Effective Communications for a New Era

Comprehensive Communications Plan

Plan by UH West Oʻahu Communications Committee:

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Background and Purpose

Since 1976, the University of Hawaiʻi - West Oʻahu has served the people of Hawaiʻi and remains a dynamic and diverse place of learning and cultural enrichment. Formerly West Oʻahu College, the University has evolved from a two-year baccalaureate institution in temporary facilities to a four-year comprehensive university at a permanent campus that offers lower and upper division courses face-to-face and online. These fundamental changes and a new focus on serving the needs of first-year students, in addition to the University's historically strong transfer student population, spurred the development of a clear and comprehensive communication strategy that reflects the growth and transformation of the University.

This comprehensive communication plan, developed by the UH West Oʻahu Communications Committee consisting of faculty, staff and student representatives, establishes a blue print for University communication policies and procedures that

- Encourages dialogue between all stakeholder groups
- Fosters the free and purposeful exchange of information that is transparent and strategically consistent with the University's mission and vision
- Creates a unified concept for communications that provides opportunities for constituency feedback on policy and planning decisions, and systematic evaluations of policies and procedures
- Supports educational effectiveness and accommodates growth
- Contributes to a high quality educational experience for University students and reflects the student-centered atmosphere that defines UH West Oʻahu

Expected Outcomes

As we effectively enhance awareness and understanding of the University's strengths in its academic, social and cultural contributions as one of the System's three baccalaureate institutions, a greater sense of community and shared values will ensue. The successful implementation of the communication strategies in this plan will result in

- Multiple streams of communication that are effective, transparent (internal and external) and encourage feedback and refinement
- Students, staff, faculty, alumni, community members and other important UH West Oʻahu stakeholders feeling connected to each other and engaged with the University, its mission and goals.
- Prospective students and their families understanding UH West Oʻahu's strengths as a student-centered institution that values clear, consistent, relevant communication.
- Increased awareness of UH West Oʻahu's distinctions within the University of Hawaiʻi System and statewide.
- Effective student recruitment and continued student success.
- Enhancement of existing academic programs and development of new academic programs of distinction for first-year and transfer students.
- More partnerships for institutional advancement and educational collaborations.

Mission and Vision

This section represents UH West Oʻahu's mission and vision for the future. The messages reflect current and future aspirations as the University grows into its new permanent campus and develops a culture reflective of a larger student body, increased faculty and staff, and the delivery of quality higher education programs that incorporate the latest technology and teaching innovations at a state-of-the-art campus in Kapolei.

UH West Oʻahu Mission Statement

UH West Oʻahu is a four-year, comprehensive university with an emphasis on baccalaureate education founded in the liberal arts, service professional, career-related, and applied fields, based on State and regional needs. UH West Oʻahu is committed to providing access to residents throughout the State of Hawaiʻi through its partnerships with the University of Hawaiʻi community colleges and its delivery of distance education programs.

Who we are and what we strive to be

- UH West Oʻahu provides an education that is rich in learning experiences to allow students to reach their full potential in a supportive and innovative environment that encompasses the aloha spirit.

- As a bachelor's degree granting institution, UH West Oʻahu welcomes students to reach their full potential as educated professionals so they can foster economic growth in their local communities.

- UH West Oʻahu develops quality professionals. Through innovative and applied programs, and a sense of community, students leave UH West Oʻahu prepared to excel in life and citizenship.

- UH West Oʻahu is the top choice for students living in Leeward and Central Oʻahu who want the richest learning experience and to study and learn in a supportive, inclusive atmosphere.

- UH West Oʻahu is a place where sustainability practices are integrated in the development and operation of the campus and within the surrounding community.

- UH West Oʻahu provides an enriching and engaging environment for faculty to partner with colleagues who share their passion for teaching and to pursue research interests.

- UH West Oʻahu provides an engaging atmosphere for learning through distance education technologies and teaching strategies of the highest quality that enhance the student experience and result in increased student understanding and engagement.

Key Stakeholders

UH West Oʻahu values its relationships with key stakeholders and will work to communicate efficiently and effectively with all groups in order to develop University advocates and create a community of support for campus programs and initiatives. Building and maintaining these relationships is essential for developing a culture of engagement at UH West Oʻahu, and helps to ensure the delivery and acceptance of quality higher education programs for generations to come.

UH West Oʻahu key stakeholders are

- University community (faculty, staff, administrators, and UH System representatives)
- Current students, prospective high school students, and parents
- UH Board of Regents
- UH Community Colleges and other institutional partners
- Alumni and donors
- Employers and graduate schools
- State leadership (Governor, legislators, public officials, and opinion leaders)
- Residents of Central and Leeward Oʻahu
- Media (local, state, national, higher education, higher education trade)

Stakeholders	What we want them to think	What we want them to do
University community (faculty, staff, administrators and UH System representatives)	• I am proud to work for UH West Oʻahu and I am an important contributor to its success. • I feel connected to UH West Oʻahu, my colleagues and students. • I believe in UH West Oʻahu's mission and feel a personal responsibility for creating an enriching student learning experience	• Speak enthusiastically, knowledgeably and with pride about the quality, impact and initiatives of the University they work for. • Support and promote UH West Oʻahu with other key stakeholders.
Current students	• I attend a great university and my UH West Oʻahu degree will help me achieve important life goals. • I feel supported and thrive in UH West Oʻahu's ʻohana atmosphere. • My UH West Oʻahu degree is a great value. • UH West Oʻahu offers me a high quality, higher education experience. • I made the right choice and I am glad I am here.	• Speak enthusiastically, knowledgeably and with pride about UH West Oʻahu. • Be engaged in classes and in campus life. • Recommend UH West Oʻahu as a top-choice to get a college degree in Hawaiʻi. • Become involved citizens in their communities. • Connect with UH West Oʻahu for a lifetime. • Persist and graduate from UH West Oʻahu
Prospective students and their parents	• UH West Oʻahu is a top-choice destination for a university education. • UH West Oʻahu is welcoming, affordable and supportive. • UH West Oʻahu offers degrees that will help me achieve my career and life goals. • UH West Oʻahu offers quality programs that are a good value. • UH West Oʻahu offers a vibrant campus life experience	• Make UH West Oʻahu their first choice. • Ask about opportunities, student life and financial aid at UH West Oʻahu. • Tell others why they are choosing UH West Oʻahu. • Recognize the benefits of UH West Oʻahu campus life.
UH Community Colleges and other institutional partners	• UH West Oʻahu offers innovative academic programs. • Transferring to UH West Oʻahu is easy. • I believe UH West Oʻahu offers students excellent and convenient options for completing their bachelor's degree.	• Speak enthusiastically, knowledgeably and with assurance about the quality, impact and educational programs at UH West Oʻahu. • Promote UH West Oʻahu transfer opportunities to students at their institutions. • Work closely with UH West Oʻahu personnel regarding effective and efficient transfer processes.
UH Board of Regents	• UH West Oʻahu is a campus essential to achieving UH System goals for increasing the number of college graduates in Hawaiʻi and raising the number Native Hawaiian graduates. • Faculty and administration are highly capable of achieving the goals of the Academic Plan.	• Speak enthusiastically, knowledgeably and with pride about the quality, impact and initiatives of UH West Oʻahu. • Advocate for state resources • Support the interests of the University.

