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Executive Summary

This Communication Plan: Faculty of Education was developed to articulate strategies or solutions for increased effective internal communication for undergraduate and graduate students, support staff, contract staff and faculty. The Plan also includes strategies or solutions to enhance external communications for potential domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students, alumni and the general public, and potential donors. A University of Alberta communications template was utilized to develop a two-pronged approach to address internal and external audiences.

Ultimately, the goal of the Plan is to foster internal and external engagement with and pride in the Faculty of Education's vision, core values, mission, strategic priorities, goals and accomplishments.

Selected highlights of the Plan include the following:

Internal Communications:

- 1. Messaging should be delivered by official, written avenues.
- 2. Messaging should come directly from the source to everyone.
- 3. Communications practices should be consistent.

External Communications:

- 1. Develop compelling content and distribute through owned communications channels.
- 2. Proactively solicit media coverage of the Faculty of Education as a source of teaching excellence, education expertise, innovative research, professional learning opportunities and community service.
- 3. Develop a social media strategy and create/curate regular content updates that express the Faculty's "brand" to build and enhance community, offer a point of contact for alumni and other educators, and invite prospective undergrad/grad students to consider enrolment in the Faculty of Education.
- 4. Identify partnership opportunities that generate awareness of the Faculty of Education.

Definitions

Internal Communications is the function responsible for effective communications among participants (ie. AASUA and NASA) within an organization e.g., communications from the Dean's Office to the faculty and staff.

External Communications is the transmission of information between an organization and another person or entity in the external environment e.g., communications from the Faculty of Education to the general population (i.e., outside of the University community), fund development, recruitment, Illuminate for alumni.

Student Communications is the function responsible for effective communications to students both undergraduate and graduate. Some of these practices fall into **internal** communications e.g.,

Undergraduate Student Services Newsletter whereas some fall into **external** communications e.g., recruitment of undergraduate and graduate students.

Resources

There is no formal faculty unit that is responsible for communications. It is critical to note that the communications team works as such only to the extent that they collaborate and support each other. The Team is comprised of the following positions:

Communications Manager: vacant

Communications Media Associate: Scott Lingley

Communications and Web Team Lead: Christine Gamble
Communications and Web EDEL & EDSE: Kateryna Barnes
Communications Design and Media Tech: Laura Sou; Shane Klein

iSMSS Communications & Events: Susan Dut

APOs: Dean's Office Yvonne Norton, Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education Vanessa Grabia, Educational Policy Studies and School of Library and Information Studies Izabella Martyniak, Educational Psychology Liz Grieve and Undergraduate Student Services Heather Kennedy-Plant

Communication Department/Unit Contributors: Educational Policy Studies and School of Library and Information Studies Cameron Mosiman, Educational Psychology Carley Okamura, Undergraduate Student Services Amanda Brown

Since this Communications Plan is a "living" document, after it has been implemented for a year or until September 1, 2021, it is recommended that a review of how the work is accomplished be undertaken and a report be disseminated.

Internal Communication

Communication Focus

- Faculty, staff, and student successes, e.g., awards, scholarships, personal milestones, grant successes, research recognitions, teaching awards
- Policies, procedures, staffing changes and appointments
- Research supports, e.g., networking, grant writing, funding opportunities
- Information for undergraduate and graduate students, e.g., programs, scholarships and other funding, teaching and research opportunities, faculty and university academic and extracurricular resources, job opportunities
- Professional learning opportunities
- Knowledge dissemination and mobilization activities

Communication Goals

- Clear and consistent internal communication strategies to:
 - Ensure faculty, support staff, contract staff, and students are apprised of essential information and able to participate as fully as possible in the Faculty of Education community
 - Ensure efficient, coordinated functioning of Faculty administrative processes

- Consistent application of practices so:
 - The audience can predict the information source and methods, making it easier to refer to past communications if necessary
 - Noise sources are reduced, if not eliminated (Please refer to "Key Messages" and Appendix B.)

