



UC SANTA CRUZ

Communication Plan

Information Technology Services
UC Santa Cruz

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Executive Summary

Developing a clear and consistent message is essential to effective communication in any organization. This Communication Plan presents a framework for managing and coordinating communication for UC Santa Cruz ITS Division.

Successful communication results from a committed effort by each ITS unit in using the channels and guidelines presented in this plan. Such a commitment ensures that ITS provides relevant, accurate, and consistent information to its service community.

Primary areas addressed in this plan include:

- Audiences to be addressed
- Delegation of responsibility
- Message standards
- Channels to be used
- Frequency of communication
- Communication matrix
- Communication standards and guidelines

The goal of this plan is to provide a framework for creating a consistent, customer-centric message in all communication with campus populations, while incorporating the ITS guiding principles of the *Who We Are* document ¹. This plan serves as a guide for developing tactical communication plans. It is a living document that will be modified when necessary.

¹ For more details on the *Who We Are* guiding principles document, please refer:
<http://its.ucsc.edu/about/index.html>

1 Purpose

This Communication Plan was developed by the ITS Strategic Communication Team for Information Technology Services (ITS) in 2005. Since that time, this plan has been updated to reflect changes within the organization. Its purpose is to provide an overall framework for managing and coordinating communication within ITS.

This plan identifies audiences, communication channels, frequency, messages, feedback, and standards. The framework ensures that ITS provides relevant, accurate, and consistent information while increasing awareness of information technology at UC Santa Cruz (UCSC).

Communication is a shared responsibility in ITS; it is imperative that ITS leadership, including divisional liaisons, and the communication manager collaborate on communication within the organization. In addition, the communication manager measures the effectiveness of this plan and makes appropriate adjustments when necessary.

2 Goals and Objectives

The goal of this plan is to provide a framework for creating a consistent, customer-centric message in all communication with campus populations. It promotes the dissemination of accurate information to the campus in a manner that is professional, informative, user-friendly, and that contributes to the ongoing culture of ITS.

The following objectives support this goal:

- Ensure understanding and use of communication framework
- Ensure clear and consistent communication to recipients
- Contribute to ITS culture by providing multiple points of entry to information and services
- Educate constituents on information technology
- Solicit feedback

These goals and objectives are accomplished by:

- Designing, writing, and distributing up-to-date information in support of ITS
- Maintaining a standard ITS identity for all written materials
- Creating announcements of new services, service changes, and service outages
- Collaborating with the University Relations, Communication and Marketing group by providing relevant information that impacts the campus-at-large
- Participating in special events to promote ITS
- Identifying ITS employees who are available and willing to be guest speakers at events and conferences
- Maintaining relevant information in all communication channels
- Maintaining procedures for executing short-term, mid-term, and ad hoc project tactical communication plans

3 Assumptions

The success of this plan is based on the following assumptions:

- ITS leadership, divisional liaisons, and ITS units participate in the communication process using the channels and guidelines presented in this plan
- ITS communicates consistent, informative messages in line with the *Who We Are* guiding principles
- ITS is committed to open and honest communication
- ITS communication balances the needs of the campus community with the goals of the organization

4 Audiences

ITS communicates with two primary audiences: the first is internal to the division and the second includes clients and other external constituencies.

These audiences include, but are not limited to:

- ITS staff
- Senior leadership (faculty and staff)
- Campus community (faculty, staff, and students)
- External constituents (affiliates, peers in higher education, service organizations, vendors) and the general public

5 Communication Responsibility

The Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, assigns responsibility for message management within each ITS unit to the Senior Management Team, divisional liaisons, or communication manager. These people regularly review divisional activities and provide communication direction using the framework outlined in this document.

The communication manager writes, reviews and edits all ITS campus messages for accurate information to the campus in a manner that is professional, informative, user-friendly, and that contributes to the ongoing culture of ITS.

6 Messages

Official campus and division ITS messages from the communication manager contain authoritative content and should not be altered unless appropriate to do so. ITS messages may be forwarded to other campus groups as needed.

Effective messages are short, clearly written, and presented in a consistent manner regardless of the media used. ITS maintains communication and editorial standards that exemplify these traits and that are as jargon free as possible.

In addition to specific content, messages increase awareness of services and support, strengthen ITS identity within the campus community, and expand information technology efforts.

