

**UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONAL AND  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

# **Perceptions of Virginia Tech Internal Communication Report**

*for*  
University Relations and  
Virginia Tech Human Resources

Survey conducted December 2 – 17, 2010  
By University Organizational and Professional Development

Report published February 18, 2011

## Introduction

This report provides a summary of survey results critical to Virginia Tech's *Internal Communication* practices. The results highlight strengths and opportunities for improvement, and include the following sections:

<b>Key Findings</b> .....	<b>p 2</b>
<i>Provides summary of key findings based on analysis of respondent feedback.</i>	
<b>Demographic Summary</b> .....	<b>p 3</b>
<i>Provides a breakdown of the number of respondents by demographic group.</i>	
<b>Daily E-Mail Summary</b> .....	<b>p 6</b>
<i>Provides a summary of aggregate scores for questions related to Virginia Tech's "The Daily E-Mail".</i>	
<b>Overall Communication Report</b> .....	<b>p 9</b>
<i>Provides analysis of responses to overall internal communication strategy, content and method questions.</i>	
<b>Narrative Comments</b> .....	<b>p 18</b>
<i>Provides respondent narrative comments to general qualitative questions regarding internal communication practices.</i>	
<b>Appendix</b> .....	<b>p 54</b>
<i>Provides landscape, large-format word clouds from narrative comments.</i>	

### INTERPRETATION GUIDELINES

This report displays both numerical and qualitative results using statistical conventions and charts to facilitate the communication and interpretation of results. "Don't Know" responses have been removed from the numerical calculations. Narrative comments are provided verbatim from the original statements made by respondents.

Where standard deviation is provided, it indicates the level of agreement or range of responses among respondents. As a general guideline: A higher standard deviation in this summary would be in the range of 1.10 or higher. A medium standard deviation would be in the range of 0.90 through 1.09. A lower standard deviation would be 0.89 or lower. Complete consensus in the responses would yield a standard deviation of 0.00.

## Key Findings

*Summary of key findings based on analysis of respondent feedback.*

### Key Findings

Overall, there was a healthy response rate to this assessment, with respondents providing a fairly representative cross-section of the university population. The most notable underrepresented groups are those university and classified staff in the lower paybands.

Overall, the assessment scores reflect a high level of interest in the university's communication practices, and a number of relevant recommendations. Generally, there are positive perceptions of official communication, yet there are opportunities to improve the more informal communication and information behind key decisions.

Below are some key findings noted from the data:

- Respondents reflect periodic reading of the news, campus events and campus notices stories in the Daily E-Mail, though there is mixed response in terms of relevance or usefulness of this mode of communication.
- Perhaps not surprisingly, levels of supervision and management closest to the respondents (e.g., direct supervisor, department head or manager) are perceived as more effective in communicating "need to know" information for satisfied, engaged employees (as compared to communication from the highest levels of the university).
- The greatest area for improvement, supported by the quantitative as well as qualitative data, is in the areas of transparency and process. People indicate a low level of effectiveness in terms of communication regarding how and why decisions are made, and how or where employees may provide input.

The following predominant themes arose from the narrative comments:

- It is striking how many similar things arose from comments about an event or example of something the university communicated well, and a similar example of something about which the university communicated poorly. This underscores the complexity of the communication challenge here at Virginia Tech – there is inconsistent experience of the same information shared and avenues of communication.
- Overall, there is much positive feedback. People seem to appreciate being able to self-serve on a variety of items since information is readily available through many newsletters and websites in particular.
- An overriding theme has to do with transparency as well as ongoing proactive communication – in particular communicating early and often about new initiatives and changes, rather than just post-decision when possible.

## Demographic Summary

*Breakdown of the number and percentage of respondents by demographic group.*

**Total respondents = 2,848**

**Overall response rate = 39%**

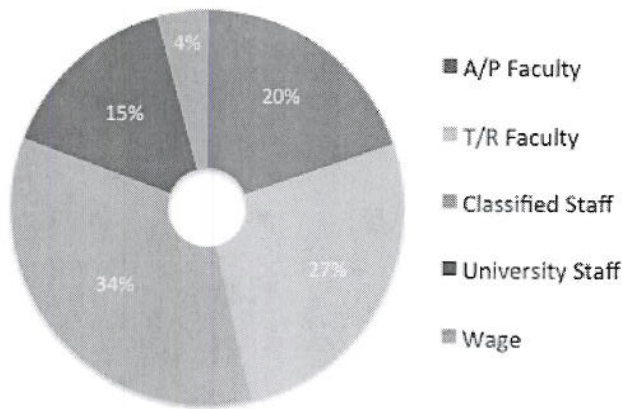
**What college or division do you work in?**

	# of respondents	% of total respondents	% of total University
CALS	405	14.2%	16%
CAUS	51	1.8%	2%
College of Business	73	2.6%	2%
College of Engineering	233	8.2%	9%
College of Science	155	5.4%	6%
College of Veterinary Medicine	148	5.2%	5%
Dean of Libraries	66	2.3%	2%
Diversity and Inclusion	8	0.3%	0%
Executive Administration	49	1.7%	3%
Graduate School	25	0.9%	1%
CLAHS	230	8.1%	7%
Natural Resources	65	2.3%	2%
President	10	0.4%	0%
Sr. VP and Provost	32	1.1%	1%
VP Development	111	3.9%	3%
VP Alumni Relations	21	0.7%	0%
VP Research	190	6.7%	6%
VP Student Affairs	225	7.9%	14%
VP Info Technology	160	5.6%	4%
Vice Provost - Outreach	77	2.7%	3%
VP & Dean for Undergraduate Ed	106	3.7%	2%
VP Admin Svcs	269	9.4%	9%
VP Finance & CFO	128	4.5%	2%
VP NCR	4	0.1%	0%