Strategic Considerations and Risks

- Limited resources and capacity to maintain or innovate internal communications channels
- Information silos or lack of collaboration between departments and/or units within the Faculty
- Limited resources and capacity to develop and maintain policy, procedure, and administrative information resources
- Slow adoption or lack of awareness of current internal communications channels
- Current practices susceptible to "noise sources"
- Internal engagement challenges highlighted by Faculty engagement survey
- Lack of integrated digital strategy

Audience Analysis

Students undergraduate and graduate Post docs

Faculty Administrative Staff
Contract teaching staff Contract researchers

Key Messages

- 1. Messaging should be delivered by official, written avenues to ensure accuracy and create audit trail as well as eliminate miscommunication and duplication.
- 2. Messaging should come directly from the source to everyone.
- 3. Communications practices should be consistent.

Supporting Messages

- 1. To ensure clarity and consistency of communicated information, the source of the information should send out written notices through appropriate avenues and utilize the Administrative Site (https://educadmin.ualberta.ca/) as a governance and administrative repository.
- 2. The source of the message is the communicator and the communication be documented in more than one place. This reduces potential miscommunication to all audience members.
- 3. The goal is to minimize "noise sources" which interfere with clear information communication. Noise sources can be:
 - a. unnecessary steps (e.g., the information source asking someone else to pass the information onto the intended audience)
 - b. unclear methods (e.g., only verbal announcements at DAC or Faculty Council)
 - c. not citable (e.g., policies and procedures not being on the administrative site)
 - d. information barrage (e.g., too many emails).

Spokesperson/People

The source of the message should always be communicator:

- 1. Decanal decisions come from Dean or appropriate Associate Dean/administrator.
- 2. Departmental decisions come from Chair or appropriate Associate Chair/administrator.

Communication Objectives

- 1. Increased adoption and use of Faculty internal communications mechanisms and resources.
- 2. Clear understanding of and compliance with policies, procedures and expectations.
- 3. Engagement with and pride in Faculty events and initiatives.

Communication Strategies

- 1. Develop protocols for consistent use of owned communications channels.
 - a. Leverage *Inside Education* newsletter for internal communications consistently:
 - i. changes to existing policies, etc, are advertised in *Inside Education* and posted
 - ii. changes in staff responsibilities are communicated to appropriate constituents.
 - b. For governance, administrative policy and procedure changes, information is posted to the Faculty Administrative Site before the message is communicated and written communication directs people to the Administrative Site as the repository.
- 2. Perform ongoing audit and create integrated content strategy for Faculty website.
 - a. Standard guidelines for content and style across units.
 - b. Develop user-driven architecture/navigation.
 - c. Implement search engine optimization best practices.
 - d. Establish analytics and reporting schedule.
- 3. Enhance current central repository for information and policies, accessible by faculty and staff (and other internal users as appropriate).
 - a. Standard guidelines for content and style across units.
 - b. Develop robust intranet and expand the existing administrative site as required, coordinated and designed for the end user.
 - c. Create clear areas of responsibility and authority for all content shared on administrative site.
 - d. Ensure that policies/practices/procedures information reside in a single, accessible location (intranet), not in emails or other documents (e.g., meeting minutes).
 - e. All policies/procedures in writing and clearly indicate office or position of responsibility where questions can be directed.

Tactical Plan

Tactic (to meet objectives)	Primary audience(s)	Completion Date	Responsible
Electronic Newsletter Inside Education	Internal to Faculty of Education	Bi-monthly on Tuesdays Ongoing (first publication Jan 21, 2020)	Communications Media Associate

Undergraduate Student Services (USS) Newsletter and listserv	Internal to Faculty of Education	Ongoing	APO USS
Inside Education: Award announcements for research and teaching	Faculty and staff Current and prospective students	Ongoing	Associate Dean Research (ADR) informs research awards. Associate Dean Undergraduate Student Services (ADUSS) and Graduate Studies (ADGS) inform teaching awards. Dean announces all awards.
Research and Teaching Celebration	Internal to the Faculty of Education and University of Alberta	Annual event	ADR and ADUSS
Admin website	Internal faculty and admin staff	Ongoing	Communications Web Team Lead and Dean's Office (APO and Governance)
Website migration EDPS/SLIS ATEP EDEL/EDSE EDPY Centres & Institutes	External landing page Internal administrative		Communications Web EDEL & EDSEC, Department/School APOs, ATEP, iSMSS and USS
Website refresh	Landing page: external and internal		Communications Web Team Lead
edfac listserv edsupport listserv All email/direct communication with faculty and support staff in the Faculty	Faculty (edfac) and Staff (edsupport)	Ongoing	Information sources direct to listserve
edgrad listserv	Graduate students	Ongoing	ADGS
Faculty research webpage (admin site)	Internal and external: successful grants listed (internal and external), facility booking (RISE) (internal)	Ongoing	ADR
Build in "how did you learn about this?" into as	Internal	Ongoing	

many communication tactics as possible.