Stakeholders	What we want them to think	What we want them to do
Alumni and donors	• I am proud to be a UH West Oʻahu graduate. • My degree from UH West Oʻahu is a great value. • I have a vested interest in the success of UH West Oʻahu. • UH West Oʻahu is a good steward of all its resources.	• Speak enthusiastically, knowledgeably and with pride about the quality, impact, and initiatives of the University. • Support and advocate on behalf of UH West Oʻahu.
Employers and graduate schools	• UH West Oʻahu students are well prepared for challenging careers and continued learning at the graduate level.	• Recruit, hire and/or accept UH West Oʻahu graduates
State leadership	• UH West Oʻahu is an important UH campus that is essential to raising the educational capital in the State of Hawaiʻi. • UH West Oʻahu has a profound impact on the quality of life in the State of Hawaiʻi. • UH West Oʻahu is an important contributor to Hawaiʻi's economic engine. • UH West Oʻahu students deserve as much funding support as students from other UH campuses.	• Be familiar with UH West Oʻahu programs, opportunities and unique offerings. • Recommend and promote UH West Oʻahu to college-bound students and their families. • Allocate resources and enact legislation supporting UH West Oʻahu.
Residents of Central and Leeward Oʻahu	• UH West Oʻahu is a supportive and participating member of the Kapolei/Central/Leeward communities. • UH West Oʻahu is a valuable community partner. • UH West Oʻahu helps to raise the quality of life in the Kapolei/Central/Leeward communities.	• Speak enthusiastically, knowledgeably and with pride about the quality, impact, and initiatives of UH West Oʻahu. • Attend UH West Oʻahu events and participate in continuing education opportunities.
Media (local, state, higher education, higher education trade)	• UH West Oʻahu is a member of the University of Hawaiʻi System and worthy of including in stories about UH and higher education. • UH West Oʻahu faculty are experts in their fields that can be called upon for opinions and input on news and events. • UH West Oʻahu is an important contributor to Hawaiʻi's economic engine. • UH West Oʻahu Administration is capable and forward thinking.	• Report accurately and informatively about UH West Oʻahu's impact and contributions to the community. • Include UH West Oʻahu in discussions about the University of Hawaiʻi in general. • Report favorably on initiatives and programs at UH West Oʻahu. • Respect and support students in their pursuit of educational goals.

Communication Strategies and Implementing Actions

Strategy 1 – Establish a Comprehensive Communications Framework (immediate initiative)

Facilitating transparent administrative decision-making processes with the purposeful and regular dissemination of information between faculty, staff, and students involves creating the necessary communications framework. This strategy establishes principles and objectives for University communication activities. It acts as the structure for the University's entire communication effort and supports UH West O'ahu's mission, vision and underlying values. As these values continue to evolve, all Communications Plan strategies and implementing actions will evolve to reflect changes in the University's mission and vision. Metrics, measurable data, and evidence will be used whenever possible by individuals, committees, and departments when communicating the status of institutional objectives.

UH West O'ahu values transparent, open, accurate, and collaborative communication. Effective internal communication creates purposeful dialogue between administrators, faculty, staff and students, thus contributing to academic and professional development, and general job/student satisfaction. Strong internal communication helps in creating a sense of responsibility, pride and motivation among all stakeholders resulting in an engaged audience that actively participates in the development of the University, and the formation of a shared and positive UH West O'ahu identity.

UH West O'ahu external communication promotes dialogue with the surrounding community. Effective external communication enhances UH West O'ahu's reputation as a high quality academic institution with faculty that are experts in their fields, a university offering bachelor's degrees that help students achieve career and life goals, and an education hub that is an important contributor to Hawai'i's economic engine.

   Implementing Actions

   a. Provide UH West O'ahu employees with information and updates regarding
      the UH West O'ahu campus and community
      1. Continue the monthly "Chancellor's Message" (initiated in November
         2013) to provide faculty, staff, and students with information about the
         state of the university. Programs, faculty, staff and students are
         recognized for their achievements.
      2. Establish "State of the University" updates by the Chancellor at all-
         faculty/staff Professional Development Day twice a year, with additional
         all-faculty/staff updates on an as-needed basis (the first of these updates
         occurred at the Fall 2013 Professional Development Day and was very
         well received by faculty and staff).
      3. Continue the "This Week at UHWO" weekly news bulletin that is emailed
         to all UH West O'ahu faculty and staff, and includes multiple short articles,
         with links to photos and video about what is happening on campus each
         week. The bulletin was developed in January 2013 in response to the
         need for a formalized communication mechanism for faculty and staff. The

focus group research beta test indicated the "This Week at UHWO" weekly news bulletin is well received.

b. Strengthen existing channels of communication and develop new ones to disseminate information internally.
    1. Between UH West Oʻahu and its students (identified as #1 priority)
    2. Between faculty and administration through the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Division Chairs meetings
    3. Between faculty and administration through the Faculty Senate meetings
    4. Between staff and administration through regular departmental meetings
    5. Between UH West Oʻahu and the community
    6. Between UH West Oʻahu and the UH system
    7. Between UH West Oʻahu and the state legislature
    8. Between the three primary units: Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administrative Affairs

c. Develop a system of categorical communiqué for defined types of communication

Communication Type	Description	Responsible Department(s)
Academic program information	for UH West Oʻahu faculty, students, staff, the general public and other universities/community groups	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Communications Department
Alumni/donor announcements	related to creating alumni/donor on-going engagement with UH West Oʻahu	Communications Department, UH Foundation
Divisional information	to be shared between divisions and by divisions to students, faculty and staff	Vice Chancellors in respective areas, Directors/Chairs, appropriate committees
Emergency communication	immediate, potentially life-threatening situations that affect the UH West Oʻahu community	Communications Department, Campus Facilities
Enrollment and marketing communication	for prospective students, their parents and families	Enrollment Services, Communications Department
External announcements	news and event information for widespread internal an external publicity	Communications Department
Policy and procedural announcements (internal)	related to UH West Oʻahu faculty and staff	Vice Chancellors in respective areas, appropriate committees, Communications Department
Policy announcements (external)	related to UH West Oʻahu and the general public including UH West Oʻahu faculty, staff and students	Communications Department

Communication Type	Description	Responsible Department(s)
Social media updates (daily)	UH West Oʻahu Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Flickr, YouTube and other social media channel messaging	Communications Department
Student Affairs Communications	service, event and deadline announcements to students	Director of Student Development, Registrar
Uniform Information Practices Act	information requests for University records from the media and general public	Senior administration, Faculty Senate chairs, Communications Department
Website calendar content management	each division responsible for updating divisional event information on a regular and timely basis.	Food Services and Events, Campus Facilities, Communications Department

    d. Develop guidelines for effective internal and external communication processes based on best practices.
   1. Create a communications webpage of information that clarifies communication policies and procedures. Use data derived from focus group discussions and Communications Committee meetings, as well as additional survey data and other evidentiary information, to establish communication guidelines.
   2. Establish a policy to require all institutional campus committee meetings' minutes be made available to internal constituencies
   3. Add communication responsibilities to job descriptions as appropriate and include accountability for communication to annual evaluations of those university employees
   4. Everyone who has a responsibility for communicating should document by position whom that information is disseminated to
   5. Create documented institutional policies (see Strategy 8 – Collect and Organize Campuswide Policies).

