SPSCC Project Communication Sheet

When embarking on any major (or even not-so-major) project, it's important to think about the role of communication in contributing to the success of your project. ***Who needs to know what? When? And how is that best achieved?*** These types of considerations can help you get the buy-in and support that are critical to successful implementations.

WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

Other than the work group that will be planning and implementing the project, think about all of the stakeholders at the College and whose work or life is most likely to be impacted. Here are just a few key constituent groups to consider and common considerations for each.

Students
- Will a system they regularly see or access *look or act* differently (even just a little?)
- Will a place or system be inaccessible for *any* period of time?
- Will the project speed up, delay, or make obsolete something students are used to doing?

Faculty
- Will this project affect their teaching environment in any way?
- Will it affect their ability to access materials or systems, even during unexpected hours?
- Will the project speed up, delay, or make obsolete something faculty are used to doing?

Facilities & Security
- Will this project need support from facilities or security that is *outside* their normal scope of work or schedule?
- Will any portion of the project create a real (or perceived) risk to any campus group?
- Does this project have any component that would need special security attention such as parking support?

Student Life/Activities/Athletics
- Will the project affect campus at a time when most students are gone but special student activities, games, or practices might be happening?

Lacey Campus
- Will this project impact stakeholder groups on one or both campuses?

Front-Line Staff/Phone Operators
- If a project is affecting students, what should these staff be prepared to say about it?
- Will students ask staff about it? If so, where do they send students for more information?
- Will the project speed up, delay, or make obsolete something staff are used to doing?

Information Technology (IT)
- Does this project involve new (or updated) software or hardware in any way?
- Will IT potentially receive HelpDesk questions from people affected by this project?
- Does this project affect any piece of equipment installed or maintained by IT?

WHAT DO THEY NEED TO KNOW?

It's a fine balance between communicating too much and too little about a project. Too much and folks tune it out, too little and folks get stressed. At a minimum, here's what people need to know.

1. **When** – As specific as possible, share what day/time something will be implemented. <u>It is imperative that if this changes for any reason, you communicate about the change.</u> If it's too early to know an exact when, let folks know that you will share that info before the change occurs and follow through on that promise.
2. **Anticipated Impact** – Tell people what you expect the impact to be, but be sure and also tell them who to talk to if the actual impact is different than they expected.
3. **Details, but not minutiae** – People like specifics and many people are visual, so whenever possible include pictures, screenshots, or even a sample to touch/test. However, they will not read long communications and—unless they were directly involved—don't engage with details about the process of a project. They just want to know, "what's it mean for me?"
4. **Benefits, not features** – Even though YOU think it's obvious that a co-locating financial aid and enrollment will save students time and create less frustration, people outside of that sphere aren't always able to read between the lines so be sure to share the benefits of a change when you talk about the features you love so much.

WHEN DO THEY NEED TO KNOW IT?

Soon. *But not too soon…* There is no magic formula for this, but here are some considerations to help make decisions about the timing of communications:

- Are there academic calendar dates that should affect your communication timing?
  - *For example, trying to communicate with faculty or students near the beginning or end of the quarter can be difficult. Moving your communication timeline one way or the other could have better impact.*
- How likely is it that something major will change?
  - *When sharing any level of detail, think about things that may be subject to change before a project is complete. If details change that you have already shared, be sure to make those changes clear in your final communications.*
- How soon will impact be felt?
  - *For a software update, impact may not be felt until the day it happens. For a change in enrollment process, though, staff will be out in the community with prospective students for months ahead of time and may need to change how they're describing something or what's in their print materials. This likely varies for each stakeholder group.*

HOW SHOULD YOU COMMUNICATE?

Living in a world where we are all saturated with messaging all the time, finding the right communication channel is challenging. Consider the information that needs to be shared, the urgency, and how much room there will be for misunderstanding when thinking about methods.

Here are some of the communication channels readily available to you at SPSCC:
- **Email**
- **Yammer**
- **Team/Division/Group Meetings**
- **All-Campus Forums (quarterly)**
- **Kickoff week**
- **One-on-one meetings**
- **Small group trainings/demos**
- **Website/social media**
- **Press Release**

Keep in mind that these are not mutually exclusive and using multiple is often a good idea. Also, the bigger the project, the more communication that should probably happen about it over a longer period of time.

SAMPLE Project Communication Plan Worksheet

Stakeholder Group	Level of Impact		
	None	**Moderate**	**Significant**
Students			
Faculty			
Facilities/Security			
Lacey Campus			
Front-Line Staff			

Strategic Communications:

Stakeholder(s)_____

Timeframe_____

Key Message(s)_____

From whom_____

Method(s)_____