# Perceptions of Internal Communication

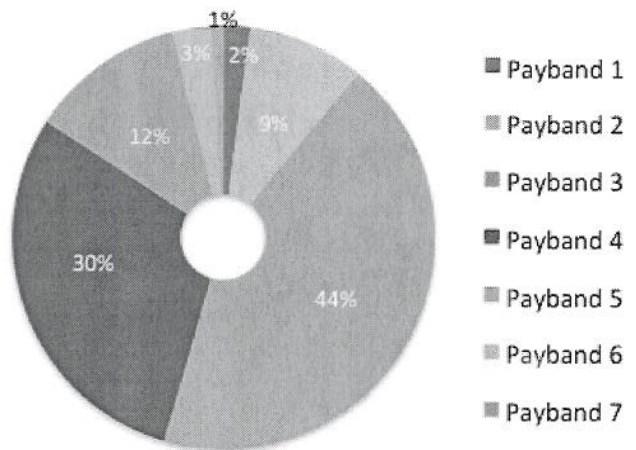
**Please indicate your current employment classification:**

	# of Respondents	% of Total Resp	% of total University
A/P Faculty	560	20%	14%
T/R Faculty	757	27%	30%
Classified Staff	975	34%	33%
University Staff	431	15%	16%
Wage	118	4%	7%



**Please indicate your current pay band classification (staff only):**

	Frequency	% of Total
PB 1	25	2%
PB 2	135	9%
PB 3	653	44%
PB 4	452	30%
PB 5	179	12%
PB 6	46	3%
PB 7	10	1%



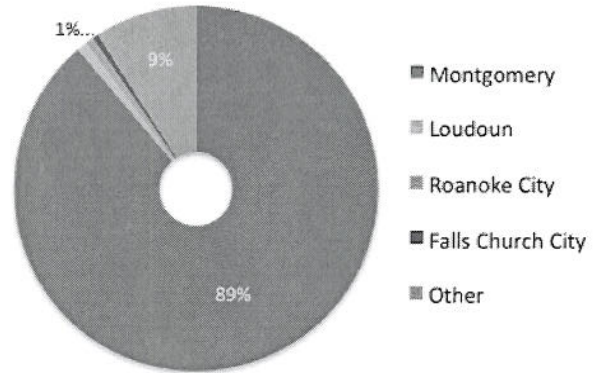
\* Note: detailed information regarding paybands is available at:  
[http://hr.vt.edu/compensation/pay\\_structure/index.html](http://hr.vt.edu/compensation/pay_structure/index.html)

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

### Where is your primary office located? (County)

	Frequency	% of Total
Montgomery	2510	89%
Loudoun	25	1%
Roanoke City	21	1%
Falls Church City	16	1%
Other	256	9%

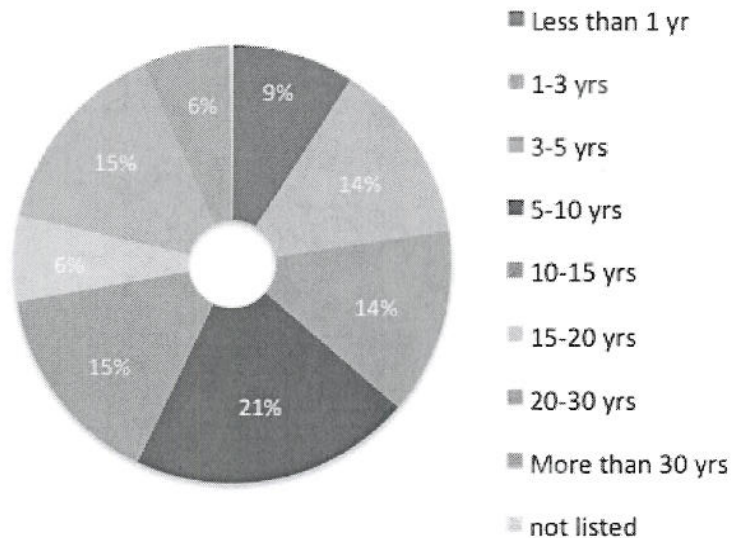
*A total of 97 locations were represented*



### How long have you been employed at Virginia Tech?

	Frequency	% of Total
Less than 1 yr	257	9%
1-3 yrs	385	14%
3-5 yrs	391	14%
5-10 yrs	593	21%
10-15 yrs	430	15%
15-20 yrs	181	6%
20-30 yrs	420	15%
More than 30 yrs	184	6%
not listed	7	0%

*Greatest tenure was 48 years*

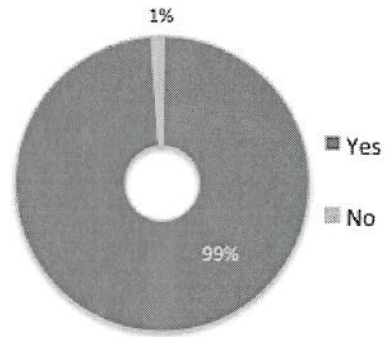


## “Daily E-Mail” Summary

Summary of aggregate scores for questions related to Virginia Tech’s “The Daily E-Mail”.