Strategy 2 – Restructure the University Website (immediate and future initiative)

The new UH West Oʻahu website went live in September 2013 and was redesigned to create a more user-friendly, intuitive experience. Current and future updates will continue to model best practices in higher education. The new site includes

- a **user-friendly content management system** that allows for multiple administrators who are responsible for updating content for specific sections. This is an improvement over the old system that allowed for only one super-level administrator and required the administrator to update pages individually without linking results to all pages that referenced the same information.
- a **robust calendar system** that is linked to the University of Hawaiʻi System website calendar that allows users with a UH ID number and password to add event information after the information is approved by designated approvers. The old event calendar is a free Google-based system that was managed through a

staff person's personal account. There was no oversight or content approval process.
- **simplified, intuitive navigation** that makes it easier for users to find needed information. The navigation for the old site was cumbersome and non-intuitive.
- an **improved search function** that yields relevant results. The search function on the old site did not work well and often yielded little or no results when searching for information that was part of the website.

The Communications department included input from the Communications Committee focus group beta test when redesigning the new site and will regularly update the site to follow best practices, create a technical system for feedback from internal and external users, and make changes as needed.

Implementing Actions

a. Complete website administrative guidelines and establish pilot offices consisting of approved users responsible for updating website content for designated sections on a weekly basis. Starting in spring 2014, provide regularly scheduled training sessions at least once every semester for new website administrators.
b. Ensure consistency in look and feel of pages and content
c. Keep pages updated
d. Increase awareness and usage of the UH West Oʻahu website calendar by students, faculty and staff through on-going promotional campaign
e. Improve consistency and connection between UH West Oʻahu website calendar and myUH events calendar.

Strategy 3 – Strengthen Enrollment Communications (future initiative)

For nearly 40 years, UH West Oʻahu existed in temporary facilities, and served the needs of largely non-traditional, transfer students. The University first began accepting freshmen in 2007 with an initial class of 30. In fall 2013, the number of new freshmen was nearly 300 and enrollment continues to grow. Amidst this rapid expansion, UH West Oʻahu is working to develop a unique identity and sense of place in a new city and brand new campus.

As part of the University's recruitment plan, the Admissions Office created communication plans for prospective students and accepted students. The "Recruit" communication plan is designed to maintain contact with prospective students while encouraging them to apply for admission to UH West Oʻahu. This pool also includes students who have submitted ACT/SAT scores, or those who have requested information by phone or through the website. The "Accept" plan is designed to encourage accepted students to enroll. Many students apply and get accepted to multiple colleges, so it is important that UH West Oʻahu keep in touch with these students and their families, provide useful transition and enrollment information, and establish a connection between the student, their family, and the institution.

To make these communication plans effective the University needs a cohesive message that ties all pieces together in a reinforcing and strategic manner, the human capital to orchestrate the direct marketing efforts, and the financial resources to design, print and distribute the communication pieces for the target audiences.

Implementing Actions

a. Formulate a strong brand image
   1. Assess current brand identity by conducting surveys and focus groups with students, employees and public to determine how the institution is currently perceived.
   2. Formulate a brand identity by establishing a strategic communications team to determine how the institution strives to be perceived going forward.
   3. Create a brand position by identifying components of the brand identity to actively communicate to the target audience, as well as the methods and strategy to deliver the message.
b. Allocate a sustainable budget
   1. Build human resource capacity to include an admissions communications specialist to manage and grow the communication plans utilizing direct mail, digital brochures, emails and telephone calls with prospective and accepted student populations.
   2. Over the course of two years, transition the Admissions Office's operating budget to self-sufficiency by utilizing all of the application fee money collected in the previous year.
c. Develop necessary communications collateral
   1. Create a suite of brochures, emails and digital communications that projects and reinforces the brand position through all materials and correspondence within the communication campaigns.

Strategy 4 – Encourage Open and Transparent Institutional Financial Communications (ongoing initiative)

UH West Oʻahu is currently experiencing financial challenges as the university adjusts to the needs of a permanent location and the high demand for courses from a student population that increases by nearly 20% each year. In addition to working on ways to fund much-needed programs and coursework, UH West Oʻahu Administration is committed to communicating financial matters openly and systematically to the campus community, and providing opportunities for feedback.

Implementing Actions

a. The Vice Chancellor for Administration will share with senior administration a budget report that uses enrollment goals and other assumptions to identify department/divisional budgets, and provide an annual budget and a 3-5 year financial forecast. Senior administration will share with directors and chairs, as appropriate, for budget and strategic planning purposes.

b. The Vice Chancellor for Administration will report to campus community on prior fiscal year income and expenses that shows how we supported our academic programs and student support services within budgetary constraints.
c. Senior administration, including the Vice Chancellor for Administration, will inform campus community of any substantial new/unexpected financial situations (positive and negative, such as grants obtained, unexpected maintenance expenses, etc.)

Strategy 5 – Collate and Organize an Employee Manual (future initiative)

The purpose of the Employee Manual is to create an organized and centralized resource to house existing institutional policies and procedures related to being employed at UH West Oʻahu. It will be the responsibility of the appropriate departments to notify the Human Resources department of any changes to ensure all information is accurate and up-to-date. The Manual serves as an essential communication mechanism that ensures the consistent delivery of important information to all UH West Oʻahu faculty and staff.

Implementing Actions

a. Several offices will have the responsibility for creating and updating institutional policies. Human Resources will be organizing entity for the Manual.
b. All employees will be required to sign an acknowledgement form that they have received/accessed the Manual online.
c. Below are some organizational categories for consideration in the Handbook:
    1. Introduction (e.g., mission statement, history, institutional distinctions, organizational structure)
    2. General Information (e.g., University standing committees, senior leadership, communications structure, human resources office, beginning work, orientation, parking, keys, employee identification cards, employee categories, access to IT systems)
    3. Compensation Policies/Procedures (e.g., pay days, direct deposit, holidays)
    4. Employment Policies (e.g., statement of community, discriminatory harassment, diversity, employee recruitment & hiring policies, performance reviews)
    5. Employee Benefits (lots of existing documentation can be copied here)
    6. Facilities and Services (e.g., use of facilities, bookstore discounts, etc.)
    7. Information Technology Policies (e.g., telephone, electronic mail and internet usage, cell phone policy, etc.)
    8. Communication Policies (e.g. info on communications webpage that includes communication policies and procedures referenced in Strategy 1 d.)
    9. Employee Safety (e.g., campus emergencies, substance abuse policy, smoke-free workplace, visitors in the workplace, pets on campus)

10. <u>Standards of Conduct</u> (e.g., attendance, handling confidential information, confidentiality of student information (FERPA), Personal Dress and Appearance, etc.)
11. <u>Commencement</u> (e.g., institutional statement regarding importance of commencement celebration, policies for attendance, assistance at commencement, etc.)
12. <u>Financial Internal Controls</u> (e.g., stewardship of financial resources in support of academic mission, etc.)
13. <u>Leaving Employment</u> (e.g., termination of employment, exit interview, submit an IT Access Form to return equipment issued)
14. <u>Travel Policy</u> (automobile use policy, automobile usage guidelines, travel expense policy, travel expense guidelines, allowable expenses, travel arrangements, travel advances)
15. <u>Appendices</u> (e.g., organizational chart, leave policies/FMLA, etc.)

<u>Strategy 6 – Strengthen Institutional Committee Communications (committees, divisions, and departments - immediate and future initiative)</u>

Like most institutions, UH West Oʻahu has a number of committees that conduct routine business and support decision-making processes for the University. The rapid growth of UH West Oʻahu has resulted in inconsistent documentation of committee meeting minutes and actions as well as inconsistent communication of committee decisions. In an effort to ensure that committee organizational structures, decision-making processes, and committee communications are aligned with the size, complexity and character of UH West Oʻahu, greater attention will be placed on committees to document meeting agendas and minutes. Committees should also make responsibilities clear to new members especially regarding communicating with their constituencies.