Evaluation Method(s)

Tactic (tools and/or activities)	Evaluation	Reporting mechanism	Responsible for collecting and reporting
Electronic Newsletter: Inside Education	Increased open and click- through rates	Campaign Monitor metrics and reporting	Communications Media Associate
	Increased content contributions from grad students/staff/faculty		
Student Services (USS) Electronic Newsletter and listserv	Increased open and click- through rates	Campaign Monitor metrics and reporting	APO USS
	Increased content contributions from grad students/staff/faculty		
Social media channels	Increased engagement and click-through	Built-in platform metrics and reporting	Communications Media Associate
	Increased subscriptions Increased re-sharing of content		
Announcements at faculty council / department council	Track announcements by category		Dean's Office Governance
	Track attendance		
Faculty Teaching and Research Event	Attendance numbers	Tally attendance	ADR
	# of ENGAGE posters	Poster count	
Faculty research webpages	Up to date research profiles		Faculty members
	Research stories		Communications Media Associate, Communications and Web Team Lead, Department/School APOs, ATEP, iSMSS

		and USS
Admin website	Metrics	Communications and Web Team Lead, Dean's Office (Governance and APO)
Website migration EDPS ATEP EDEL & EDSE	Timeliness	Communications and Web Team Lead
Website refresh	Timeliness	Communications Media Associate, Communications and Web Team Lead, Department/SchoolA POs, ATEP, iSMSS and USS

External Communication

Communication Focus

• Showcase excellence in teaching, learning, research, service and programming within the University of Alberta, locally, regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally to maintain and strengthen reputation.

Communication Goals

- 1) Promote and enhance positive public perception of the Faculty of Education's role in supporting Alberta's/Canada's educational systems and contributing to research-driven advances in the fields of education, psychology, and library and information sciences
 - a) Support recruitment of excellent undergraduate students to meet enrolment targets
 - b) Support recruitment of excellent graduate students into graduate programs across the Faculty
 - c) Support recruitment of excellent professors and researchers who will enhance and benefit from the reputation of the Faculty
 - d) Encourage donor support for the Faculty's vision, core values, mission and strategic priorities
- 2) Promote the Faculty of Education as the source of professional learning for Albertan, Canadian and International students to:
 - Support and expand range of professional learning opportunities available through the Faculty

- b) Increase enrolment of working professionals into credit and non-credit programming
- c) Maintain and enhance the Faculty's reputation locally, regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally

Strategic Considerations and Risks

- Limited resources and capacity to support robust communications or marketing activity
- Reliance on "earned" media coverage to promote programming, research; fewer local or regional media outlets for coverage of Faculty research, accomplishments and expertise
- Lack of alignment between faculties and University Relations/Central MarComm (no institutional communications plan)
- Local, regional, provincial, national and international competitors that are better resourced or more established in promoting and recruiting for professional learning programs
- Lack of recent data on public perceptions of Faculty
- Reputational challenges based on perception of UAlberta as an institution
- Current budgeting challenges and provincial government approach toward post-secondary education/public education sectors

Audience Analysis

Potential domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students

Educational specialists (policy makers, curriculum developers)

Teachers School Leaders

Adult Educators Librarians and information specialists

Counsellors Psychologists
Alumni Potential donors

General messaging is required for each audience. Those within each of these audiences have varied reasons for interest in and engagement with the Faculty; thus, specific messaging is also required. Aside from their interests as specific audiences, they are also exposed to mass media. They spend time online, participate in a variety of social media channels, read the paper, watch the news, have magazines of interest, and so on. Therefore, external media and media relations activity is key to raising awareness of the Faculty's teaching, learning and research activity, accomplishments and impact.