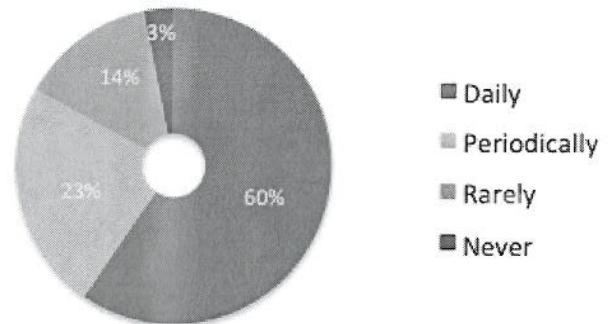
### Do you receive Virginia Tech’s “The Daily E-Mail?”

	Frequency	% of Total
Yes	2813	99%
No	35	1%



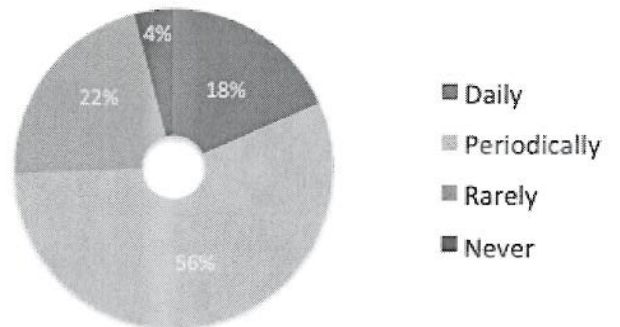
### How often do you open or review Virginia Tech’s “The Daily E-Mail”?

	Frequency	% of Total
Daily	1676	60%
Periodically	659	23%
Rarely	390	14%
Never	88	3%



### How often do you read the news stories?

	Frequency	% of Total
Daily	517	18%
Periodically	1572	56%
Rarely	606	22%
Never	116	4%



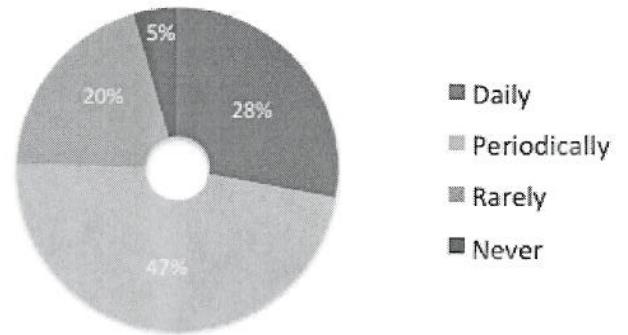
## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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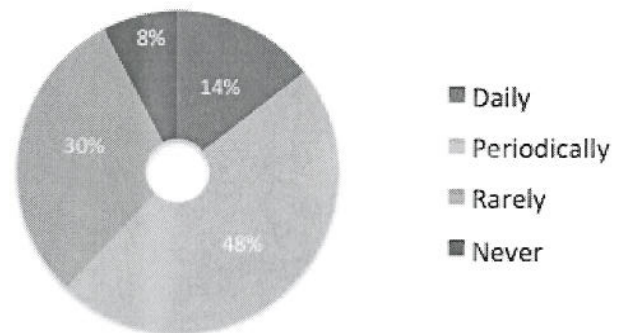
### How often do you read the Campus Notices (internal correspondence)?

	Frequency	% of Total
Daily	786	28%
Periodically	1336	47%
Rarely	564	20%
Never	127	5%



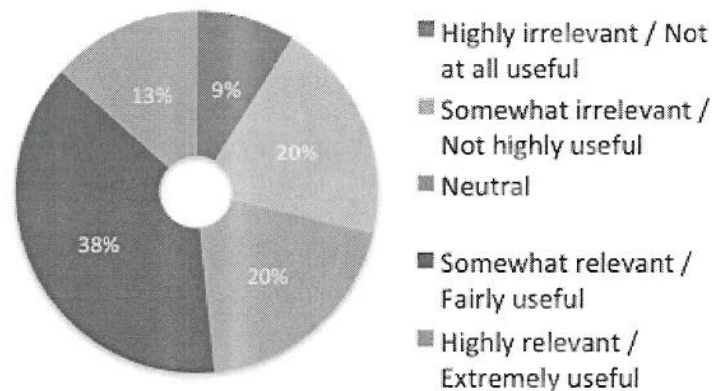
### How often do you read the Campus Events?

