Dragonfly project strategy brief and outline

1. **Target Public Profile:**
   1. Current students, faculty, staff and alumni of CPMS; these people are scientists or mathematicians and believe in higher education. They are educated and interested in research and pushing the boundaries of current scientific knowledge. They are affiliated with BYU and are likely members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They believe in both science and God and are inspired by the intersection of science and religion. They feel that their careers are very important and contribute to society in a very meaningful way. They believe themselves to be creative and artistic in their own special ways. They love to learn, be engaged, and answer questions. Many of the people who read this article in depth will be geologists, astronomers, or people more interested in space and space travel than others. They may have taken Dr. Radebaugh’s classes or are interested in planetary science. They may also be interested in the mechanical side of the mission. They could be chemists who are interested in the prebiotic chemistry questions of the mission.
2. **Target Public Self-Interest:** These people want to feel like the fields they are going into are inspiring, important, and relevant to everyday life. They want to feel that their work and research is meaningful on a bigger level than the subject matter itself. They want to feel proud of BYU and their professors and feel like even though their University is affiliated with religion, that they are still legitimate scientists who are taken seriously in the real secular world.

**3. Action Desired from Key Public:** We want our readers to understand the importance and prestige of this mission so that they think highly of our professors and college. We want them to be proud of BYU and to share this awesome news with their peers in other colleges and even at other universities.

**4. Intervening Public / Media Outlet Analysis:**

* Which types of stories does this outlet like to publish? Which generate the most interest?
  + Frontiers publishes stories that highlight the different professional and educational achievements of students and professors in the college, including those with interesting research areas. Stories that engage a broad audience generate the most interest. A story like this will interest many different kinds of people because most scientists and mathematicians have at least a recreational interest in the prospects of space exploration, if not a professional interest in it too.
* How long is the typical post? Why do think this is the case?
  + A typical feature story in Frontiers is anywhere from 2-4 pages. This story will be about 4 pages long including graphics. It’s enough space to make the page feel open and uncrowded while still getting deep into the story topic.
* What are the topics that seem to resonate the most with the outlet's audience? Why?
  + Topics that resonate the most with the outlet’s audience are ones that are familiar to the reader. NASA and space travel are familiar enough to even non-scientists that this story will likely generate a large number of readers. After all, space is the stuff of science fiction and Hollywood, who wouldn’t be interested in it? This story topic incorporates several different scientific emphases and also has the overwhelming feeling of newness and prestige due to the unprecedented nature of the spacecraft and because of the name recognition of NASA.

5. **Story Topic:** Based on what you learned about the target audience and the publication, identify a story topic that will resonate with both the target public and the publication AND PROVIDE A RATIONALE FOR WHY YOU SELECTED IT. Justify your topic selection with data.

* Use the feature story types we discussed in class to help you zero in on a story topic (case study, application (how to), survey/research, backgrounder, personality profile or historical piece).

The key here is to ask yourself a lot of questions (i.e., be curious) about the topics you are considering. Put yourself in the shoes of your target public (channeling) and figure out what questions you can answer for them. What are they worried or concerned about? What don't they know? What keeps them up at night? (Following list is ideas you want to touch on)

* The biggest thing I want to touch on is the logistics of the mission, what they’re trying to do, and why it’s important. The implications for the future of science and why this mission is relevant and worthwhile is important. What questions are we trying to get answers to with this mission?
* I also want to portray how special the fact that this mission was chosen is. The New Frontiers missions are a big deal and it’s pretty exclusive. It’s awesome that this project was selected and that a BYU professor is on the team for it.
* I want to do a good job describing the science part of it. I want to describe Titan in a way that people will understand but that isn’t too simple. I want to talk about what the machine is, what it will do, and why.
* I’m interested in touching on what Jani said about the political climate, stability, and budgeting needs. I don’t want to get into this too much so that the article doesn’t feel political, but I think it’s a really interesting part of the conversation I had with Jani.
* I want to describe Jani’s past work with Titan and how big moments in her career seemed to line up perfectly with new opportunities for her. This can just be a small point made.

**6. Secondary Research Ideas**: Identify at least three secondary sources you will use to help you write your story.

* Official NASA Dragonfly page
* Jani’s research
* NASA’s data from Cassini and general information about Saturn and Titan

7. Tone: What emotion are you trying to get your target public to feel in this feature?

* Wonder
* Awe
* Excitement
* Pride (on behalf of Jani and BYU)
* Anticipation
* Curiosity

8. News Values: Identify as many news values as you can that realistically are reflected in the story topic. Be as descriptive as you can about how each news value applies to the story. Don't settle for vague descriptions, be concrete and specific about how and why each value applies. Also include a brief statement about how each of the values you selected help you to appeal to your target public?

* Newness: This is the first time that we’ve sent a drone to the surface of Titan. It’s the first drone that will fly around its planet. It was just recently announced as the newest New Frontiers mission.
* Prominence: Everyone knows what NASA is, so the name-recognition of such a classic agency will pique people’s interest. Also, the New Frontiers mission is a pretty prestigious program, so the fact that THIS project was selected says a lot about how important it is.
* Proximity: This is a BYU professor who is on a team of incredible scientists for a huge NASA-sponsored project. This project would feel much farther away if not for Jani being at BYU.
* Bizarreness: You could argue that this story is somewhat bizarre due to the nature of the drone being a helicopter that can actually fly around another planet and be stable. Compared to past NASA missions, this is very different and new.
* Impact: This will have a profound impact on how much we understand about Titan and other planets. It will answer vital questions about prebiotic chemistry and what happens before life can start. The nature of the spacecraft will change the way we explore other planets in a way never done before.
* Conflict: While this will only be part of the article, the political implications when it comes to NASA funding and the funding for this project compared to other NASA endeavors shows some signs of potential conflict. The budget cuts that Jani mentioned about earth science research is concerning and could cause more problems down the road for this mission.

9. Primary Messages (subheads of your feature story): Based on what you know about your target public and what you learned from conducting secondary research and your interviews with a subject matter expert, identify the primary messages that will resonate the most with that public.  What are the 2-3 messages that you need to communicate with a member of your target public to educate him/her about this topic? What are the main takeaways you are trying to communicate with them?

* The mission: What is New Frontiers, Dragonfly, and Titan? What is the purpose of the mission, and what questions are they trying to answer? (Explain what the spacecraft will do, and how, and just the general logistics of what they’re trying to do.) (Questions about life and how it starts)
* What does Jani Have to do with it, and how does her research apply? What is her role? (Past research with Titan, her expertise on geology and dunes etc., why geological factors of this distant planet are important to us, etc.)
* What other factors are affecting the mission? (Government, funding, priorities, etc. Technological questions, the engineering of the thing, etc.) Why is this mission important? End on an inspiring, looking-towards-the-future note.

10. Secondary Messages: Based on what you know about your target public, identify the secondary messages you need to communicate about each primary message to make these messages substantive, valuable and convincing. Don't write vague statements here. You need to go find the fact, craft a detailed, specific statement that communicates that fact, and then provide a source for the information. You should go for depth. This is where you do the work that the reader is not willing to do that will make the story substantive and worth the reader's time.

* Look at fact sheets from mission website and interview

OUTLINE

1. Brief summary of mission, narrative style, introduce Jani at end
2. Talk more about what the mission is, what it will do, and more interesting things about it. What's the purpose? Why is it so newsworthy?
3. Start talking about the geology stuff and Jani’s role.
4. Then transition into how Jani got involved in the mission and what how her career and research has led her to this
5. Talk about potential problems or opportunities for more success
6. End on an inspiring note