The following are examples of the kinds of ITS messages:

- Accomplishments and project updates
- Service announcements
- Urgent service and system outage notices
- Organization changes

7 Communication Channels

This plan defines the following communication channels used by ITS:

- Web sites
- Online Newsletter, Blog, RSS feeds
- IT Request Ticket System
- UCSC Google Apps for Education
- Events
- Email
- Voicemail
- Meetings
- Feedback
- Social Networking and Mobile Applications

7.1 Web Sites

7.1.1 *ITS Web Site*

ITS keeps the campus well informed of policies, security, strategies, services and support, projects, and general news through the divisional Web site. This site is updated frequently to reflect current information. All ITS messages to the campus should end with a reference to the Web site. <http://its.ucsc.edu>

7.1.2 *UCSC Web Site*

The UCSC Web site links to Information Technology Services from the Administrative and A-Z Index sections, as well as areas in ITS including, support, service information, and the ITS Support Center. It serves as a resource for information of high value to the campus community. <http://www.ucsc.edu>

7.1.3 *MyUCSC*

MyUCSC allows students, faculty, and staff secure access to self-service and associated campus links including registration and student records, student billing and account information, financial aid, grades, class schedule, enrollment, course catalogs, and class rosters. In addition, *MyUCSC* provides campus quick links and campus departmental messages. <http://my.ucsc.edu>

7.2 Online Newsletters, Blog, RSS Feed

7.2.1 *ITS News and Alerts*

The *ITS News and Alerts* section of the ITS web site is web-based and reaches multiple audiences with Internet access. This news section includes outage information, service updates and changes, security alerts, patches, and other IT related news.

<http://its.ucsc.edu/news/index.html>

7.2.2 *RSS Feed*

Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feed is an additional format used to publish the *ITS News and Alerts* that includes a feed of summarized news articles to subscribers.

7.2.3 *UCSC Google News Blog*

This is an online source for Google news at UC Santa Cruz. <http://ucscgoogle.blogspot.com/>

7.2.4 *UCSC Tuesday News Day Online Newsletter*

UCSC Tuesday News Day presents campus news weekly to faculty and staff. ITS submits articles to *Tuesday News Day* on a project- or announcement-needed basis to communicate to the broader campus community audience. <http://news.ucsc.edu/>

7.3 IT Request Ticket System

7.3.1 *IT Request (ITR)*

IT Request is a web-based tool designed to offer technical support to the campus. It provides an easy way for the campus to request IT services, find answers to IT questions, and help resolve computing problems. ITR also allows ITS staff to communicate technical information within the ticket to each other. <http://itrequest.ucsc.edu/>

7.4 UCSC Google Apps

Faculty, staff, and students have access to UCSC Google Apps by logging in with their CruzID and Blue password. These services include Email, Calendar, Drive (Docs), Groups, Sites, and other Apps.

7.5 Events

7.5.1 *ITS Town Hall*

Bi-yearly ITS Town Hall meetings provide a forum for ITS staff to discuss key information, technology issues, and receive announcements from the Vice Chancellor of IT.

7.5.2 ITS Brown Bags, All-Hands, Special Events

ITS Brown Bags offer staff in-depth examination of IT-related topics. They occur monthly based on available topics. All-Hands and special events occur as needed per the Vice Chancellor of IT and focus on general work-related news and topics.

7.6 Email and Voicemail

7.6.1 Email – Tuesday News Day

The *Tuesday News Day* is sent via email to all faculty and staff. It highlights ongoing and upcoming campus initiatives, projects, events, and news to develop awareness and understanding among the campus employees. ITS is able to leverage this online newsletter for IT specific articles.

7.6.2 Broadcast Email

Broadcast email is a mechanism for distributing important messages and/or announcements to UCSC faculty, staff, and students. All broadcast email to the campus from ITS must be ITS technology or service related. The communication manager approves, writes, and distributes all broadcast email on behalf of the ITS Division.

7.6.3 ITS Division Announcements

Official ITS announcements and other time-sensitive messages for the ITS staff are broadcasted through email to the entire division on an as-needed basis from the communication manager and other designated ITS staff as required.

7.6.4 Service and Time-Sensitive Announcements

Service announcements and other time-sensitive messages including outage notices, are broadcasted through phone and/or email (UCSC broadcast email or the ITS email lists) on an as-needed basis. Each message directs the audience to the ITS Web site as the primary source of information.

7.6.5 ITS Mailing Lists

ITS has several mailing lists that add an additional communication channel within the division. ITS staff may use these lists to communicate to a specific ITS group.