	Frequency	% of Total
Daily	405	14%
Periodically	1341	48%
Rarely	850	30%
Never	217	8%



### How relevant or useful is Virginia Tech's "The Daily E-Mail" to you?

	Freq	% of Total
Highly irrelevant / Not at all useful	248	9%
Somewhat irrelevant / Not highly useful	559	20%
Neutral	553	20%
Somewhat relevant / Fairly useful	1076	38%
Highly relevant / Extremely useful	377	13%





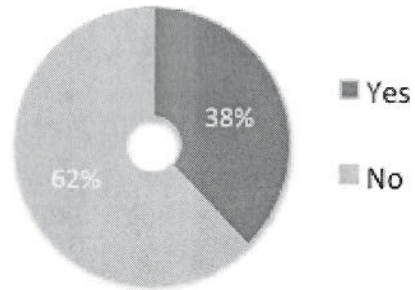
## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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**Do you know that Campus Notices (items of news and information of importance to the overall campus community) in The Daily E-Mail can be submitted by anyone?**

	Frequency	% of Total
Yes	1079	38%
No	1769	62%



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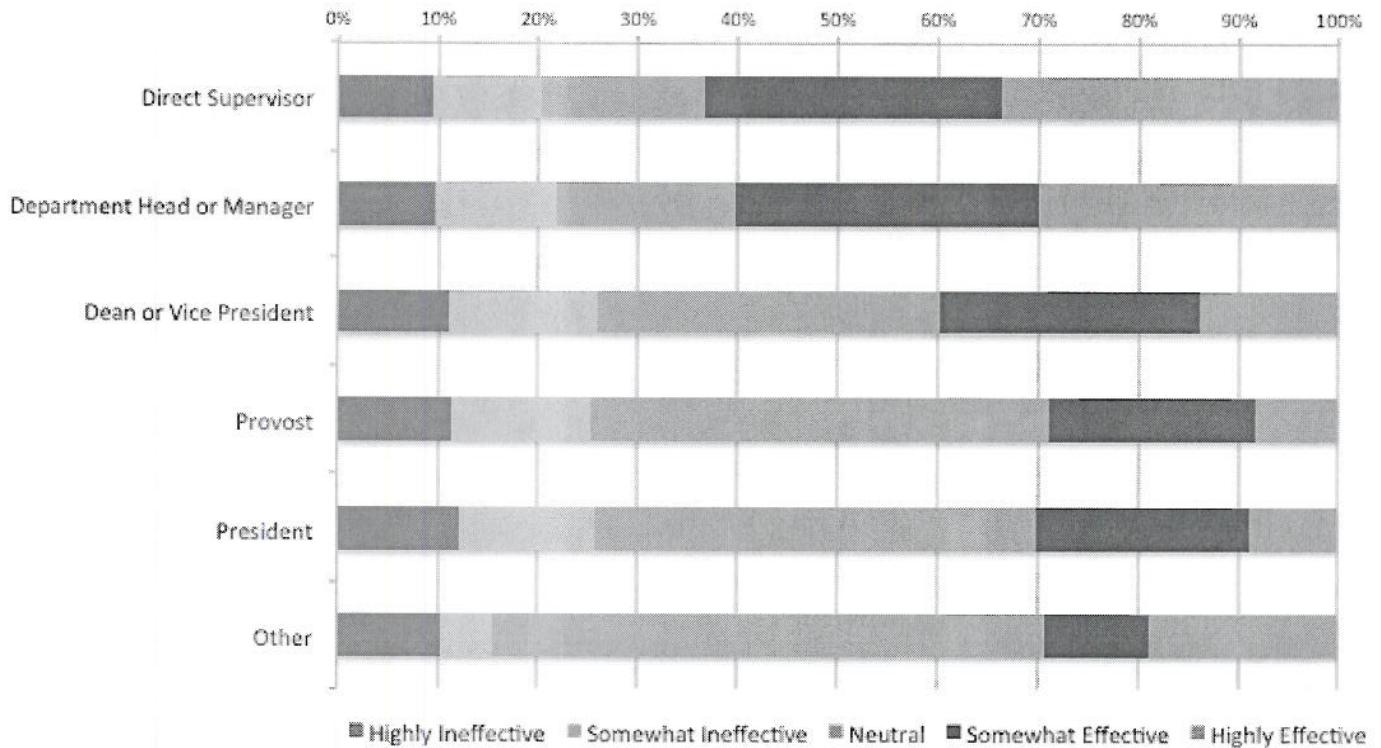
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## Overall Communication Report

*Analysis of responses to overall internal communication strategy, content and method questions.*

Please rate how effectively people in the following positions keep you informed about what you need to know to be an effective and engaged university employee.

	Highly Ineffective	Somewhat Ineffective	Neutral	Somewhat Effective	Highly Effective
<b>Direct Supervisor</b>	9%	11%	16%	30%	34%
<b>Department Head or Manager</b>	10%	12%	18%	30%	30%
<b>Dean or Vice President</b>	11%	15%	34%	26%	14%
<b>Provost</b>	11%	14%	46%	21%	8%
<b>President</b>	12%	14%	44%	21%	9%
<b>Other</b>	10%	5%	55%	10%	19%
<b>Averages</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>19%</b>



## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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**Please indicate what additional “others” are sources of university information:**

	Frequency
Coworkers / Colleagues	19
Administrative Asst / Support Staff	11
Human Resources	8
District Director	6
Rumor Mill / grapevine	5
Larry Hincker	5
Asst / Assoc VP	4
VT Police	4
Controller's Office/Purchasing/Etc.	3
District Administrative Assistant	3
School/Program director	3
COSSA listserv / email lists	2
Staff Senate	2
VP for Research	2

**Other sources named:**

- Supervisor
- Self (remote campus)
- VA DHRM and Governor’s Office
- Daily email
- Blacksburg Alert
- Unirel
- Committee Chairs
- Legal Department
- Other departments
- OSP
- Chief Operating Officer

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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**Please rate how effectively people in the following positions keep you informed about what you need to know to be an effective and engaged university employee.**