Implementing Actions

a. Determine how the various committees understand their mission, perform that mission, and communicate the mission and process to the faculty at large and other relevant audiences. This information will enable the Communications Committee to establish a baseline perception regarding how communication works in and through the faculty senate committees (see Appendix *Faculty Senate Committees Communications Survey Results*).
b. Using the information learned from the Faculty Senate Committees Communications survey, the Communications Committee will identify best practices for all UH West Oʻahu committees that improve committee communications and clearly define committee members' responsibilities.

<u>Strategy 7 – Engage the Campus Community in the Development of the Comprehensive Communication Plan (immediate initiative)</u>

In order to maintain transparency and generate support for the Comprehensive Communication Plan, the plan will be shared with all UH West Oʻahu faculty, staff and students with clearly defined opportunities and procedures for feedback and input. UH West Oʻahu is committed to the success and implementation of the Communications

Plan and will create internal procedures for the plan's operation rollout. The University will make a good faith effort to enact Plan policies and procedures systematically and within budget guidelines. The Communications Committee will make changes as needed and provide scheduled, regular updates on the status of the plan and the completion of short and long-term communication initiatives on an on-going basis.

Implementing Actions

a. Announce Communications Committee activities at spring 2014 all faculty and staff Professional Development Day (including a summary of the results of focus groups).
b. Distribute Comprehensive Communications Plan draft at spring 2014 all faculty and staff Professional Development Day and encourage feedback to Communications Committee by February 2014.
c. Provide semester updates to campus community.
d. Obtain leadership approval for final draft of Comprehensive Communications Plan by end of spring 2014 semester.
e. Provide semi-annual updates on Communications Committee activities to campus community.
f. Establish Communications Committee site accessible by all faculty and staff that includes the Comprehensive Communications Plan and other relevant committee information.

Strategy 8: Collect and Organize Campuswide Policies (ongoing and future initiative)

Currently, UHWO academic, administrative, and student affairs policies are housed by their respective units and not within one centralized location. The Vice Chancellor for Administration's Office will be the party responsible for collection, organization and maintenance of existing policies.

Implementing Actions

a. The Vice Chancellor for Administration's Office will collect and organize existing policies.
b. A committee will identify specific policies that need to be written and obtain senior leadership approval to approach appropriate offices to draft policies for senior leadership review and approval.
c. A committee will draft Guidelines for Policy Development for senior leadership approval.
d. The Vice Chancellor for Administration's Office will develop a method of making the policies public and provide access to the UHWO students, faculty, staff, and community.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: Proposed Timeline for Comprehensive Communications Plan
- Appendix 2: Spring 2013 and 2014 Focus Group Analysis
- Appendix 3: Spring 2013 and 2014 Focus Group Questions

- Appendix 4: Faculty Senate Committees Communications Survey Results
- Appendix 5: UH West Oʻahu Formalized Communication Map – DRAFT IN PROGRESS

Spring 2013 and 2014 Focus Group Analysis
April 2014

In order to assess existing and newly developed communication channels and address the communication needs of the University of Hawaiʻi – West Oʻahu campus, the Communications Committee conducted focus group discussions with the University's stakeholders. The focus group research was conducted as a beta test in spring 2013 with follow-up discussions in spring 2014. The committee also included communication-related questions as part of a larger online and in-class student survey that was conducted by the UH West Oʻahu WASC EER Committee and implemented in April 2013.

The desired outcomes from the focus group discussions were to
- Determine the effectiveness of existing communication channels at UH West Oʻahu
- Obtain suggestions for improvement of existing communication channels
- Determine new communication channels that appeal more directly to the communication needs of all university stakeholders

Recommendations

Based on the focus group discussion data, the Communications Committee recommends the following steps to improve communication practices and student satisfaction at UH West Oʻahu

- Collect, organize, develop, and publicize official University campus wide policies with opportunities for input from students, faculty and staff (see *Comprehensive Communications Plan Strategy 8*).

- Develop and publicize a comprehensive strategic plan with a clearly defined University mission and vision that incorporates input from student, faculty and staff representatives.

- Create opportunities for students, faculty and staff to hear directly from senior leadership about future development plans, updates from the State Legislature, and other relevant topics that affect UH West Oʻahu.

- Representatives from Academic Affairs and Student Affairs work together to develop and communicate course forecasting information outlining classes that will be offered each semester (i.e. every spring, every fall, every other spring etc.) allowing students, with assistance from academic and faculty advisors, to determine academic plans more than one-year out and progress efficiently to graduation.

- Provide regularly scheduled and updated advising training for all faculty advisors.

- Work to provide students with consistent and accurate advising throughout their

- academic careers.

- Create representative campus committees responsible for coordinating campus events for students, faculty and staff to increase engagement and the development of informal communication networks.

- Add more physical spaces designated for student life activities (places for students to socialize, play intramural sports etc.) to the UH West Oʻahu Long Range Development Plan that encourage student life development, and foster student pride and engagement with the University.

- Offer more in-person classes on campus during the day when possible and in the evenings (vs. online only courses) to deliver on the promise of faculty personalized attention and a student-centered University culture.

Research Method

In spring 2013 and 2014, the Communications Committee conducted focus groups including UH West Oʻahu students, faculty, and staff. Spring 2013 participants were videotaped and verbally agreed to participate. Spring 2014 participants were audio recorded and signed a written consent form.

Students

Spring 2013

Student participants were selected randomly and approached at times in between classes outside of the Campus Center by Associated Students of UH West Oʻahu (ASUHWO) student representatives. ASUHWO set up a booth on two Wednesdays to recruit student participants and offered a small incentive item to students who signed up. ASUHWO provided an additional incentive item (pizza) to students who participated in the actual focus group discussion.

The student focus group was held on April 16, 2013. Five students participated. None of the original eight students recruited for the focus group showed up. Communications Committee members recruited nearby students to participate in the focus group. A Communications Committee member acted as the facilitator and another member took notes. The videotaped discussion was 34 minutes. The focus group discussion was shorter than the preferred one-hour length due to the availability of the participants.

Spring 2014

To improve on the poor spring 2013 student focus group turnout, the committee changed its recruitment method. A Communications Committee member publicized the focus groups via social media posts and a direct email to students the week of the focus group discussions. Promotional flyers were posted in all classrooms and UHWO Library staff encouraged student participation via announcements over the library PA system.

ASUHWO student representatives and Communications Committee members recruited students in-person outside of the library on January 28, 29 and 30, 2014. Three, one-hour long focus group discussions were completed 20 minutes after students were solicited to participate. In return for focus group participation, the students were offered free pizza and drinks.

<u>Faculty</u>

Spring 2013

Participants were solicited through an open call to all faculty sent by a Communications Committee member via email and then encouraged to attend via in-person appeals. One spring 2013 faculty focus group was held on April 24, 2013. Eight people attended the focus group that consisted of junior and senior faculty members. A Communications Committee member facilitated the group and another member took notes. The discussion was one hour long.

Spring 2014

Faculty participants were randomly selected from a list of faculty names and invited to participate by a Communications Committee member via email. Those who participated in the spring 2013 focus group were exempt from the spring 2014 discussion. Ten people attended the focus group that consisted of junior and senior faculty members. One spring 2014 faculty focus group was held on January 22, 2014. A Communications Committee member facilitated the group and another committee member took notes. The discussion was one hour long.