The Computer Coordinator (Coord) email list plays an important legacy role that is still utilized throughout the ITS Division. The Coord list offers an additional channel for communication that expands beyond ITS. its-coord@ucsc.edu

7.6.6 CruzAlert Emergency Notification System

CruzAlert is the campus emergency notification system, intended to provide critical information rapidly to students, faculty, and staff during an emergency on campus. The CruzAlert system can deliver voice messages to all phones, text messages to cell phones, and emergency email to UCSC email accounts.

7.7 Meetings

7.7.1 ITS Meetings

ITS meetings with the Vice Chancellor, IT, are scheduled on an as-needed basis with departments and/or divisions to provide a forum for discussion of key IT issues. The VC, IT meets weekly with the Senior Management Team (SMT), meets monthly with the ITS Manager Group (ITSMG) to discuss specific work-related issues and topics, and meets quarterly with all ITS staff to discuss general updates.

7.8 Feedback

Every communication includes an invitation and mechanism for feedback to a specified point of contact. A confidential feedback form is available on the ITS Web site for general comments; these are directed to the appropriate area in ITS. <http://its.ucsc.edu/feedback.php>

7.9 Future Communication Channels

Social networking and mobile device applications are potential communication channels that the ITS Division may develop to help communicate especially to students at UCSC.

8 Frequency

Communication is regular and as needed to ensure that all audiences are aware of critical and important information on a timely basis. For example, the ITS Web site and IT Request ticket system are updated regularly to communicate the most current service information; *ITS News* updates are emailed weekly or as needed to ITS employees; ITS Town Hall is a quarterly face-to-face gathering with the Vice Chancellor and ITS employees.

9 Communication Matrix

The Communication Matrix serves as a guide to the “who,” “what,” and “when” of communication. This matrix displays a specific audience, channels, and delivery timetable.

Audience	Channel	Frequency
All ITS Staff	ITS Web Site ITS News and Alerts Town Hall Google Apps ITS Brown Bags Broadcast Announcements Mailing Lists IT Request Ticket System	Updated as needed Updated as needed Bi-annual Daily or as needed Monthly As needed Daily or as needed Daily or as needed
ITS – Vice Chancellor	Email Meetings Feedback	As needed As needed As needed
ITS – Senior Directors, Managers, and Divisional Liaisons	Email Meetings Feedback	As needed As needed As needed
Chancellor, Vice Provosts, Vice Chancellors	Email Meetings	As needed As needed
Advisory Committee for IT, Committees of the Academic Senate-Chairs -Deans and Department Heads	Meetings	Bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly
Faculty and Staff	Email (broadcast email) Meetings ITS Web Site	As needed As needed Updated as needed
Students (service clients)	Email (broadcast email) ITS Web Site / Portal	As needed Updated as needed
Extended Community (<i>alumni, prospects, donors, parents, vendors</i>)	ITS Web Site	Updated as needed
UCOP (Office of the President)	ITS Web Site UCSC Web Site	Updated as needed Updated as needed
Service Organizations (<i>e.g. WASC, EDUCAUSE, CUMREC, NABUCO</i>)	ITS Web Site Participation	Updated as needed As needed
Other Campuses	ITS Web Site UCSC Web Site	Updated as needed Updated as needed

10 Communication Standards

A succinct, focused communication aims to clarify a few points rather than to cover an unlimited range of issues. The following five questions help determine what to include in a message and what to forego:

1. What is the purpose?
2. Who is the audience?
3. When does it need to go out?
4. What is the most direct way to say it?
5. What action is required on the part of the reader?

10.1 Style

Style is the approach an organization uses to present its image through the written word. It is a set of guidelines that standardize the use of terminology and grammar to make messages and materials the most applicable to all audiences.

This plan supports and recommends using the communication standards outlined in the UCSC's *Guide to Editorial Style*. This guide answers common questions about grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Through the use of a common style, ITS projects a cohesive and coordinated professional image to the campus and public.

The *Guide to Editorial Style* can be found at:

<http://urelations.ucsc.edu/about/units/communications/style-guide.html>

This plan also supports and recommends that the ITS Division use the *ITS Style Guide* for ITS specific branding, web and visual guidelines, and project and general templates.

The *ITS Style Guide* is available online at: <http://its.ucsc.edu/communication/style-guide/>

10.2 Graphic Identity

Graphic identity involves the use of logos, typefaces, and colors to create a clearly recognizable image. A successful graphic identity helps ITS develop a strong name recognition by defining a “look” for all ITS materials that audiences instantly identify.