Key Messages

- 1. Graduates of the Faculty make outstanding contributions locally, regionally, provincially, nationally and internationally:
 - a. Bachelor of Education graduates are excellent teachers and leaders who contribute to the lives of children and youth as well as families and communities.
 - b. Graduate graduates:
 - contribute new knowledge and practices in the fields of education, counselling psychology, library and information studies
 - ii. are policy makers, curriculum specialists and educational leaders, counsellors and psychologists, librarians and information specialists
- 2. The Faculty
 - a. is recognized for producing high quality, meaningful teaching, research, and service that transforms and enriches society.

- b. makes essential contributions to the quality of education and information studies in Alberta, Canada and the world.
- c. has and will continue to provide leadership, research and evidence-based expertise that facilitate education and related professional systems adapt to prevailing challenges in order to provide learners in all contexts with the best possible education experiences.

Supporting Messages

- 1. The Faculty is consistently ranked among the top four faculties of education in Canada and currently ranked among the top 100 faculties of education in the world.
- 2. Established in 1942, we are proud to claim the title of Canada's first Faculty of Education. Today we are one of the largest education faculties in the country, with four teaching departments and one school: Elementary Education, Secondary Education, Educational Policy Studies, Educational Psychology, and the School of Library and Information Studies.
- 3. We are a leader in preparing for local, regional, provincial, national and international:
 - a. educators to meet the learning needs and aspirations of learners throughout their lives
 - b. librarians and information professionals to meet the needs of the public and in specialized areas
 - c. psychologists to meet the needs of schools and the public.
- 4. As one of the largest faculties of education in the country, we are able to offer a variety of undergraduate and graduate programs, as well as professional development opportunities, to meet the needs of our prospective students and the demands of various educational contexts.
- 5. Our award-winning and internationally recognized faculty members provide ground-breaking contributions and national and global leadership in a variety of areas including curriculum and pedagogy, Indigenous education, educational psychology, policy development, educational administration and leadership, information ethics, early childhood education, and the appropriate integration of technology with scholarship and teaching.
- 6. We are leaders in inclusive, progressive education, as seen in the work of our research centres and institutes (CMASTE, iSMSS, CRTED, CGCER, JP Das Centre on Developmental & Learning Disabilities, Western Canadian Centre for Deaf Studies), our undergraduate Aboriginal Teacher Education Program and our graduate Indigenous Peoples Education program.

Spokesperson/People

The source of the message should always be communicator:

- 1. Decanal decisions come from Dean or appropriate Associate Dean/administrator.
- 2. Departmental decisions come from Chair or appropriate Associate Chair/administrator.

Communication Objectives

- 1. Increased adoption and use of Faculty external communications mechanisms and resources.
- 2. Maintain and strengthen the Faculty's reputation within the University, locally, provincially, nationally and internationally.
- 3. Increase engagement with the Faculty
 - a. enrollment in Faculty's undergraduate programs
 - b. enrollment in Faculty's credit and non-credit graduate programs

- c. participation in Faculty's research initiatives
- d. strengthen pride in and loyality to the Faculty of Education.

