

Research & Analysis

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OFFICIAL INTERNAL COLLEGE COMMUNICATION: FACULTY & STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

The Department of Institutional Research (IR) administers surveys to different stakeholder groups to gather information on client satisfaction. These data support continuous improvement efforts of planning, program review, and decision-making at all levels.

IR administers a satisfaction survey to all faculty & staff (full and part-time) every other year in the spring term. The most recent one, issued electronically in spring 2007, received responses from 339 employees. To allow tracking over time, the survey was fundamentally identical to the first one issued in spring 2005.

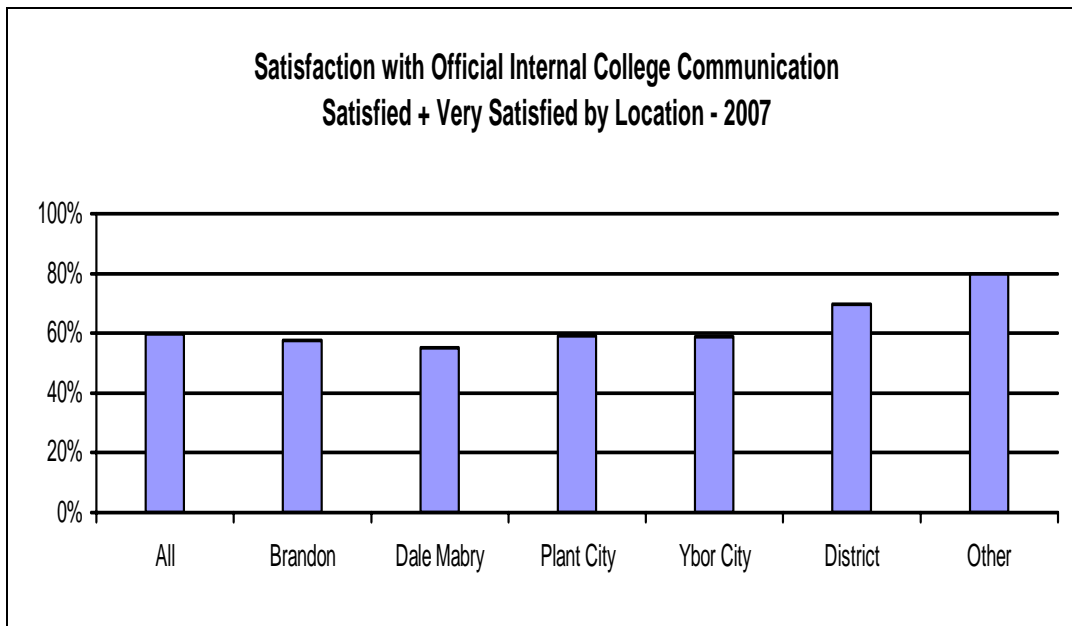
However, in response to faculty concerns regarding the effectiveness of college communications, a survey item was added allowing respondents to rate their satisfaction with "Official internal college communication." In so doing, an indicator has been established to evaluate the efficacy of initiatives to improve communication as assessed by future survey results. The purpose of this brief is to examine the results for the baseline year of 2007.

Results

The Faculty/Staff survey consisted of 42 items in which respondents could rate their satisfaction on a Likert Scale of Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied. The items were clustered in four sections 1) College Qualities, 2) Administrative Services, 3) Campus Services, and 4) Instructional Program Services. Satisfaction is expressed as the percentage of respondents rating an item as Satisfied or Very Satisfied. In addition, respondents could opt to answer three open-ended questions soliciting strengths, weaknesses, and recommendations for improvement to enrich an understanding of the numerical ratings.

"Official internal college communication" received the next lowest satisfaction rating on the survey – besting "Parking" by a marginal amount. The ratings ranged from a high of 96.8% being Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Library services to a low of 59.2% for Parking. Official internal college communication was rated at 59.8%.

The graph below displays satisfaction ratings for communication by location. The location labeled "other" has n = 5.



The communication item also elicited many open-ended comments (111), with the preponderance expressing dissatisfaction; but few recommendations were proffered on how to improve it. A content examination was conducted to assist in identifying the sources of dissatisfaction. The most frequently cited sources can be collapsed into four categories:

1. Electronic communication
2. Administrative communication
3. Intra-organizational communication
4. Need for more bilateral communication (lack of faculty/staff input)

The table below illustrates the type of comments received in each category as well as the number of comments.

Open-Ended Comments by Category, Spring 2007

Source of Dissatisfaction With Communication by Category	# of comments
Electronic communication mediums (email, telephone, public folders, web, etc.): Unlike other categories, the dissatisfactory comments were frequently contradictory and some expressed that email improved communication. Dissatisfactory comments included too much email; too little email; recalling & resending email; untimely email notification; irrelevant and extraneous email; employees do not manage their email and phone accounts (i.e. don't respond or delete); inappropriate use of "reply to all" in responding to emails; incomplete email distribution lists. Also mentioned on multiple occasions were Public folders as an ineffectual communication vehicle.	25
Administration: Lack of communication with faculty/staff (a variant of this was dean to faculty/staff); unilateral communication (top-down); untimely communication.	20
Intra-organizational: Lack of or inconsistent communication between or on campuses; between disciplines/departments; with adjunct faculty, day/night employees.	9
Lack of input to decisions: Insufficient faculty/staff involvement with critical decisions; not enough solicitation of user input; insufficient use of existing committees to provide input to decisions; not enough faculty involvement in academic decisions.	8

For readers of the electronic version of this brief you can view all survey comments by [clicking here](#) and using the left navigational bookmark to select "Official internal college communication."

Dr. Joseph Hoey, in a 2006 keynote address at All College Day, suggested that organizational and geographic issues at a multi-campus institution can make effective communication more challenging. Further, the administrative offices occupy their own "campus." Note the difference in the satisfaction ratings at District as shown in the previous graph. Difficulties with Intra-organizational communications are also exacerbated by physical separation as cited by respondents regarding inconsistent communication/procedures between campuses, departments, disciplines; adjunct faculty; and even day/night employees.

Conclusions

Although recommendations to improve communication were few, some included:

- Hire a consultant to improve communication;
- Continue to enhance a comprehensive college calendar of events that can be searched by campus;
- Share more information via in-service meetings and discussions;
- Develop a multi-media approach to communicate a message (i.e. paper, computer, face-to-face) as exemplified by the QEP communications program.

It can be inferred from the comments that other recommendations could include, but are not limited to:

- Greater employee management of their electronic communication accounts;
- Careful consideration in the drafting of emails and to whom they should be targeted;
- Greater use of existing committee structures to provide input to decisions.

The Institutional Advisory Council has carried forward their focus on the enhancement of college communication into 2008-09. One survey respondent suggests that improved communication may be more of a process than a destination - "Administration and faculty need to constantly work at communication in a positive and on-going way in order to precipitate trust and cooperation."

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