Communication Plan
Division of Information Technology

April 2015
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Appendix 1 – Communication Matrix for Regular and Scheduled Communications

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Effective communication is key to all organizations. Developing a clear and concise communication plan is essential to delivering a consistent message. This Communication Plan presents a framework for managing communications for the Division of Information Technology at Florida International University.

Successful communication is the result of a committed effort by each unit in the Division using the guidelines outlined in this plan. This commitment ensures that the Division will provide timely, accurate, relevant, and consistent information internally and to the campus community.

Primary areas addressed in this plan include: normal communications and incident/emergency communications.

The goal of this plan is to serve as a guide for the Division in developing effective and timely communications. This goal will ensure that the Division maintains a customer-centric, service excellence philosophy when disseminating information.
1. Purpose

This Communication Plan was developed by the Division of Information Technology to provide a framework for managing and coordinating communication within the Division and to the campus community.

This plan identifies audiences, channels of communication, frequency, incident communications, and communication standards. The plan ensures that communication coming from the Division will be timely and accurate. It will also increase awareness of information technology services at Florida International University.

Communication is key to an organization. It is important that the Division’s leadership team, communication liaisons from each unit and the Communications and Marketing team collaborate on all aspects of communication and in following the framework provided in this plan.

2. Plan Instructions

The Division of Information Technology will keep a copy of this plan both electronically and in paper format. It is the responsibility of each unit leader to ensure that a copy of the plan is available to each team member. It is the responsibility of the Communications and Marketing team to ensure that the plan is kept up-to-date and that new unit leaders have read the plan and understand its contents. This Communication Plan will be reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that it is up-to-date and that necessary adjustments are made.

3. Goals and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to provide a framework for the Division of Information Technology to communicate internally and with the campus community in a timely and accurate manner. This plan promotes the dissemination of information that is informative and user-friendly. It also keeps the campus community informed of events in the Division.

The following objectives support this goal:

- Ensure understanding and use of this plan by the Division
- Ensure clear and consistent communication to the Division and the campus community
- Educate the campus community on information technology
- Encourage feedback from the campus community

These goals and objectives are accomplished by:

- Designing, writing and disseminating up-to-date information about the Division
- Announcements of new services via email and the Division’s newsletter
- Keeping the Division’s Communications and Marketing team informed of new technologies and incidents within the Division
• Participating in special events to promote the Division
• Maintaining and updating information on all communication channels such as the IT website
• Maintaining procedures for executing all communications from the Division to the campus community

4. Assumptions

The success of this plan is contingent on the following:

• The Division of Information Technology leadership, managers, and units participate in the communication process and adhere to the framework and guidelines of this plan
• Every staff member of the Division of Information Technology is committed to open and honest communication

5. Audiences

The Division of Information Technology has two primary audiences: the first is internal to the Division; the second is external to the Division and constitutes the different groups that make up the campus community.

These audiences include but are not limited to:

• Division of Information Technology staff
• Senior leadership of the University
• BOT/BOG
• Faculty and staff
• ITAC
• Students
• Constituents external to the University including vendors, peer universities, and the community at large

6. Communication Responsibility

The Vice President and Chief Information Officer for the Division, assigns responsibility for message management within the Division. Unit managers or their liaisons are responsible for communicating new activities, technologies or incidents to the VP and CIO and to the Communications and Marketing team.

The communication manager in the Communications and Marketing team writes, reviews, and/or edits all Division of Information Technology messages to ensure consistency, accuracy and relevancy.
7. **Messages**

Divisional messages from the VP and CIO contain authoritative content and should not be altered. These messages will be forwarded to campus groups as needed.

Effective messages are concise, clearly written and presented in a consistent manner. They should be as jargon free as possible and written in a manner that is communicable to all audiences.

The following are examples of kinds of messages that may come from the Division:

- Accomplishments and project updates
- Service announcements
- Urgent service and system outages

8. **Communication Channels**

This plan defines the following communication channels used by the Division:

- Web sites
- Newsletter (online and hard copy)
- Email
- Voicemail/Call Center
- Meetings
- Events
- Mobile Applications/Portal
- Social Networks (Facebook/Twitter)

9. **Frequency**

Communication is both regular and as needed to ensure that all audiences are aware of important and critical information in a timely manner.