*Analysis by respondent Senior Management Area:*

	Direct Supervisor	Dept Head or Manager	Dean or VP
CALS	3.50	3.40	3.07
CAUS	3.17	3.22	2.96
College of Business	3.71	3.76	3.71
College of Engineering	3.70	3.78	3.34
College of Science	3.92	4.04	2.94
College of Veterinary Medicine	3.30	3.23	2.98
Dean of Libraries	3.78	3.88	2.87
Diversity and Inclusion	2.88	2.88	3.13
Executive Administration	3.62	3.58	3.30
Graduate School	3.59	3.45	2.62
CLAHS	3.84	3.98	3.35
Natural Resources	3.66	3.81	3.56
President	4.20	3.86	2.67
Sr. VP and Provost	4.24	3.74	3.46
VP Development	3.89	3.75	3.48
VP Alumni Relations	3.22	3.12	3.00
VP Research	3.49	3.38	2.99
VP Student Affairs	3.73	3.44	3.32
VP Info Technology	3.67	3.56	3.05
Vice Provost - Outreach	3.87	3.61	3.33
VP & Dean for Undergraduate Ed	3.86	3.73	3.18
VP Admin Svcs	3.67	3.48	3.06
VP Finance & CFO	3.80	3.47	3.04
VP NCR	3.25	3.00	3.25

mean responses < 3.00

mean responses > 3.75

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

**How helpful are the following methods of communication for keeping you informed about the university? (listed in rank order from highest mean response to lowest)**

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Virginia Tech's "The Daily E-mail"	3.78	3.78	1.06
Department/Unit Staff Meetings	3.67	3.67	1.15
Campus website	3.49	3.49	1.05
The local "grapevine"	3.46	3.46	1.01
College or division mass email or newsletters	3.38	3.38	1.01
University publications or literature	3.24	3.24	0.92
The local newspaper	3.18	3.18	1.07
Other method of communication	3.11	3.11	0.95
Communication from university governance leaders and representatives	3.05	3.05	1.00
Social media (Facebook, Twitter)	2.97	2.97	1.11
The student newspaper	2.91	2.91	1.03