<u>Staff</u>

Spring 2013 and 2014

Staff participants were randomly selected from a list of staff names. Those who participated in the spring 2013 focus group were exempt from the spring 2014 discussion. The spring 2013 staff focus group was held on April 22, 2013. Ten staff members attended the focus group. The spring 2014 staff focus group was held on January 21, 2014 with 10 staff members. A Communications Committee member acted as the facilitator and another committee member took notes for the focus group discussions.

Facilitators

A Communications Committee member acted as the facilitator for all focus group discussions. Participants were asked to address open-ended questions approved by the committee. Facilitators met prior to focus group implementation to determine standard procedures to main consistency among the focus groups (student, faculty and staff). Other committee members acted as recorders/greeters (took notes and made observations about unsaid group dynamics and made participants feel welcome).

The facilitator's responsibilities included
- Posing open-ended questions agreed upon by the committee
- Guiding discussion back to committee questions when participants went off topic
- Asking participants for further clarification of discussion points
- Asking the impressions, opinions and perceptions of the participants
- Calling on participation from all focus group participants
- Guiding the discussion away from any dominant speakers
- Noting questions that were not in the original script but made sense during the course of discussion for future focus groups

Questions

The Communications Committee drafted focus group questions pertaining to the four communication areas (see below) addressed in the WASC CPR report. The questions were submitted to the entire Communications Committee to discuss and approve prior to focus group implementation (see *Focus Group Questions*)
- Students only (addressing communication between UHWO and students)
- Faculty (addressing communication between faculty and UH West Oʻahu Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs and the Chancellor's Office)
- Staff (addressing communication between staff and UH West Oʻahu Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Administrative Affairs and the Chancellor's Office)
- Alumni and community members (addressing external UHWO communications)

Focus group data analysis

All focus group comments were transcribed (with the names of participants removed) and analyzed by the committee. The committee compared the results from the spring 2013 and 2014 focus groups, pulled out conversation themes and determined descriptive statements for what was discussed by the participants. The spring 2013 student focus group discussion was not compared with the spring 2014 discussions due to problems with the spring 2013 sample size, length of discussion and non-representative make-up of the group.

The following main conversation themes were determined upon completion of the focus groups

1. **Community**
   Students, faculty, and staff view UH West Oʻahu as a small, friendly campus that offers students individualized attention and positive support.

   Students

   "I think I would characterize it as like more welcoming like. Students are more welcomed to actually go to class. The atmosphere is like, for a better word, chill. They have a good academic, academia going here, it's respectable. But in like other areas, you're like thrown into college immediately, you're like, 'oh where do I go?' It's small so you're not like running around like, 'where's my building? Where do I gotta go?' it's like, 'oh, it's right there' even if you're a brand new

person here, it feels you go through adjustment very quickly. So students who come here or transfer here, they're not taking long amounts of time like wasting their class hours trying to find out where everything is, it's like right there. People are very friendly, and the staff is actually very helpful. So it's not like you're on your own. You always got your own support group."

"Kinda like what he was saying about 'ohana. It feels like a close-knit community, 'cause our professors from like, that I've taken a few semesters ago, I see them around campus now and they still remember my name. They'd be like 'Hey [name], how's it going?' So I like that, you know."

"To add to that I wonder if it's because like what everybody is saying, they're an up and coming school. And I don't want UH West O'ahu to lose that and I know were growing but we all like this small close-knit community feel. It's like it 'Oh no! If we get so big will we turn into Mānoa?' (laughs) And is it because it's so small that the teachers remember your name, and it's so small that you feel comfortable here. I don't wanna lose that. That's what I like best about it too, that it's small and it's intimate."

Staff

"The smaller community. The more personable, I mean everybody seems to interact more on a personal basis."

"Just the same thing, everybody said, um, I guess, I can only speak as a person who works here that it's a more, it's friendly, um, people. I don't know if everybody just gets along, or it's so small that if you have a problem, you can't just avoid someone, you have to deal with it, more than Mānoa. Because at Mānoa you can just cut the bridge, and it's not as severe as here. But, it's just a whole different vibe from Mānoa and I like it."

"Oh, my cousin comes here and she's kind of soft-spoken but she's um feels comfortable enough to speak to her professors. So she said she really likes that since she came from Oregon State and it's a different scene for her."

Faculty

"I had two or three, really, really bright students, came to my office to talk to me. They like to do that. Then, they told me they were going to transfer. I told them 'don't.' If you have to, to get the program you want to get, then you can, but if you stay here, I guarantee I'll look after you. I will talk to you. I will give you that attention that you will not get at some other university. I told them that. So what happened was that after those talks, they decided to stay."

"I would also say at that, that this place is very supportive. It's very supportive of students, and in my division, I see a lot of one-on-one, individualized attention that might be lacking at a larger institution, and I think in terms of my own experience."

2. **Student Life**
   UH West Oʻahu lacks opportunities for campus engagement, provides limited spaces for students to interact with each other, and there are few student life activities to keep students on campus before or after class. This negatively impacts student satisfaction and retention.

Students

"Cause when people ask about West Oʻahu, they're like, 'oh, what's going on with West Oʻahu?' And I say, honestly I say, 'there's nothing much going on' because it's upcoming school, it's promising, but it's promising there's not much here yet. I mean, I could tell them we're having this we're having that but nobody tells them it's years down the road. But I love telling them there's yeah, there's a point of small class size. I know teachers, I know people, but there's a convenience factor to that. People, it's so convenient people come here go class and then leave. There's no motive from them to stay, unless finals week, cram jam…"

"I think that's the problem in my prior groups we talked about campus life how there's kind of a small lack of here where like, people go to class then their like, 'Do I wanna stay in the library for another couple hours or go Kapolei or Pearlridge or something?' So I think there's like, there should be more. I mean, West Oʻahu is good. It's good points. But one of its down points is campus life. They do have field days and things like that where it notify the students but usually the same people are always going to that. It's not really like reaching out to more. I mean the two focal points like hanging out on campus would actually be just library and the student lounge. Where like we got two places – the library being more like studying, chilling, and just relaxing, and the student lounge where people watching TV or play games or whatever. So I think we need to boost or add some more things to attract people to stay longer and then they can connect to other people and you never know they might be like, 'oh yeah these classes are good' or they like spread the word. Plus what's good about West Oʻahu is that we're small, so word through the grapevine goes fast. Like can't do that at Mānoa where it's so huge like, people can be talking nonstop just to get everyone to know. Over here it's more compact you tell somebody then they tell somebody else it goes really fast. So if there were more events over here then people can be like, 'Oh yeah, we should go to this,' we should spread West Oʻahu like spirit and support our college and I think that would also help with recruitment, 'Oh you heard West Oʻahu they did this it was really awesome, we should go over here."

"Encourage people to stay here and do things here. I know people got jobs and stuff, they gotta go to. But when they don't they can come here and be involved in school. 'Cause when you're in school when you're sitting down on campus or in the lounge you'll eventually see the flyer on the wall that says, "Free pizza come to this thing," or, "Club meeting coming up," or, "This event is gonna come." And the more you're on campus the more you become aware what's going on.

And the reason the people don't know is because they come to class, go to class and then they leave. 'Cause they have things to do, nothing keeps them on campus."

