Internal Communications

A path forward

May 2013
Audit Focus

Our assignment:

• Investigate ways that internal communications could be enhanced within existing resources

• Focus on faculty and staff communications
Methodology

• Survey
  o Conducted over two weeks in November and December 2012

• Communications review
  o This Week@MSU Denver, MSUDENVER.EDU, Mobile website and mobile app, Connect U, primary Social Media

• Peer Interviews
  o Portland State University, California State University – Fresno, California State University – Northridge, Weber State University and Boise State University

• Internal Interviews
  o 25 interviews conducted over four months including faculty, staff, administration, students and advancement
Survey Results

- @ MSU Denver primary source of news and information (85.9% responding this is their primary source)
- Academic policy (39% top ranked) and campus policy (21% top ranked) areas of highest interest
- Academic policy (56%) and campus policy (58%) ranked as highest priority areas of information “you’re not getting”
- Preference for one-stop information source
- Desire ability to self-select information
Internal Interviews: Key learnings

- Re-examine cabinet meeting structure
  
  “The meetings may have become too large to really allow substantive discussion on key issues.”

- Use existing technology to create more dialogue
  
  “I think the campus could benefit from more two-way communication that doesn’t necessarily involve showing up at meetings.”

- Ensure listserv policies enhance opportunities to communicate
Internal Interviews: Key learnings

• Ongoing challenges with access to consistent policy-related information

  “It’s really two issues: Knowing how to find the policies and knowing how to execute them”

• Department chairs increasing as key nodes of information

• Need for more help with the “why” around decisions

  “I find myself sometimes struggling for a better way to explain the reasons why decisions were made.”
Internal Interviews: Key learnings

- Continued value in in-person conversations (town halls, coffee chats) with leadership, consider broadening leadership in these conversations
- Challenges around making IT and Human Resources messages more accessible
- Support for continuing tradition of centralized communications with greater flexibility for targeted communications at the school and unit level
Internal Interviews: Key learnings

• While email is the official form of university communication, it is not the preferred form for younger students

• Incoming students increasingly have low tolerance for older forms of technology

• Schools and departments lack the technology and strategies to communicate with key groups of students

“What does meaningful student engagement look like with this generation?”
Peer Interviews: Key Learnings

• Traditional walls between internal and external communications are gone
• Investments in communications closely track university vision and focus
• Systems for developing, packaging, repackaging and disseminating content are the holy grail
• Alumni increasingly treated as a key internal audience
Recommendations

• @ MSU Denver as daily, one-stop information source

• Enhanced storytelling and story sharing in support of university vision and key initiatives
  o Campus communicators program
  o Communications Advisory Council/Brand Ambassador program
  o Development of communications beat system by school/department/program

• Creation of a content storehouse for use by all (work already underway through revised newsroom format)
Recommendations

• Launch new policy website and develop robust, ongoing communications plan

• Development of clear and fair listserv policies, apply them uniformly (In process)

• Digital platform enhancements
  o Continued revision of current web presence
  o Responsive technology for smart phones and tablets
  o Ability to develop micro sites for key audiences
Questions?