**\*\* Most Popular Social Media named:**

*Facebook (200+), Twitter (40+), WDBJ 7 (5), Linked In (4), TechSideline (2)*

**\*\* Most Popular Campus Websites named:**

*VT Homepage, VT News, Human Resources, Hokie Sports, HokieSpa*

**\*\* Most Popular Other Methods named:**

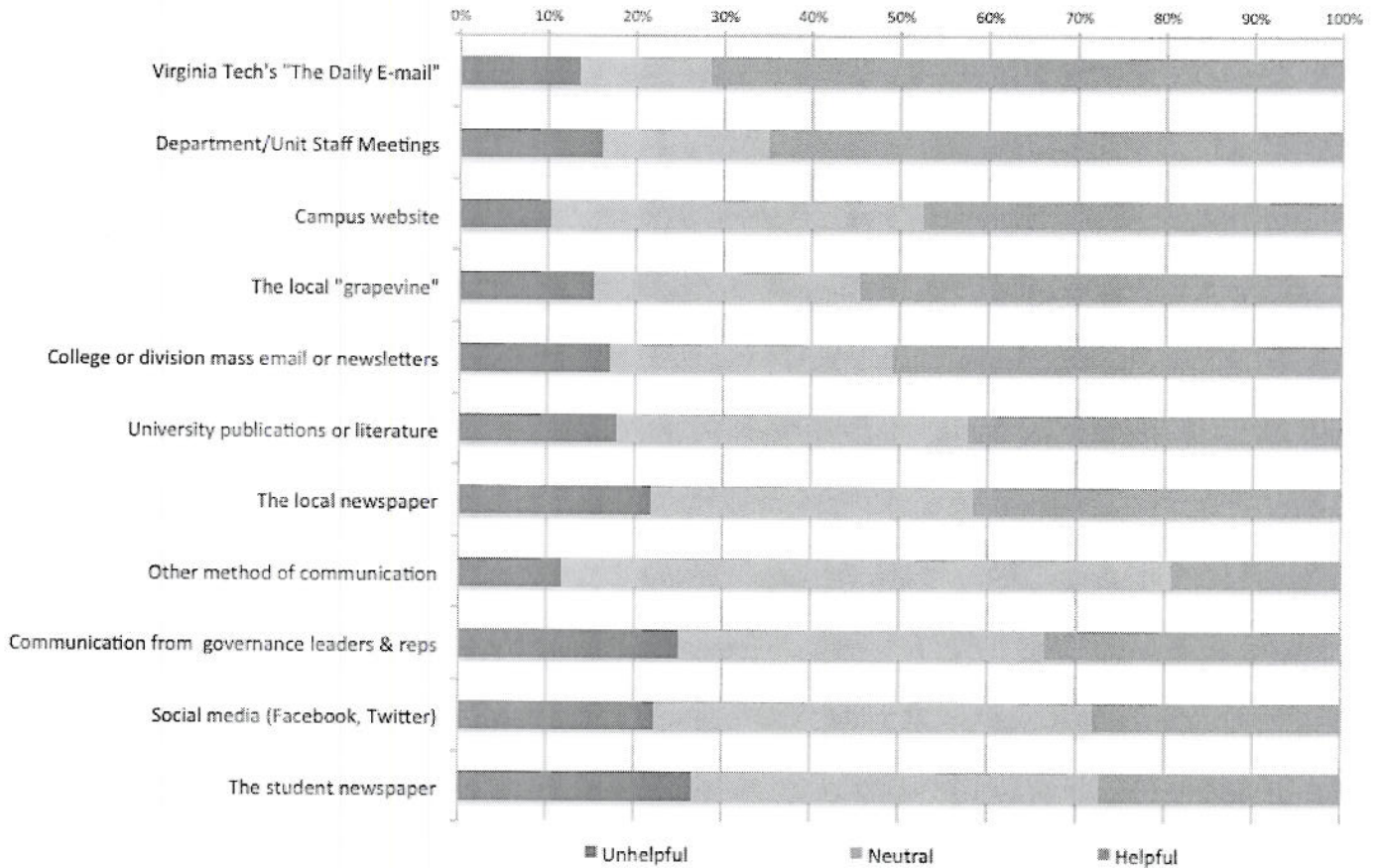
*Email, Facebook, Google, VT Alerts*

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

**How helpful are the following methods of communication for keeping you informed about the university? (listed in rank order from highest mean response to lowest)**



**Please rate how effective university communication is at keeping you informed of the following topics: (listed in rank order from highest mean response to lowest)**

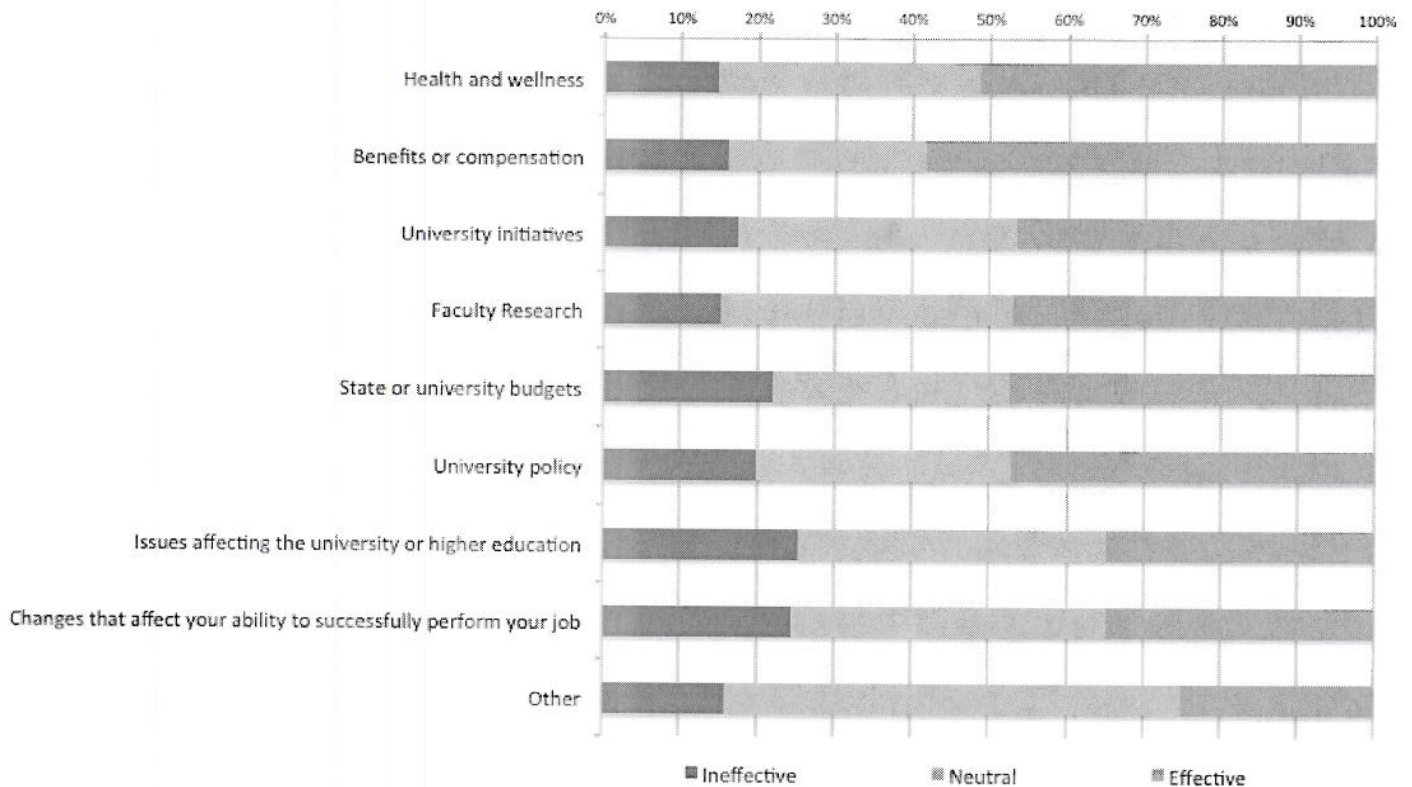
Topic	Mean	Std. Dev.
Benefits or compensation	3.46	0.95
Health and wellness	3.39	0.92
Faculty Research	3.35	0.91
University initiatives	3.31	0.90
University policy	3.28	0.96
State or university budgets	3.26	1.01
Other: (please name)	3.08	0.99
Issues affecting the university or higher education	3.07	0.95
Changes that affect your ability to successfully perform your job	3.06	0.99

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

**Please rate how effective university communication is at keeping you informed of the following topics: (listed in rank order from highest mean response to lowest)**