Faculty

"I'd say that it definitely feels like a commuter school. The time that you see people is in between classes, there's very little like hanging out for the sake of hanging out. You know, I'll date myself, but hacky-sack on the quad doesn't really exist here. You know, intramural sports don't really exist yet. And it's, I think, there are opportunities, like [Speaker 2] said earlier, to do things for the community, the faculty, the staff, and the larger West O'ahu community, but it seems like it's all kind of hit or miss at the moment."

"There's no place to get a cup of coffee after 2 o'clock."

3. **Campus Culture**
Faculty and students value a campus culture that is collaborative and personal with ample opportunities to develop informal communication networks. The University mission and vision is unclear and the campus lacks academic and social engagement. There are not enough opportunities to collaborate and participate in initiatives, policy development and issues that affect UHWO.

Students

"I think somehow the encouragement of communication between student-and-student and student-and-faculty. I've been saying this the whole meeting. Students being proactive I think, students need to be encouraged to be more proactive and they need to realize that being a scholar doesn't just mean you're here for an hour and you're there for an hour. You actually take a personal interest in your work, you realize that you're doing this for a reason, you communicate, you talk about it and you work with people on it."

Faculty

"We need to build that culture for ourselves and take down those walls, get out of our silos, and move forward and come together. You know, because that's the only way that we, as a university, will be able to find that identity for ourselves. If we come together and work together, then we are examples for students, you know."

"Our emerging identity seems to be more as a job training center, than as a university. I don't see, like, the development of an intellectual climate, like that kind of student life that engages students. Our students come in and then they leave. Our faculty come in, and then, sometimes, they leave. And there's no kind of culture that would tell me that this is a university. People come here to get a certificate so they can go get a job."

"I see a university, while it's in transition, it's struggling, and I get that. I'm concerned about the direction, and while I have wonderful colleagues and great people to work with, and staff that are great to get stuff done for you, the way I see the university. I'm struggling to see it as a place. I'm struggling to see it as a place where faculty really do have a voice, where we have opportunity for innovation, and creativity in things."

"So, what I'm lacking is that kind of… personal touch. We don't have a departmental structure so that it is easy to go to somebody, you know, and I feel kind of afraid to go to the broader administration, because we've been told not to, and then you find someone who knows everything like [person's name] which its very unfair of people to go there. You can't go to [person's name] for everything, and [person's name] gets overwhelmed too. So we're kind of missing that personal place, you know, somebody to interact with, where you can just pick up the phone, go talk to quickly. Everything seems a little distant, which you know is funny, we have a small university, but that kind of thing seems distant to me, where I'm just so used to just walking down the hallway to our office."

"I think for any, any institution, you're going to have both formal and informal communications, you know any institution. I've built an informal network, I've been here three… and I know who to go to already. I think what would be good is to give the new faculty access to that info network as well. It sounds maybe unrelated, but it actually is related, we need to have more faculty like get-togethers, like eating, drinking, that's how people build informal networks."

4. **Internal Planning, Policies and Practices**
   Unclear internal communication processes affect student success and degree completion and lead to inconsistent scheduling of courses, program offerings, and course availability. Faculty and staff report insufficient communication regarding planning, policies and practices between academic and administrative divisions.

Students

"Or like your Writing Intensive classes offer a butt load of them during summer but you don't get any financial aid offerings over summer. So a lot of us are dependent solely on financial aid to pay for our school, and the Writing Intensive classes that are offered during spring and fall or so limited. They're full really fast, and I don't know if you guys have that problem but I have. And it's very hard to get into those class, and you end up almost having to take a Writing Intensive in summer class but if you're dependent on financial aid. It is really, really costly 'cause tuition is more expensive."

"Yeah, I get told by past students because I transferred from LCC so I had friends who were already over here and they're telling me when you transfer to take this class during this semester because you're not gonna see it for another year or take it during summer because sometimes its not even offered during the fall and blah, blah, blah. And you're caught up in so when can I take certain

things and then you find out this class you could've taken that you thought was gonna be offered isn't then you have to extend another six months or so."

"I think this college needs to work better on coming to the students about their academic programs. 'Cause a lot of things I've heard from a lot of freshmen and even upper classman is the rumors that they don't know for sure, 'There's a dentist program or a new science classes or new math.' They don't know. They hear it from the grapevine but they're not sure. So I think the school should better advocate or advertise that, for sure, like 'Oh, this is coming.' So they're not like, 'I don't know what's going on.' Maybe, maybe, maybe two years, three years, maybe now. Cause I think that's what's some of the students have to switch. I don't like the way that it's unsure, 'Is this coming, is this not? I'll just go to another college already.' So I think that'd be better for the students….yeah. Yeah. So they're not feeling like they're putting their time into something that they have to move to another college just to do. That'd be better for the students."

Staff

"And the students get frustrated, because like can't even tell you how many times they come in and the first thing they say is 'shouldn't you already know that? Because that other department…' There's been so many students where it's like, 'See, now you're assuming we're all talking to each other, but we're not.' So we've had a lot of students, that they then see it, which is not good, and not positive for the university, if they can tell when we're not talking. It's a bad sign."

"I guess that's hard for me to answer because I feel like I'm at the bottom of the totem pole when it comes to information. So, unless somebody, like my own supervisor or director tells me directly, I feel like I'm not going to hear about it anyway, at least what's going on in other departments. Unless somebody else said something to me, and it's not. In my position, and in my role, I don't get the impression that it's my job to be disseminating information except to the student, obviously. That's hard for me to answer because I don't get a lot of information. I guess that's what I'm trying to say. There's meetings that happen, I'm not necessarily at them, and I don't necessarily get the information trickled down to me, but there's meetings that happen, so I'm assuming that it's getting communicated somewhere."

"…so a Chancellor's forum once a semester or town hall forum where the Chancellor will say, here's what's going on Q&A, just to keep us all more informed. I think that would be very useful but optional not mandatory but…"

"It's kind of…almost hard to say because there is really no communication between departments. Except for the people at the top perhaps…"

"It's hard because we hear different things that come out of the same meeting, right? It just depends on your supervisor. There's no like overall minutes that gets shared with everyone."

"This communication forum [reference to focus group discussion] is so nice even though…really appreciate to see and there's a committee across campus thinking about this and talking about this…should continue the ongoing process. And I think, like what [person's name] said, writing the policies down so it becomes, there's one central place to go and to read it and to direct people who have questions would be really helpful."

"You know like at PD Day, when everyone gets the reports from the VCs, that's an improvement from before. But, between the different departments, I always want to know what's going on in Student Services, and you know, so maybe we all think there's a lack of [communication] between different departments."

Faculty

"But you know, it would be nice if things were institutionalized, you know, I'm still waiting to close out the books on the distinguished visiting scholar that came at the beginning of November, you know, it's now the end of January, you know, that shouldn't happen, right, and that's bad PR for us. I mean, there's just, there's so much low hanging fruit that if they could systematize some of these things, institutionalize them. That would be very helpful. Not focusing on, I have to talk to a student, to talk to a secretary, to make an appointment with an administrator. That's been institutionalized, and that's the wrong thing to prioritize."

"…but this is for planning for my students and planning for the program, to look into the Banner system, and you look at what a student's taken, and it's very difficult to decipher that, and I've just seen some nice systems where you get something, their degree audit, and you see, this is their program, this is what they've taken, and the blanks are what they need to take, and it's all laid out, and you can advise a student right on the spot, and you can plan, and I can say, okay, I need two sections of this next time, because I have this many people who need it, and it's very difficult. I mean, I ask people, well who should I ask, well, [person's name], or ask [person's name]. I bother all of these people, and it's not easy for them to collect the information, and it shouldn't be that hard because we want to serve our students, and advise them. So that's been ongoing… request after request, and that kind of stuff. That kind of stuff. It's information, and communication, and we need that."

