Business and Financial Affairs
Communications Initiative Advisory Committee
CHARTER

Background

One of the key areas for improvement identified through the 2018 Business and Financial Affairs (BFA) SCOT exercise was the need to improve communications within the division and with the University communities. Within BFA, communication can work 'three ways':

- 'Top down,' from leadership to employees
- 'Bottom up,' from employees to leadership (the feedback loop)
- 'Side to side,' sharing best practices and ideas between employees and departments

With University customers, communication exists to inform about what BFA does. The other aim is to engage people in understanding and 'buying in' to changes, policies, and adherence to regulations. BFA's role is to serve and support the University communities, including compliance and to help the University avoid and mitigate risk.

Any communication plans and efforts would be measured and evaluated through the new employee engagement survey, as well as any customer satisfaction surveys.

Scope

This advisory committee focuses on the BFA initiative "Communicate Effectively with our Western Community." The committee advises the BFA Leadership Team on improvements to the way BFA communicates within the division and the University community, resulting in a communication strategy, plan, and implementation of that plan. In particular, the role of the committee is to:

- Help articulate gaps and opportunities in communication
- Provide insights as to content and solutions and which are most important to address
- Feedback on the initiative action plan(s)

In making their recommendations, the committee will consider complementary University activity:

- The WWU Strategic Plan, particularly those aspects relating to campus climate and culture, and the importance of considering diverse backgrounds and experiences
- The three other BFA shared initiatives: Empower to Engage; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; and Growth

Once the BFA Leadership Team has agreed on the communication strategy and plan, the role of the committee shifts to monitoring and advising on this plan.

Approved 12/16/2020 by Rich Van Den Hul, VP for Business and Financial Affairs

Deliverables

Although not a responsibility of the committee, the work may result in these deliverables, produced by the Lead and Subject Matter Expert (SME) member(s), with agreement by the BFA Leadership Team:

- Recommendations for improving communications within BFA and with University stakeholders
- A communications strategy, action plan and timetable for 2019-2025
- An assessment of the viability of recommendations within the context of current resources and the impact to the current workload
- A framework, or methodology to communications with staff and colleagues that is developed at the BFA level and adapted for use at the departmental level. This is because the size, employee make-up, and strategic objectives of each department vary.
- Tools and training for departments to help them communicate effectively with their teams

Convening Authority and Reporting

The committee is appointed by and reports to the Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs (VP BFA).

Time Frame

The committee was formed and began meeting in September 2019. The initiative spans the 2019-2025 six-year period, in support of the University's strategic plan.

Meetings

Meetings will be called by the Chair. Materials will be distributed in advance of meetings to allow time for review before the meetings.

Membership

Membership will be appointed by the VP BFA, with assistance from the BFA Leadership Team. The committee will be comprised of a representation of members from across BFA, representing different departments, lengths of employment, and levels. Members will serve for a defined period, with new members rotating in as the committee determines appropriate.

The committee will include:

Member	Role	Name
Leadership Team	• Decision-making body • Responsible for implementation at department level	Leadership Team and team members
Initiative Lead (BFA Leadership Team member)	• Guidance and leadership • Reports to the BFA Leadership Team for decisions • Accountable for development of the Communications Action Plan, monitoring the plan, and updates as needed	Anne Gilbert
Subject Matter Expert (SME)	• Functional expert at the University • Strategy and implementation advice and support	Anne Gilbert

	• Responsible for development of the Communications Action Plan, monitoring the plan, and updates as needed	
Chair	• Runs the committee • Ensures committee work is thorough, inclusive, and effective • Schedules meetings and ensures notetaking	Sarah Crawford

The BFA Leadership Team is the decision-making body for all BFA-wide initiatives. The individual members of the BFA Leadership Team are responsible for implementation of the Communications Action Plan in their departments.

Role of a committee member

It is intended that the committee leverage the experiences, expertise, and insight of key individuals at organizations committed to finding ways to support the division's communications initiative. Committee members are not directly responsible for managing project activities but provide support and guidance for those who do. Thus, individually, committee members should:

- Understand the strategic implications and outcomes of initiatives being pursued
- Appreciate the significance of the initiative for some or all major stakeholders and represent their interests
- Be genuinely interested in the initiative and be an advocate for broad support for the outcomes being pursued

In practice, this means they:

- Consider ideas and issues raised
- Advise if the outcomes of the initiative meet the objectives of the original proposal
- Help balance conflicting priorities and resources
- Review the status of the initiative
- Foster positive communication outside of the committee regarding the progress and outcomes of the initiative