**Other topics indicated to be of interest for more communication:**

- Staff Senate or other organization meetings
- Efforts to restructure
- Parking changes
- Assaults on campus
- Community issues that are related to VT
- University policies
- Extension
- Events
- National Capital Region
- Activities and recognition
- VT Policy revision (see comments)
- Changes that affect students
- Financial transparency
- What are new outputs
- Emergencies
- Campus security/logistical & infrastructure issues
- Emergency & weather
- Construction projects
- IT system issues and downtime
- Diversity and inclusion
- Surveys
- Ongoing threats (4/16)
- P&T procedures
- Feedback from Daniel Wubah
- Admissions overbooking
- Governor's Office
- Closings and delays

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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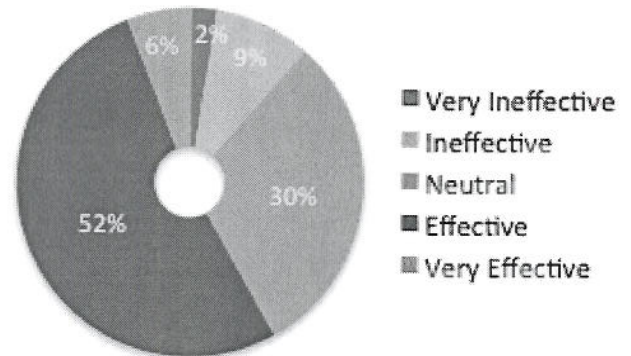
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**Please rate how effective university communication is regarding the content of information you receive:**

		Mean	Std. Dev.
Providing relevant information	3.49	3.49	0.85
Providing information about why decisions are made	2.79	2.79	1.03
Providing information about how decisions are made	2.66	2.66	1.01
Providing information about how to provide input or where to address questions	2.93	2.93	1.02
Providing information in a timely manner	3.21	3.21	0.97

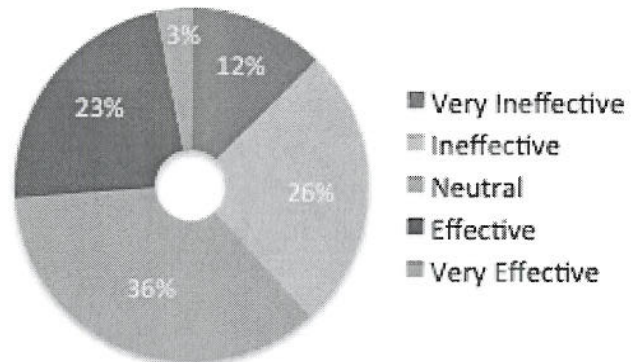
### *Providing relevant information*

	Frequency	% of Total
Very Ineffective	69	2%
Ineffective	221	9%
Neutral	745	30%
Effective	1282	52%
Very Effective	145	6%



### *Providing information about why decisions are made*

	Frequency	% of Total
Very Ineffective	307	12%
Ineffective	634	26%
Neutral	876	36%
Effective	566	23%
Very Effective	79	3%

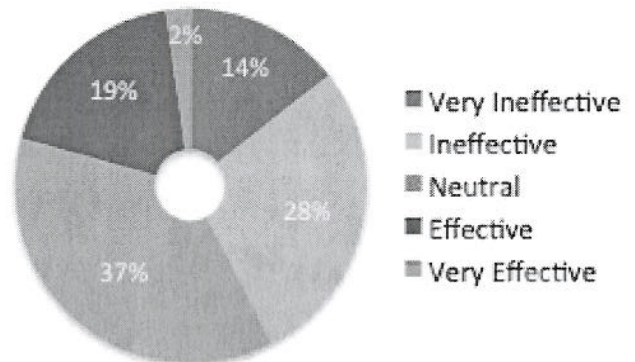




## Perceptions of Internal Communication

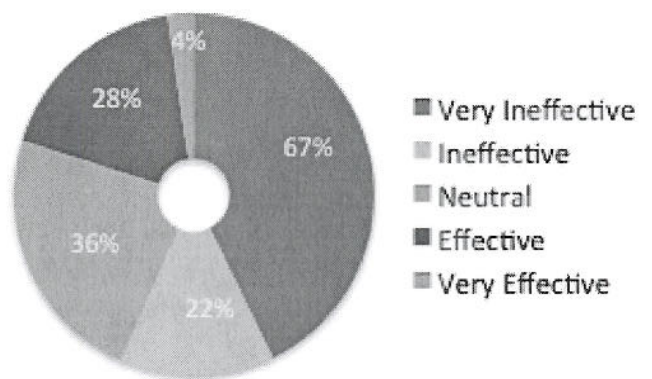
### *Providing information about how decisions are made*

	Frequency	% of Total
Very Ineffective	354	14%
Ineffective	689	28%
Neutral	907	37%
Effective	456	19%
Very Effective	56	2%



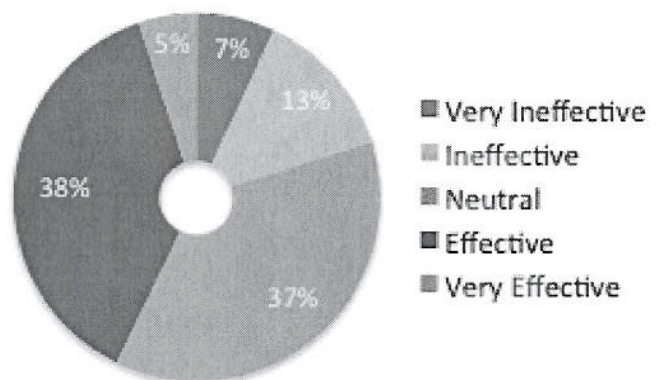
### *Providing information about how to provide input or where to address questions*