Important information includes but is not limited to:

- Accomplishments
- Service announcements
- Project updates
- Scheduled maintenance down times

Critical information includes but is not limited to:

- Service outages
• System outages
• Unscheduled maintenance down times

10. Communication Standards and General Guidelines

The first step in developing a clear and concise message is to delineate the pertinent points of the communication. The communication should focus on one topic or incident rather than a whole range of issues. The following questions will determine the content of the message:

- **What** is the purpose? **What** happened?
- **Who** is the audience?
- **When** does the message need to go out?
- **What** is the best channel?
- **What** action, if any, is required on the part of the reader? **What** action, if any is required, is being taken by the Division?

Each communication coming from the Division will be clear and concise. They will fit the intended audience and avoid terms and definitions that are not clear. Further, all communication will focus on conveying a positive message and they will provide resources for any questions that may follow. All communications originating from the Division will be approved by the VP and CIO and the communication manager. The general guidelines for all communications include the following:

- Clear and consistent message
- State any necessary action in each message
- Direct the message to the appropriate audience
- Include contact information, including link to the IT website
- Educate when appropriate
- Use all appropriate communication channels
- Ensure that the communication is timely
- Listen and act on any feedback

11. Incident Messaging

As determined by the CIO and VP of Information Technology, and IT senior managers, incident messages that relate to the Division’s services will be sent out to the required audiences as
needed. All incident messages will be coordinated through the communications team and approved by the CIO and VP. General guidelines for communicating an incident message:

- Everyone affected by an incident receives a communication/message
- The communication/message needs to be clear and relevant
- The communication/message needs to be timely

12. Conclusion

This Communication Plan serves as an internal framework for the Division of Information Technology to follow communication procedures. The successful execution of this plan depends on the commitment of staff in the Division to follow the guidelines and processes identified in the plan. This commitment will ensure that the Division disseminates information that is accurate and timely and targets the desired and appropriate audience.
## Appendix 1

### Communication Matrix for Regular andScheduled Communications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All IT Staff</td>
<td>Email, Meetings, Feedback, IT Newsletter, IT Website, Voice Broadcasts</td>
<td>As needed, Yearly, As needed, Spring/Fall Semesters, Updated as needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Leaders of the University – President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts, Deans</td>
<td>Email, Meetings, Feedback</td>
<td>As needed, As needed, As needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOT/BOG</td>
<td>Email, Meetings, Feedback</td>
<td>As needed, As needed, As needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITAC</td>
<td>Email, Meetings, Feedback</td>
<td>As needed, Monthly, As needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and Staff</td>
<td>Email, Meetings, Univmail, IT Newsletter (online), IT Website, Events</td>
<td>As needed, As needed, As needed, Spring/Fall Semesters, Updated as needed, As scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Email, Social Media, Portal, IT Website, Events</td>
<td>As needed, As needed, As needed, Updated as needed, As scheduled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External Community</td>
<td>IT Website</td>
<td>Updated as needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

Incident Communications Process

When an unforeseen or unscheduled incident occurs, it is important that a communication process be in place in order to communicate the event to those in the University community who may be affected, both internal and external to the Division. The following guidelines provide a framework for departments to use in such an event. It is important to note that all communication with be coordinated with the Communications and Marketing team and that all messages disseminated to the University community will be approved by the CIO and VP of Information Technology.

Seven Steps for Incident Communication

Communicating during and after an incident is important – not only when communicating within the Division, but also with faculty, staff and students, and other constituents of the Division of Information Technology. The following is a seven-step approach to:

1. Help you understand your communication role when an incident occurs
2. Follow and support the Division’s procedures
3. Know what communication actions to take

Step 1: Verify the Incident Situation
The first step is to determine what has happened (what, when, who, how, why), by immediately identifying as many facts as possible:

WHAT happened and where?
WHEN did this happen?
WHO is involved?
HOW did it happen?
WHAT is currently being done?
WHY did it happen?

