



Style Guide Recommendations

FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY | 10.2025



Current Style – Overall Analysis

FAU's current verbal identity is strategically sound, but emotionally restrained. It articulates values clearly and consistently, but stops short of creating an empathic bridge between the institution's goals and the student's personal journey.

An evolved style predicated on making FAU more engaging would:

- Use more narrative and less declaration.
- Center the student's experience rather than the institution's accomplishments.
- Trade formal confidence for authentic enthusiasm.
- Bring in emotional texture and everyday language that sounds spoken rather than scripted.

1. The foundation is strong *but institutional*.
2. The tone is confident *but formal*.
3. The voice is value-driven *but not yet student-centered*.
4. Diversity is well-integrated *and could be more personal*
5. The personality is aspirational *but could be more distinctive*.
6. The writing framework is clear *but needs emotional vocabulary*.

Future Style Recommendations

1. The foundation is strong but institutional.

FAU's brand language clearly defines its core themes: *ambition, diversity, opportunity, innovation, and excellence*. These are powerful and relevant pillars, but they're expressed in a way that feels more institutional than emotional. The voice is articulate, structured, and aspirational but it lacks the immediacy and warmth that engage Gen Z readers.

Opportunity: *Reframe ambition and excellence in terms of student agency and experience. Instead of "propelling to the forefront of higher education," use phrasing that shows what that means for me, the student: how FAU empowers individuals to lead, discover, and belong.*

2. The tone is confident but formal.

The editorial tone emphasizes pride and progress but leans into formality and abstraction. Phrases like "tackles some of humanity's most challenging problems" sound impressive but distant. For Gen Z and Gen Alpha, who value transparency, relatability, and social consciousness, a tone that balances confidence with realness (*less press release, more purpose statement*) will feel more authentic.

Opportunity: *Make confidence conversational. Replace elevated phrasing with clarity, storytelling, and humility. For example: "We're changing what's possible in education and who gets to be part of it."*

Future Style Recommendations

3. The voice is value-driven but not yet student-centered.

FAU's verbal identity focuses heavily on institutional achievements: research, rankings, and diversity statistics. While these are meaningful proof points, they speak *about* the university, not *to* the reader. Gen Z and Gen Alpha audiences want to hear about outcomes through lived experiences: *real people, real impact, real purpose*.

Opportunity: Shift from "FAU is" to "You will." Use second-person perspective and narrative to show how FAU's values shape individual growth rather than presenting institutional standing.

4. Diversity is well-integrated and could be more personal.

FAU deserves credit for framing diversity as integral to its identity. However, the messaging is still primarily descriptive ("the most diverse public university in Florida") rather than experiential ("you'll learn alongside people whose stories are completely different from yours").

Opportunity: Express diversity through stories, voices, and the emotional benefit of inclusion: what it feels like to belong here versus what it looks like on paper.

Future Style Recommendations

5. The personality is aspirational but could be more distinctive.

Words like *ambition*, *innovation*, and *excellence* appear frequently across higher ed branding. They're foundational but create little differentiation. FAU's coastal identity and energy, the "coexistence of access and excellence" and its *Atlantic inspiration*, are the elements that make it truly unique.

Opportunity: Lean into the *coastal optimism* and *South Florida energy* as defining traits of the voice. They can signal warmth, movement, and creativity, all of which are things that naturally resonate with younger audiences who see college as both a life experience and a launchpad.

6. The writing framework is clear but needs emotional vocabulary.

The guidelines provide a strong structural base (brand promises, position, voice words, tone rules) but lack an emotional through-line. For Gen Z and Gen Alpha, *emotion is logic*, meaning they decide based on how a story makes them feel and whether it aligns with their personal identity.

Opportunity: Introduce an emotional vocabulary around belonging, discovery, growth, and impact. Make those ideas tangible and sensory, things a student can picture and feel.