



UC SANTA CRUZ

Strategic Communication Plan

Information Technology Services
UC Santa Cruz

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Author: Lisa Bono

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Executive Summary

Developing a clear and consistent message is essential to effective communication in any organization. This Strategic 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. This plan serves as a guide for developing tactical communication plans. It is a living document that will be modified when necessary.

1 Purpose

This Strategic 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 is not intended to be tactical. Instead it 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, divisional liaisons, and the communication manager collaborate on communication within the organization. In addition, the communication manager measures the effectiveness of the Strategic Communication 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
- Collaborating with Public Information Office (PIO) 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 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

4 Delegation of Responsibility

The Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, delegates responsibility for message management within each ITS unit to the Senior Management Team or others as required. This group regularly reviews divisional activities of strategic or tactical importance and provides direction to the communication manager for the creation of specific tactical communication plans using the framework outlined in this document.

The Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, delegates coordination of campus messages to the communication manager or others as required. The communication manager 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.

5 Messages

Official campus and division ITS messages from the communication manager serve as an authoritative source 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. This plan incorporates the *Who We Are* guiding principles¹.

6 Communication Channels

This plan defines communication channels used throughout ITS. These include:

- Web
- Online Newsletter
- Events
- Email
- Voicemail
- Meetings
- Feedback

¹ For more details on the guiding principles document, please refer to http://its.ucsc.edu/about_us/guiding_principles.php.

6.1 Web

6.1.1 *ITS Web Site*

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

6.1.2 *UCSC Web Site*

The campus corporate 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>

6.1.3 *MyUCSC*

MyUCSC allows students and faculty 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>

6.2 Online Newsletters

6.2.1 *ITS Online Newsletter*

The *ITS News Online Newsletter* engages the campus in discussion about IT news and events, key accomplishments, and information about services and technology. The newsletter is dynamic and updated frequently, and published on a quarterly schedule. The newsletter is web-based and reaches multiple audiences with Internet access. IT staff are encouraged to submit articles for publication. http://its.ucsc.edu/news_and_events/

6.2.2 *UCSC News and Events Online Newsletter*

UCSC News and Events presents campus news weekly to faculty and staff. ITS submits articles to *UCSC News and Events* on a project- or announcement-needed basis to communicate to the broader campus community audience. *UCSC News and Events* is managed by the Public Information Office (PIO). http://www.ucsc.edu/news_events/

6.3 Events

6.3.1 ITS Town Hall

Quarterly 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. Dates and agendas are communicated via weekly email updates and the ITS Web site.

http://its.ucsc.edu/news_and_events/townhall/

6.3.2 Colloquiums

IT Colloquiums offer the campus in-depth examinations of IT-related topics. IT Colloquiums are communicated via weekly email updates and the ITS Web site. All faculty, staff, and students may attend.

6.4 Email and Voicemail

6.4.1 ITS News Update via Email

The *ITS News Update* sent via email highlights ongoing and upcoming IT initiatives, projects, events, and news to develop awareness and understanding among ITS staff. The *IT News Update* is broadcast weekly via email to ITS staff by the communication manager and is used to emphasize articles in the *ITS News Online Newsletter*.

6.4.2 Broadcast Email

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

6.4.3 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.

6.4.4 Service and Time-Sensitive Announcements

Service announcements and other time-sensitive messages for ITS staff and the campus community are broadcasted through phone and/or email (UCSC broadcast email or the ITS list serve) on an as-needed basis from ITS. Each message directs the audience to the ITS Web site as the primary source of information.

6.4.5 ITS List Serves

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

The Computer Coordinator (Coord) list serve 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. coord@ucsc.edu

6.4.6 Campus Voicemail Tree

As determined by the Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, and the ITS senior managers as required, messages of immediate importance are broadcasted via the campus voicemail tree to all faculty and staff.

6.5 Meetings

6.5.1 Constituency Meetings

Constituency meetings with the Vice Chancellor, Information Technology, are scheduled on an as-needed basis with departments and/or divisions to provide a forum for discussion of key IT issues.

6.6 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/>

7 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 Update* is emailed weekly to ITS employees; ITS Town Hall is a quarterly face-to-face gathering with the Vice Chancellor and ITS employees.

8 Communication Matrix

The Communication Matrix serves as a guide to the “who,” “what,” and “when” of communication. Each tactical plan uses this matrix to create a specific set of audience, channels, and delivery timetable.

Audience	Channel	Frequency
All ITS Staff	ITS Web Site ITS News Online Newsletter IT News Update (Email) Town Hall Colloquiums Broadcast Announcements List Serves	Daily, weekly, monthly Daily, weekly, monthly Weekly Monthly Monthly 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-LASSO, Committees of the Academic Senate-Chairs -Deans and Department Heads	Meetings	Weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly
Computer Coordinators	COORD List Serve (<i>coord@ucsc.edu</i>)	Daily or as needed
Faculty (service clients)	Email (broadcast email)	As needed

Audience	Channel	Frequency
	Meetings ITS Web Site UCSC News and Events Online	As needed Daily, weekly, monthly Weekly
Admin. Staff (service clients)	Email (broadcast email) Meetings ITS Web Site UCSC News and Events Online	As needed As needed Daily, weekly, monthly Weekly
Students (service clients)	Email (broadcast email) ITS Web Site / Portal	Daily, weekly, monthly
Extended Community (<i>alumni, prospects, donors, parents</i>)	ITS Web Site	Daily, weekly, monthly
Vendors	ITS Web Site	Daily, weekly, monthly
UCOP (Office of the President)	ITS Web Site UCSC Web Site	Daily, weekly, monthly Daily, weekly, monthly
Service Organizations (<i>e.g. WASC, EDUCAUSE, CUMREC, NABUCO</i>)	ITS Web Site Participation	Daily, weekly, monthly As needed
Other Campuses	ITS Web Site UCSC Web Site	Daily, weekly, monthly Daily, weekly, monthly

ITS Communication Matrix

9 Communication Standards

A succinct, focused communication aims to clarify a few points rather than to cover an unlimited range of issues. Focus on the following five questions to help determine what to include 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?

9.1 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://pio.ucsc.edu/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.php

9.2 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 *Identity Guidelines* can be found at: http://its.ucsc.edu/communication/writers_guide.php

This plan also supports and recommends that the ITS Division use the *ITS Style Guide* for ITS specific graphic identity.

The *ITS Style Guide* is available online at: http://its.ucsc.edu/communication/style_guide.php

9.3 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/templates.php>

10 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

10.1 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 tree 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.

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

10.2 ITS Web Guidelines

Web site guidelines and templates are established for web pages within ITS in accordance with UCSC accessibility standards and the Public Information Office (PIO). 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://its.ucsc.edu/communication/web_guide.php

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

10.3 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://www.ucop.edu/ucophome/policies/ec/>

10.4 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/about_us/commercial_endorsements.php

10.5 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>

11 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

12 Conclusion

The Strategic 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.