"That's what, I, I'm not going to put blame or anything, but it's just when we have to learn about news through… for me, when something happens, spread it out immediately to faculty. You know, I mean, I've been at universities on the mainland where stuff, much more major stuff has happened, and immediately, each of us faculty had an email. Immediately, saying, you know, 'this is what happened,' 'you're going to be asked about this,' and in a sense, I'm getting my news from three sources, that's what I just wanted to say…So, I guess, what I'd like to get… I think, for the big picture, from the administration, I just want the information, if something happens that makes any news, I'd like to get information about the event, because I get asked about it. And I become the spokesperson for West O'ahu."

5. Resources

Limited financial resources create challenges for all departments and compounds communication problems. It restricts the University's ability to add academic programs and face-to-face course offerings that negatively affects student satisfaction and retention. There is a disconnect between what UH West Oʻahu presents publicly as an inclusive, institution offering on-campus classes and personal attention, and what is actually delivered.

Students

"I feel like West Oʻahu has majority online classes which I can't really learn in online classes that well like I want it to be more in class kind of thing. But whenever I see, oh this is held online, I don't wanna take those classes."

"If I had a choice as to online or in person, I would rather have it in person 'cause I learn better off of people because I read their emotions, and I read their reactions to what other people say as well as listening to what other people say. I can't just sit…I can't just stare…my eyes are already getting scurry enough as it is."

"It feels like online classes are just for professors…here's what you have to read, here's your assignment and they just walk away."

"They don't have enough teachers at this school to accommodate for all the classes. Like he said, there's a lot of stuff online, but not a lot of classes. That's the reason why I came to West Oʻahu because there were telling me there was a lot of classrooms, but when I check class availability, there's this bunch of online classes, more than the regular classes, so I'm okay, what's going on. I came in here with the assumption that there were more classes than online classes. This is the university. This is not the University of Phoenix where there are online classes. If that's the case, I should have when there. I mean, I like it. I like coming this way. That's why I came here. I like coming this way, and I thought there was going to be more classrooms and classes and that wasn't the case. I'm willing to work around it because I love coming here. This is my first semester, but with the Noʻeau Center and everybody else here, it's more like a community than it is like a regular university, and that's the reason why I like it and that's why I'm willing to work with it. But I'm just saying do they have enough teachers to accommodate with all the classes 'cause that's gonna be like another issue."

Staff

"This is my opinion, and it's so territorial now. It feels like we don't work as a team. Like West Oʻahu is supposed to be a team, not an individual department team, or a certain team."

In response to follow-up question "Any ideas why [there is a lack of communication between departments]? – "I think they're fending for their own space."

"And it's [limited finances] harder on everyone, because now you have to do more research, and it's not like 'oh, we can do this' and it's like 'I'm sorry, everybody's got to stick to the limits.'"

<u>Faculty</u>

"So, before they transition out, they do want to stay as long as they could, here, and take classes here, which means they at least like the university environment, they like the instructors, and they like the programs that we do offer, however, they're eventually going to be heading out. So, how, or why should they try to make this community, or be involved or whatnot, when they know they're ultimately going to head out, like sooner than a normal university student. So how do you make them invest when they're on their way out? Before they're fully in here?"

"Maybe that [communication] will get better when we get more buildings, I don't know how the layout will be, but it would be nice to have an open lobby where people, I don't know, various administrative assistants, are out there, and they're like "oh, what do you need? Do you need something?" and then, well, where I've been before, the dean's office, the associate dean, their doors were always open, which was nice too."
"…What I notice, that's what I hear from other faculty, that's what I hear from students, that they don't have a place here at the university for themselves because of the lack of resources, the lack of available buildings, the gym, a place to get coffee after 2. I teach at 7, my students are hungry. These are non-traditional students and I run until 9:45. By the time I'm done, these students are half dead in my classes. So, I feel for them."

"So for me, I think this is an opportunity, as we said. But we have to put enough energy to hire people who are competent and who work together. And we take our students, for me, I take them as 'my kids,' train them and make them competitive, but we need space. We need facilities, as we said, there's no way we'll have people stay here if there's no gym, there's no, something to, movies around, there's no boutique, anything. There's nothing around here."

Future steps

In order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of communication at UH West Oʻahu, additional research needs to be conducted that solicits input from other key University stakeholders including alumni and community members; and prospective students and their parents.

Spring 2013 and 2014 Focus Group Questions

1) How would you describe UH West Oʻahu? What kind of place is this? How would you characterize the university?

2) How do you find out about what is happening on campus?

    What do you like about it?
        What entices you to read/engage with the website/Facebook page/digital signage etc.? What do you like best about it?
            Why do you like it?

    Anything you don't like about it?
        What don't you like about the website/Facebook page/digital signage etc.?
        What do you not like about it?
            Why don't you like it?

    How do you share what is happening in your department, club or program?

    Please elaborate on…
    Tell me more about…

3) How would you prefer to be communicated with?

    What would you like to see the university do to improve on getting the word out?

    If the university used other routes to communicate with you, what would you like to see? How would you like to be communicated with?

    How would you prefer to communicate your views and opinions?

    Please elaborate on…
    Tell me more about…

4) How do you feel about the information you're currently getting? What kind of information are you most interested in?

    How do you feel about the frequency of communication?

    How do you feel about the appropriateness of the information you're getting?

    Any suggestions for improvement? What would you like to see the university do to improve on the information currently being provided?

    Please elaborate on…
    Tell me more about…

5) FOR FACULTY AND STAFF ONLY: How do you feel about internal communication at the university?

How do you feel about communication between the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administrative Affairs and Chancellor's Offices?

       What do you like about it?
       What do you not like about it? Any ideas on why this is the case?
       Any suggestions for improvement?

Please elaborate on…
Tell me more about…

6) FOR FACULTY ONLY: How do you feel about communication between faculty and…

Academic Affairs?
Student Affairs?
Administrative Affairs?
Chancellor's Office?
       What do you like about it?
       What do you not like about it? Any ideas on why this is the case?
       Any suggestions for improvement?

Please elaborate on…
Tell me more about…

Faculty Senate Communication Survey Results

Overview
During the Spring 2014 semester, the Communications Committee requested each of six standing faculty senate committees to complete a survey about existing communication modalities and their perceptions of how effectively their particular committee communicated with the faculty at large and various branches of the administration.

There are six faculty senate committees, and all responded to the survey, and a 100% response rate was attained.

Purpose:
As part of its initial mandate and mission, the Communications Committee is actively researching existing communication modalities and their effectiveness across the UHWO campus. Standing Faculty Senate Committees are an integral part of the governance, administration, and development of programs at UHWO. Through this study, the Communications Committee (itself a special committee appointed by the Chancellor) seeks to establish a baseline of existing communication practices, and from that develop a "Best Practices" for Faculty Senate Committees, which may eventually be extended to ad hoc committees. The survey is a first step towards the development of a "Best Practices" recommendation for Faculty Senate Committees.