When collecting the data consider the following:

• Do you have all the facts (to the best of your knowledge)
• What other information do you need to put the incident into perspective?
• Has the incident been confirmed?
• Is information consistent from several sources?
In some cases, faculty, staff, and/or students (depending on who is being affected) may be alerted to the situation before all of these facts can be determined. **Even if you do not have all of the information yet, it is important to notify the Leadership team, ITAC, and the affected constituents indicating that the incident is under investigation and that as soon as more information is available it will be provided.**

**Step 2: Notifications and Assignments**
As soon as an incident affecting external users is identified, the Operational team and ITAC will be informed.

*NOTE:* Even if the situation does not seem like it could cause operational disruption, it is important that the Operational team and ITAC be informed. Situations can escalate very quickly, and it is extremely important that these two teams are kept up-to-date.

**Communication Notification Steps**

1. Unit manager, or designee, notifies Operational team and ITAC via email (within one hour) of incident.
2. Members of the Operational team and ITAC will ask questions or comment on the incident via email so that all can be kept in the loop in regards to the latest developments.
3. Communications manager will contact unit leader who has reported incident and will work with unit leader to determine if there is an incident occurring which requires more extensive communications to the affected constituents. The communications manager and unit leader will determine next steps based on Step 3 below, assess the level of incident.

**Step 3: Assess the Communications Incident Level**
Based on the level of the intensity of the incident using the criteria on the chart below, determine level of communication required.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Steps</th>
<th>4 HIGHLY INTENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate via email to Operational team, ITAC, President’s Office, Provost’s Office. Post alert on IT Alerts. Post on social media, post on University’s website. Communicate with entire university community via available means.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Operations are interrupted across campus.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inquiries about the incident express concern, impatience, or anger.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Entire system(s) down or has failed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Steps</th>
<th>3 INTENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate via email to Operational team, ITAC, if necessary, President’s/Provost’s Office(s). Post alert on IT Alerts. Determine group(s) who have been affected and communicate with group(s) via email, phone, or social media. Update IT Alerts and social media as needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Partial system outage/failure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some operations are interrupted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One or more groups of internal and external constituents have been affected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large number of inquiries about the incident have been received.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Steps</th>
<th>2 MODERATELY INTENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate via email to Operational team and ITAC. Post alert on IT Alerts. Send email updates as needed. Update IT Alerts as needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Small number of internal/external constituents have been affected, operations have not been interrupted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some inquiries about the incident have been received.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Internal/External constituents are aware of incident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Steps</th>
<th>1 MINIMALLY INTENSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Communication is internal, via email or phone, only between teams who are working to resolve the incident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only internal operations are affected.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Incident attracts little or no attention.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Constituents (internal/external) are not aware of incident.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step 4: Communication Management

Message Management
1. Schedule regular internal communication updates with unit leader, leadership team, and CIO.
2. Identify key audiences.

Step 5: Develop Messages
Once the crisis level has been determined and factual information to be communicated has been confirmed, begin planning a response strategy for communicating critical information and for responding to potential questions for each audience.

- Develop a script for conveying key information points.
- Develop or refer to a list of questions that could be asked by a variety of constituents about the crisis.
- Modify pre-scripted messages or develop new messages.
- Identify the best methods (phone, email, website, social media) for delivery of key messages.
- Monitor and update messages based on updates from unit leader.

Step 6: Approve and Release Messages

Message Approval
Once messages are developed for each potential audience, all messages that will be distributed to faculty, staff, and student, must be approved by the following individuals:

1. Communications Manager
2. Unit leader
3. CIO

Once the above have reviewed and approved the messages, they will be finalized for release.

Message Release
Messages can be released through a variety of means and messengers and at various time frames, depending on the incident. In crisis levels 3 or 4, the main statement or overarching message should come from the CIO.

Step 7: Provide Feedback
A “Lessons Learned” document will be prepared for each incident.