Communication Strategies

- 1. Develop compelling content and distribute through owned communications channels. Tactics (tools and/or activities):
 - a. Leverage Illuminate for external communications.
 - b. Create content calendar for ongoing updates to illuminate.
 - c. Create content plan for Spring/Fall alumni mail-outs of illuminate.
 - d. Provide content for the UAlberta news page, New Trail, the Quad.
- 2. Proactively solicit media coverage of the Faculty as a source of teaching excellence, education expertise, innovative research, professional learning opportunities and community service. Tactics (tools and/or activities):
 - a. Proactively provide information and interview opportunities to key media such as Postmedia papers, Global TV and Corus radio affiliates, CFRN TV, CBC TV and Radio, Globe and Mail, Gateway.
 - b. Identify areas of expertise and willing commenters among faculty, support staff, contract staff, graduate and undergraduate students for timely response to media requests for expert comment.
 - c. Monitor and analyze media coverage on education to identify opportunities for expert comment on emerging issues in education/information technology/education policy/educational psychology.
 - Develop communications framework with Indigenous faculty to identify areas of expertise, preferred media outlets and target audiences for sharing scholarship, research and expert comment
- 3. Develop a social media strategy and create/curate regular content updates that express the Faculty's "brand" and build community, offer a point of contact for alumni and other educators, and invite prospective undergraduate and graduate students to consider enrolling in the Faculty. Tactics (tools and/or activities):
 - a. Twice daily Facebook updates (course offerings, funding opportunities, professional learning opportunities, employment and volunteer opportunities, research stories and expert comment, awards and recognition, third-party coverage of issues that impact Alberta educators).
 - b. Daily Twitter posts plus retweets and live-tweeting of special events involving faculty and students (i.e., CSSE)
 - c. Three Instagram posts per week (student life, Faculty/campus events, awards and recognition).
- 4. Identify partnership opportunities that generate awareness of the Faculty. Tactics (tools and/or activities):
 - a. Peer faculties (Augustana, CSJ, KSR, Native Studies).
 - b. ATA, other professional associations and stakeholder organizations.
 - c. Other PSE institutions/Faculties of Education.
 - 5. Leverage milestone moments to generate media attention and stakeholder awareness.

Tactics (tools and/or activities):

- a. Convocation.
- b. Field Experiences both Introductory and Advanced.
- c. Research and teaching awards.
- d. Program launches.
- e. CILLDI summer programming.
- f. Faculty hosted conferences (e.g.) CSSE 2021.
- g. Donation announcements.
- h. Centre and Institute events.
- 6. Explore new media formats for increasing reach of Faculty expertise and scholarship. Tactics (tools and/or activities):
 - a. Health and wellness podcasts for preservice and practicing teachers.
 - b. Video tutorials/webinars (e.g., online teaching best practices).
 - c. Virtual conferences.
 - 7. Perform audit and create integrated content strategy for Faculty website.

Tactics (tools and/or activities):

- a. Standard guidelines for content and style.
- b. Develop user-driven architecture/navigation.
- c. Implement SEO best practices.
- d. Establish analytics and reporting schedule.

Tactical Plan

Tactic (tools and/or activities to meet objectives)	Primary audience(s)	Completion Date	Responsible
Illuminate mail-out	Alumni	Twice yearly (spring and fall)	Communications Media Associate
External media pitching and expert finding	External	Ongoing	Communications Media Associate
Social media campaigns and calendar	Students Alumni Faculty and staff Education professionals Prospective students	Ongoing	Communications Media Associate
Media calendar for Faculty milestones	UAlberta community External	?	Communications Media Associate
Develop new digital media products	Education professionals External	? (n/a)	? (No one available.)

Explore communications partnerships with peer institutions	UAlberta community Education professionals External	? (n/a)	? (No one available.)
Integrated web strategy	Internal Prospective students External	? (n/a)	? (No one available.)

Evaluation Method(s)

Tactic (tools and/or activities)	Evaluation	Reporting mechanism	Responsible for collecting and reporting
Illuminate mailouts	Increased open and click- through rates	Campaign monitor metrics and reporting	Communications Media Associate
Social media channels	Increased engagement and click-through; increased subscriptions and re-sharing of content	Built-in platform metrics and reporting	Communications Media Associate
External media pitching and expert finding	Increase in media coverage of research/ expert comment opportunities	Media tracking spreadsheet, year-over-year comparisons	Communications Media Associate
New digital assets	Completed products/downloads/ subscriptions	Platform metrics and reporting	? (No one available.)
Integrated web strategy	Increased traffic and engagement	Analytics and reporting	? (No one available.)

Appendix A: Background Information

<u>Education for the Public Good</u>, the 2019-2024 Faculty of Education Strategic Plan, asserts we are "to be a flourishing, diverse, and sustainable Faculty of Education that excels, innovates, and transforms society through high quality, meaningful teaching, research, and service."

The purpose of this communications plan is to address within Faculty Structures, Processes & Resources two objectives: "Objective 4. Develop clear and consistent internal communication strategies to facilitate excellence in teaching, learning, research and service." and "Objective 5. Develop a comprehensive external communication plan that showcases excellence in teaching, learning, research and service within and beyond the institution."