This plan supports and recommends using UCSC's *Identity Guidelines*. Through consistent graphic identity, ITS projects a strong, unified, and professional image to all audiences.

The *Visual Guidelines* can be found at: <http://its.ucsc.edu/communication/style-guide/visual.html>

10.3 Templates

ITS templates conform to UCSC's *Guide to Editorial Style and Identity Guidelines*, as well as the *ITS Style Guide*. This plan recommends using the templates for ITS documents. By using the standard ITS templates, a recognizable ITS identity is instantly achieved.

These templates are available online at: <http://its.ucsc.edu/communication/general-templates.html>

11 General Guidelines

Each communication fits the technical level of the intended audience, avoiding acronyms and definitions that may not be clear. Communication focuses on conveying a positive message and identifying a knowledgeable resource for follow up or questions. Follow the communication standards outlined in this plan including the ITS templates for reports, memos, and presentations.

This plan suggests that all ITS campus messages, including service announcements, are approved and reviewed by the communication manager before distribution.

General guidelines for communicating with the groups identified in this plan are as follows:

- Establish a clear, consistent, and easily recognizable message
- State any necessary action at the beginning of each message
- Direct message to the audience
- Include unit name, contact information, closing statement, and provide a link to the ITS Web site
- Educate about ITS services when appropriate
- Use all appropriate and available communication channels
- Ensure timely and meaningful communication
- Listen and act on feedback

11.1 ITS Emergency Messages

As determined by the Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, and the ITS senior managers as required, emergency messages that relate to ITS technology and services are transmitted via the campus voicemail and broadcast email to the entire campus community as needed. The communication manager is responsible for managing all emergency messages distributed by ITS to campus. <http://its.ucsc.edu/change-mgmt/its-doc.html>

The ITS Division Operations Center (ITS DOC) may be activated based on the type and length of the emergency. The purpose of the ITS DOC is to coordinate the ITS Division and to facilitate communication to and from the campus Emergency Operations Center.

General guidelines for communicating an emergency message:

- Everyone affected by a “problem” gets the message
- The message needs to be clear and relevant
- The message needs to be timely and frequency monitored

11.2 ITS Web Guidelines

Web site guidelines and campus template design are established for web pages within ITS in accordance with UCSC Communications and Marketing group. The campus standard web templates are used for all ITS web pages.

UCSC web policies, site standards, and web templates are available online at:

<http://www.ucsc.edu/identity/web/guidelines.html>

For assistance creating ITS web pages, contact the communication manager at: lbono@ucsc.edu

11.3 UC Electronic Communication Policy

The University of California encourages the use of electronic communications to share information and knowledge in support of the university's mission of education, research, and public service and to conduct the university business. The UC Electronic Communication Policy establishes an overall policy framework for electronic communications and is supported by UC Santa Cruz and Information Technology Services.

The UC Electronic Communication Policy is available online at:

<http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/7000470/ElectronicCommunications>

11.4 ITS Commercial Endorsement Policy

ITS periodically receives requests from commercial vendors to serve as a reference, participate in press releases, case studies, advertisements, or product endorsements. In general, following UC policy, ITS does not participate in such requests for commercial vendors.

The ITS Commercial Endorsement Policy is available online at:

<http://its.ucsc.edu/policies/commercial-endorsement.html>

11.5 Feedback

Every ITS communication incorporates a mechanism for feedback. Evaluating audience feedback ensures effective communication. In addition to determining credibility, feedback focuses on answering questions. Feedback offers the audience the opportunity to respond by communicating or indicating:

- Understanding of ITS services and projects
- Understanding of project timelines
- Personal involvement
- Opinions and questions

By evaluating feedback, ITS is able to communicate effective messages to meet the needs of the audience at any given point in time. This enables continuous improvement for future communication.

Events (e.g., Town Hall, All-Hands, and meetings) provide an opportunity for the audience to respond directly to the communicators. Online feedback offers a place where people can share opinions or ask questions in a confidential environment.

A confidential online feedback form is available at: <http://its.ucsc.edu/feedback.php>

12 Conclusion

The Communication Plan serves as an overall framework for communication within ITS. Successful communication results from a committed effort from each ITS staff member in using the channels and guidelines presented in this plan. Such a commitment ensures that ITS provides relevant, accurate, and consistent information to its service community.

The communication manager assists in developing specific tactical communication plans for each ITS unit and project as needed using the framework outlined in this plan. Contact Lisa Bono at lbono@ucsc.edu or 9-1583 for assistance.