportunities to put their education in action—because we know that it makes them more capable to succeed when they go out into the real world.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT IN GREATER DETAIL:

- Our innovative programs and facilities foster hands-on learning, so our students are knowledgeable about the needs of today's industries.
- Our internships and field-study opportunities give our students firsthand experience in tackling real-world challenges.
- Our campus fosters connections between students and the community, so our students are ready to contribute to the workforce.

Our Attributes and Benefits

We have a **diverse and welcoming campus community**, so our students are **more connected**.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT AT A HIGH LEVEL:

We know that it's easier to learn more when you feel like you belong. That's why our campus culture is diverse, supportive, active, and even personalized. You'll find a place to fit in at COD—and when you graduate, you'll find even more ways to stand out.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT IT IN GREATER DETAIL:

- We give students personal attention through an individualized learning experience, so they know they're supported and encouraged.
- With so many opportunities to get involved at COD, it's easier for our students to find a place to belong.
- We bring together individuals with a mix of backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, so all of our students know how to collaborate with a range of different people.
- We provide students with opportunities for interaction and leadership earlier in their academic careers.

Crafting Content

Things to remember:

1. KEEP IT BRIEF.

Attention spans are short, and your copy should be, too. That means getting to the point as quickly as possible while still keeping the language smart and intriguing. It's a tough line to walk, but it makes the message even more rewarding to the reader.

2. FOCUS, FOCUS, FOCUS.

When you try to say everything, it's hard for the reader to hone in on anything. Whenever possible, try to limit your piece to just one topic.

3. MAKE IT SCANNABLE.

When it's NOT possible to keep the piece to one topic—or if you're working on a long-copy piece that requires more content—make it easier to scan by organizing the information into smaller sections, and using subheads and bullet points to help readers move through the piece.

4. BACK IT UP WITH PROOF.

Our stories are so much more powerful when we have facts to back them up. When you're writing a piece, try to include specific proof points or testimonials whenever possible.

5. INSPIRE ACTION.

Every piece of our communication exists to convey a message—but that message is only important if the reader knows what to do after they've digested it. Always remember to include a clear call to action, whether it's applying for a course, visiting a website, or attending an event.

QUESTIONS TO ASK:

1. Does it contain a complete message? Have we communicated both attributes and benefits?
2. Does it match the College of DuPage personality? Does it sound like it's coming from the New School of Thought?
3. Is there an organized hierarchy that lets one strong point rise to the top?
4. Are you speaking directly to your readers and addressing them as "you"?
5. Does it relay a core message from the messaging map*?

*See the full Messaging map at cod.edu/brand.

SHARING THE BRAND

A brand is more than a logo or a name. It's the way we tell our story and the experience people have with College of DuPage. Our new brand guidelines are the tools we use to tell our stories and reinforce those experiences; they are the touchstone for looking, speaking and acting as one College.

Each and every point of contact we have with our audiences—students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and community—builds a perception about who we are as a college, what we are doing to fulfill our mission, and why we are important to our community.

With consistent use, these guidelines will create a unified voice and vision that support our goal to be recognized as the primary college district residents choose for high quality education.

Learn more.

We hope you find this booklet useful as you explore our new brand. If you would like to learn more, visit our brand web page for the complete brand guidelines and more tools to help you share our brand story.

cod.edu/brand



Marketing & Communications
425 Fawell Blvd
Glen Ellyn, IL 60137