Furthermore, in August 2019, faculty and staff members gathered at the Faculty Retreat to discuss five areas of concern within the Faculty that had been identified by the Faculty's Engagement Survey (conducted in February 2019) and one was communication challenges. The discussion generated a list of nine specific considerations and they included the following:

- 1. Seek Innovative Communication Methods (to avoid information overload and email overwhelm)
- 2. Communication
- 3. Faculty Newsletter/Email Digest
- 4. Internal Faculty Newsletter and Faculty Spotlight
- 5. Create Living Faculty of Education Policy Manual Online
- 6. Faculty Wide Communication Plan for Faculty and Staff
- 7. Communication: Calls to Action
- 8. Faculty Intranet Page with Recognition of Individuals and a Blog for Dean
- 9. Have a single, unified calendar for the Faculty of Education

The Communications and Information Working Group (CIWG) was created in September 2019 to address concerns raised in the Faculty's Engagement Survey and further responses provided at the Faculty Retreat as they related to the 2019-2024 Faculty of Education Strategic Plan.

The CIWG membership is as follows:

- Maryanne Doherty (Chair), Associate Dean Undergraduate Student Services & Professor
- Kateryna Barnes, Communications & Web Assistant Elementary & Secondary Education
- Amanda Brown, Administrative & Special Events Assistant Undergraduate Student Services
- Susan Dut, Communications & Events Coordinator Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS)
- Vanessa Grabia, Assistant Chair/Administrative Professional Officer Elementary & Secondary Education
- Denise Larsen, Associate Dean Research & Professor
- Scott Lingley, Communications Media Associate Faculty of Education
- Elaine Simmt, Associate Dean Graduate Studies & Professor

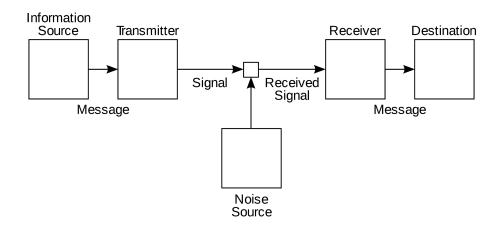
Two outcomes as of May 1, 2020 include the following:

- 1. Faculty bi-weekly newsletter *Inside Education* (first issue January 21, 2020).
- 2. Faculty communications plan to govern/guide external, internal, and student communications practices.

Creating An Effective Communications Plan Template was presented at the Communet Communications Planning Campus Communications Network (CCN) session on October 30, 2019 by Anne Bailey, Executive Director of Strategic Communications, University of Alberta as one that is commonly used. The key sections of the template include the following: goals, considerations and risks, audience analysis, key messages, objectives and tactics (tools and/or activities to achieve objectives).

Appendix B: A Mathematical Theory of Communication: C. Shannon

Claude Shannon's <u>A Mathematical Theory of Communication</u> was utilized as the theoretical framework, since the goal of the Communication Plan is to minimize "noise sources" which interfere with clear information communication.



Source: C. Shannon (1948). "A Mathematical Theory of Communication". The Bell System Technical Journal, Vol 27. pg. 2.

Appendix C: Communication Plan Directory: Faculty of Education

For information about specific communications, please contact the following:

Inside Education and Illuminate Communications Media Associate

Scott Lingley <u>slingley@ualberta.ca</u>

iSMSS Director lieb@ualberta.ca

Graduate Students Listserv Associate Dean edgs@ualberta.ca

Research Associate Dean edasg@ualberta.ca

If you are interested in department/school/unit communication procedures, please contact the following:

Assistant Chairs/Administrative Professional Officers

ATEP Vacant

Dean's Office Yvonne Norton <u>ynorton@ualberta.ca</u>

Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education Vanessa Grabia vogilvy@ualberta.ca

Educational Policy Studies and School of Library and Information Studies

Izabella Martyniak martynia@ualberta.ca

Educational Psychology Liz Grieve <u>liz.grieve@ualberta.ca</u>

iSMSS Susan Dut sdut@ualberta.ca

Undergraduate Student Services Heather Kennedy Plant hkennedy@ualberta.ca