

## 2008 Pride of CASE V Awards Program

### Abstract

#### *The Grinnell Magazine*

6a. Best Alumni/Institution Magazine, 2,999 FTE or fewer

Institution: Grinnell College

Submitted by: Jacqueline Hartling Stolze, editor, *The Grinnell Magazine*/editorial director

E-mail: [stolze@grinnell.edu](mailto:stolze@grinnell.edu)

Phone: 641-269-3404

1. **General Description:** *The Grinnell Magazine* is a four-color magazine published quarterly for alumni, students, parents, faculty, staff, and friends of the college. It averages 48 pages per issue, and carries no advertising.
2. **Goals and Objectives of the Magazine**
  - Grinnell College is a place where lively discussion and friendly argument are considered a worthy pursuit and an agreeable pastime — perhaps even a competitive sport. The magazine's goals reflect this aspect of the College, and its overall mission to educate its students in the liberal arts through free inquiry and the open exchange of ideas, in a lively academic community that includes students, teachers, alumni, staff, and friends. *The Grinnell Magazine* provides a place for the entire community to exchange ideas and to continue the discussion well past graduation.
  - *The Grinnell Magazine* is the college's storyteller, and by telling interesting stories well, it keeps alumni and other audiences actively engaged in the life of the college.
  - The primary goal of *The Grinnell Magazine* is to create a publication that is irresistible. When people read it and are engaged what they have read, we have succeeded.
3. **How Does It Fit into Overall Institutional and/or Advancement Goals?**
  - *The Grinnell Magazine* is the college's storyteller. It is Grinnell's flagship publication, proven by research to be the most widely read and highly regarded of the college's communication efforts. The magazine helps establish and maintain enduring connections with our constituents by telling the stories of our people and our institution in a way that is compelling and appealing.

By doing this job well, we set the stage for other programs of the college to achieve their goals. For instance, the magazine does not fundraise, but it does enhance fundraising efforts by winning readers (potential donors) and making them feel like an important part of Grinnell. We tell the stories of what their gifts make possible.

By doing what we do well, we lay the foundation for other institutional efforts.

#### **4. Audience**

- Alumni
- Faculty and staff
- Students
- Friends of the college
- Others

#### **5. Staffing**

- **Editor**—devotes about 50 percent of her time to the magazine
- **Art director/graphic designer**—devotes about 25 percent of his time to the magazine
- **Contributing writers** — two contributing staff writers produce a few stories for each issue of the magazine, in addition to their primary duties elsewhere
- **Classnotes editor**—devotes about 20 percent of her time to the magazine

#### **6. Total Annual Budget**

- \$194,573

#### **7. Average Cost per Issue and Unit Cost**

- Average cost per issue: \$29,632
- Average unit cost: \$1.05

#### **8. Special Circumstances or Challenges**

- Our very small staff makes producing a quality magazine a challenge. With only the editor and art director able to make a significant time contribution to the magazine (in addition to numerous other duties), we have had to be resourceful to find and cultivate quality freelance writers and photographers. In rural Iowa, this can be challenging, to say the least.

We have made extensive use of professional networks, such as the CUE editors' listserv, for help finding freelancers, as well as for the insights of other editorial professionals. We're also developing the talents of college staff in other areas — for instance, the director of the outdoor recreational program has become a good photographer whose work we have featured. Faculty members write feature stories. Students are a great resource, too, and working with young writers and photographers is fun and productive. We find this sort of involvement increases the engagement of people on campus, and brings new voices and perspectives to our content.

#### **9. Results**

- In 2008, The Grinnell Magazine was recognized by the CASE Circle of Excellence Award Program with a silver medal in the "Best Articles of the Year"

category. “Campus Mystery,” written by Grinnell alumna Sarah Aswell, was published in the winter 2007 issue of the magazine.

- *The Grinnell Magazine* consistently receives more letters and responses from readers than we have room to print. Whether expressing approval or disapproval, every letter reflects a reader who is engaged and sometimes enraged by what he or she has read. We count that as a success. We now include an overflow letters column on the web so more letters can be published.
- Stamats Communication Inc. conducted a recent survey of Grinnell alumni with the following results demonstrating that *The Grinnell Magazine* does in fact meet its stated and implicit goals (i.e., our audience reads the magazine, and they find it “interesting,” “informative,” and “intelligent”):
  - When asked, “What one thing does Grinnell not do well for its alumni?” Less than 3 percent chose the alumni magazine from a list of choices.
  - When asked, “How often do you read *The Grinnell Magazine*?” 87.9 percent responded that they read every issue or read most issues.
  - When asked to choose adjectives that apply to *The Grinnell Magazine*, 83.3 percent chose “interesting”; 73.3 percent chose “informative”; and 65.7 percent chose “intelligent.”