Overall Assessment of Responses:
The Faculty Senate standing committees perceive themselves as providing generally adequate communication, but only rarely excellent communication. Fundamental procedures could be standardized, including
- use of the UHWO Calendar to post scheduled meeting dates
- increased communication with the faculty at large and with division chairs about committee processes, procedures, and action;
- increased communication between committees as appropriate (esp. General Education and Curriculum)
- uniform posting of minutes to UHWO Intranet (in addition to embedded minutes in Faculty Senate reports)
- increased effectiveness of communication between faculty committees and administrative units, most particularly the Business Office, but also the Office of the Chancellor, VC Academic Affairs, and VC Student Affairs.

Anecdotal reporting from faculty in the Communications Committee itself contradicts some of the positive responses from the committees; therefore, a faculty survey to assess faculty perceptions of these same communication issues will be an essential next step in developing best practices for communication by and about Faculty Senate Committees (and perhaps all university committees).

Next Steps:
(1)   A survey of all faculty will be conducted in early Fall 2014.
The next step in this process will be to survey the faculty and then (perhaps) the administration about the same communication modalities. A comparison between the

committee perceptions of communication and the external view of the effectiveness of that communication will provide insight about the accuracy of the committee self-perceptions as well as faculty and administrative input about existing modalities of communication and suggestions for improvement.

(2)   A comparison of the committee survey and all-faculty survey will determine additional followup and the drafting of best practices for committee communication.

Detailed Analysis of Results

1. **Meeting regularity:**
   5 of 6 committees meet once a month
   - The Budget and Resources Committee meets on an as needed basis
   - The General Education has several sub-committees (not surveyed) – the meeting regularity was not obtained for these sub-committees

2. **Publication of Meeting Times**:
   This is identified as an area that could use improvement and consistency.
   - No committee publishes meeting dates on the UHWO calendar
   - Only 1 committee publishes their meeting dates on the Faculty Senate Website
   - Only 2 committees use list-serves to announce upcoming meetings
   - 4 committees send emails to people who might want to be present at the meeting
   - 2 committees do not send any notification beyond the immediate committee members
   - 1 committee added that they do send email to committee members
   - 1 committee noted an attempt at consistency (particular week of the month) and inclusion of dates "embedded in the Faculty Senate minutes."

3. **Sharing of information with the faculty at large and the campus community:**
   This is identified as an area that could use improvement and consistency.
   - All 6 committees submit minutes to the Faculty Senate on a monthly basis
   - No committees present detailed notes in any place
   - Only 2 committees publish minutes on the UHWO Intranet Link for the Faculty Senate
   - 4 committees reported that members report back to their Divisions each month
   - 1 committee (BRC) sends email to faculty about activities like travel awards and sabbaticals

Quantitative Questions regarding processes, procedures, decisions and actions

4. **The purposes and process of this committee are understood by the faculty at large**:   **3.5**
   This is identified as an area that could use improvement and consistency.
   No committees "strongly agreed"

---

4 committees "agreed"
        1 committee "neither agreed or disagreed"
        1 committee disagreed

5.   **UHWO Administration and other University Departments understand the purposes and processes of this committee**: **3.83**
       This is identified as an area that could use improvement and consistency.
       1 committee "strongly agreed"
       4 committees "agreed"
       1 committee "disagreed"

6.   **Faculty at large and other members of the campus community understand decisions and actions of this committee**:   **4.0**
       This is identified as an area that could use improvement and consistency.
       2 committee "strongly agreed"
       3 committees "agreed"
       1 committee "disagreed"

Assessment of questions 4, 5, 6.
Given the importance of the actions of Faculty Senate Committees, it is vital that all constituents understand the purpose, processes, decisions and actions of these committees. These evaluations must also be compared to the perceptions of the faculty at large (Fall 2014 survey) in order to better determine the actual understanding of these aspects.

Quantitative Evaluation of Communication between committees and various administrative bodies:
Committees were asked to rate how well they communicated with each of the following (on a scale of 1-5, with 5=very well; 4=well; 3=neutral; 2=not well; 1=poorly.

All responses were in the top three categories, and most were in the top two categories. The fact that one committee found communication with three administrative bodies warrants further investigation. (Even if there is no direct relationship with a specific office, communication should be fluid and transparent between all committees and all major units of the administration and faculty constituents.)

The best communication is with the Faculty Senate leadership, likely because of regular Executive Council meetings, and second with the Faculty Senate as a body, likely because of the regularly monthly reports delivered at Faculty Senate meetings.

Communication with the Business Office and with the faculty members at large had the lowest scores, with one committee communicating very well with the Business Office but three committees expressing a neutral communication relationship, indicating that effective communication is not in place. As in Question 4 above, communication with the "faculty at large" is middling, at best, with a 3.83 score here and a 3.6 score in Question 4.

Assessment: *Although there is clearly acceptable communication between Faculty Senate committees and the faculty at large, this category warrants attention and improvement given that the Faculty Senate committees and the Faculty Senate itself are the main mode of communication with faculty and between faculty and administration.*

Faculty Senate leadership	4.33	3 very well	2 well	1 neutral
Faculty Senate membership	4.33	2 very well	4 well	
Adminstration – VCAA	4.33	2 very well	4 well	
Admin. – Chancellor 1 n/a	4.00	1 very well	3 well	1 neutral
Admin. – Business Office 1 n/a	3.60	1 very well	1 well	3 neutral
Division Chairs	4.20	2 very well	2 well	1 neutral 1 n/a
Faculty Members at large	3.83		5 well	1 neutral
Other – Student Services	4.00	(added category)	1 well	

Subjective Comments

Q.9 requested the committee to provide a "description of its communication procedures to administration, faculty at large, and other departments." This question was intended as an opportunity for the Communication Committee to learn of other modalities of communication, and to ascertain an overall sense of how committees perceive themselves in relation to communication issues.

Depending on the charge of the committee, there are specific meetings with administration. For example, the Chair of the Student Services Committee meets with the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs; the Chair of the Distance Education committee has weekly meetings with the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs.

The question was not uniformly understood. Committees were asked to discuss the survey questions as a group and respond. However, one committee responded in the first person, so it is unclear if there is a consensus of opinion from this result.

Assessment: *In general, the responses here echo the results of the survey overall. The Faculty Senate procedures figure prominently in the processes for all committees. There are varying degrees of engagement with other divisions and offices as appropriate to a committee's particular charge*

Q10:   Additional Comments

Two committees expressed appreciation for the survey and "the opportunity to communicate."

The Curriculum Committee suggested end-year reports of all committee actions, especially for committees like General Education and Curriculum, as well as coordinated between committees with related responsibilities (again, GenEd and Curriculum).

One committee pointed out some logistical problems with the survey itself, particularly the exclusion of the Office of Student Affairs. (This was added as an "other" category by the Student Affairs Committee and included in the data.)

UH West Oʻahu Formalized Communication Map – DRAFT IN PROGRESS

UH West Oahu Formalized Communication Map

- → Communication of Event, Policy or Procedure
- ···· Committee Discussion & Formulation of Event, Policy or Procedure

Nalimakui Council · UHWO Adv Board · Labor Ed Adv Board · Senior Mgt Team · Chancellor · Academic Affairs · Administrative Affairs · Communications Committee · Enrollment Planning Group · First Year Experience Committee · Hawaii Graduation Committee · Communications Dept · Student Affairs · ASUHWO Student Government · Board of Student Publications · Campus Center Program · Student Fees Board · Division Chair Meeting · Prgm Director Meeting · Department Head Meeting · Department Meeting · Department Head Meeting · Student Body, Faculty & Staff · External Community, Alumni & Media · Faculty Senate · Academic Affairs & Planning · Budget & Resources · Student Affairs · General Education · Curriculum · Distance Education