

Research & Analysis

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OFFICIAL INTERNAL COLLEGE COMMUNICATION: FACULTY & STAFF SURVEY RESULTS

The Institutional Advisory Council of Hillsborough Community College has among their priorities the enhancement of college communication. The purpose of this brief is to present results on a single survey item from the 2009 Faculty/Staff Survey measuring satisfaction with *Official internal college communication*.

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

The Faculty/Staff Survey is issued electronically every other year in the spring term to all full and part-time employees. The spring 2009 survey received responses from 329 employees.

The Survey

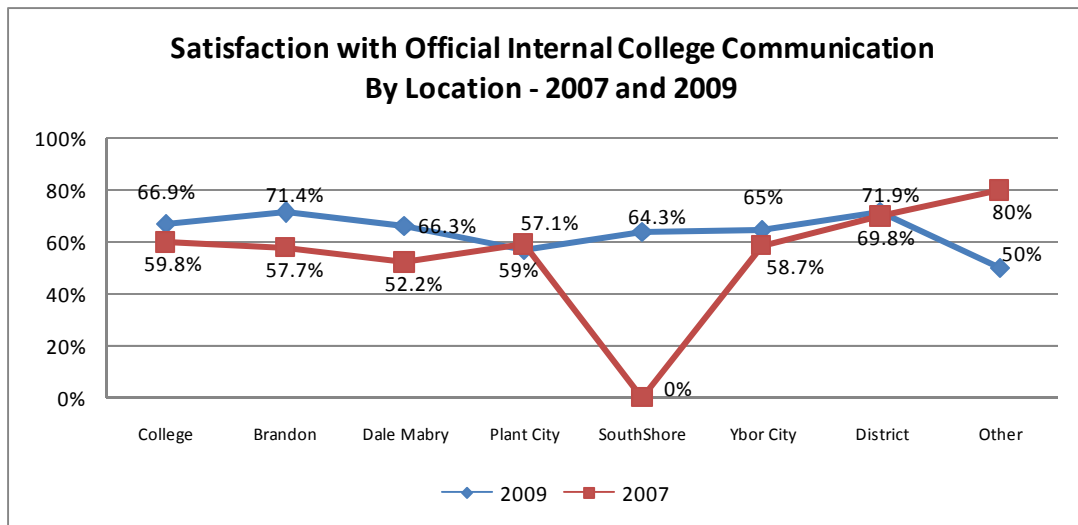
The Faculty/Staff Survey consists of 42 items in which respondents rate their satisfaction on a Likert Scale of Very Satisfied to Very Dissatisfied. The items are clustered in four sections 1) College Qualities, 2) Administrative Services, 3) Campus Services, and 4) Instructional Program Services. Satisfaction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

Results: Official Internal College Communication

The ratings among all survey items ranged from a high of 96.8% being Satisfied or Very Satisfied with Library services to a low of 64.3% for Registration process. "Official internal college communication" received the next lowest satisfaction rating on the survey (66.9%) – besting "Registration Process" by a marginal amount.

Among the campuses, the highest percentages of respondents who expressed satisfaction with communication were at the District Office and Brandon – 71.9% and 71.4% respectively. The lowest percentages of satisfaction were among faculty and staff assigned to "Other" non-campus locations at 50% and those at Plant City at 57.1%.

"Official internal college communication" was a survey item first added in 2007 to gauge progress in this area. Satisfaction increased by 7% since spring 2007 from 60% to 67%. More striking are the improved communications reported at most locations. The graph below compares satisfaction ratings for communication by location for 2007 and 2009. The number of responses to the survey item was comparable for the two administrations with 333 in 2007 and 317 in 2009.



Note: SouthShore was not established in 2007, thus a zero value for that year.

The communication item also elicited many open-ended comments (75), 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. Administrative communication
2. Electronic 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 2009

Source of Dissatisfaction With Communication by Category	# of comments
Administration: Lack of a proper vehicle to convey new processes/systems from the top-down; poor communication with faculty/staff; untimely communication.	26
Electronic communication mediums Dissatisfactory comments included; too little email; untimely email notification; irrelevant and extraneous email; employees do not respond in a timely fashion; inappropriate use of "reply to all" in responding to emails; Public Folders are not easily navigated as a form of true information sharing.	22
Intra-organizational: Lack of or inconsistent communication between or on campuses between disciplines/departments. Lack of communication between full-time and adjunct faculty. Reduced communication is a limiting factor regarding the consistency of curriculum.	11
Lack of input to decisions: Insufficient solicitation of user input with planning or feedback; lack of faculty/staff involvement with critical decisions.	5

Readers may view all survey ratings and comments at the web site of the Department of Institutional Research & Grants, select "Surveys" on the left.

In a 2006 keynote address at All College Day, Dr. Joseph Hoey, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness at the Savannah College of Art & Design 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." 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:

- Provide professional development teaching proper etiquette of email communication;
- Organize the intranet to provide better information for policies, procedures, forms and updates;
- Clarify specific executive communications regarding operational concerns of the college/ policy implementation;
- Include greater faculty and staff input regarding the decisions that will impact/involve them.
- Develop a multi-tiered approach to communicate a message, and provide prompt responses to concerns.

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 committee structures to provide input to decisions.

Julie Redcay, Institutional Effectiveness Analyst
Paul Nagy, Special Assistant to the President, Strategic Planning & Analysis
Hillsborough Community College
39 Columbia Drive
Tampa, FL 33606