	Frequency	% of Total
Very Ineffective	249	67%
Ineffective	538	22%
Neutral	897	36%
Effective	690	28%
Very Effective	90	4%



### *Providing information in a timely manner*

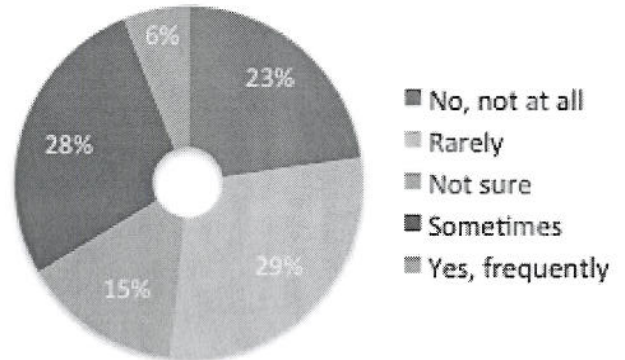
	Frequency	% of Total
Very Ineffective	170	7%
Ineffective	325	13%
Neutral	911	37%
Effective	930	38%
Very Effective	126	5%



## Perceptions of Internal Communication

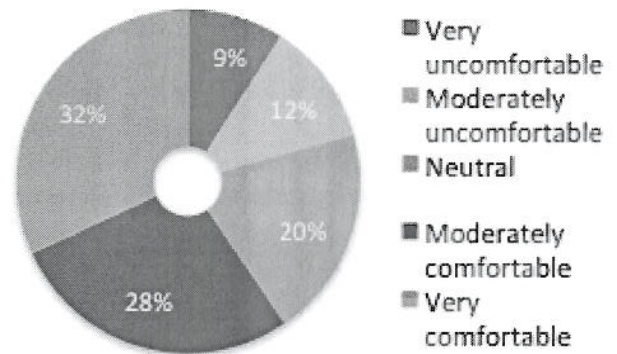
**Do you feel like you have a chance to participate in the direction of the university or partake in discussions concerning university life?**

	Frequency	% of Total
No, not at all	557	23%
Rarely	707	29%
Not sure	364	15%
Sometimes	675	28%
Yes, frequently	148	6%



**How comfortable are you discussing strategy or future direction of your unit or the university with your direct reports? \* Asked of 1,165 respondents who indicated supervising others in their role \***

	Freq.	% of Total
Very uncomfortable	105	9%
Moderately uncomfortable	134	12%
Neutral	228	20%
Moderately comfortable	320	28%
Very comfortable	369	32%





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- Benefits and compensation university initiatives Budget concerns
- Greater notification of time period to change health benefits, 403(b) and flex spending, I have missed these important events twice because I wasn't sure when they were happening. I know they are posted on HR's website however, I am not in the habit of checking this site daily.
- Budget situation -- specific to the university What other departments are doing to address budget concerns Regular reports from university committees -- faculty and staff senate, focus groups
- Flex Scheduling and Alternative Work Schedules
- None.
- The plans to expand the campus/ move all the livestock out to Kentland Farm.
- In the old days of Spectrum, there was "newspaper"-type coverage of University Council, the BOV, and some other university governance activities. Now there is nothing. Minutes are either deliberately not posted until after the meeting at which they are approved, or simply delayed. And, of course, minutes don't offer the "color" that newspaper coverage can.
- campus master planning and building agendas, procedures for admissions and reviews
- I'd like to hear more about the huge salary raises given to football coaches. It is really exciting to hear about raises ..RAISES ... exceeding most faculty (let alone staff) entire salaries. That's just swell.
- Budget cuts, job loss, restructuring of Cooperative Extension.
- I would like to see the university put an end to the mass paper distributions (especially the weekly "News & Funding Opportunities for Research & Scholarship sent from the Office of the Vice President for Research). We have asked that the entire lot sent to our department be stopped, but they keep coming. These are a waste of paper, and they are a waste of a staff member's time in putting them in the appropriate mailboxes. We no longer actually distribute them but simply lay the pile out on a table or just recycle them from the start. Also, the various mailings from the Athletic Department are useless as well. These also simply get recycled. For a technology-based institution, it is ridiculous that we're still getting paper notices and unwanted solicitations to attend campus seminars or sporting events.
- Long term budget implications and issues. However I realize a significant portion of this topic is out of the University's hands and we are at mercy of many other external influences.
- The impact of state and federal funding shortfalls Regional transportation and land use planning Collaboration with other universities
- Parking issues are my #1 issue at the moment. With Schultz lot rapidly shrinking, and random spots being marked as "reserved" by parking services (i.e. today there were ~20 spots on the drillfield and mall marked reserved all day, and sat empty, while I got to drive around and eventually park downtown and walk to work). How about updates from Parking Services? Why are spaces blocked, etc?
- programs open to staff and faculty -- e.g., wellness, arts, etc.
- This doesn't really apply to the question asked here - but for the questions above, it is sometimes difficult for me to rate the effectiveness of university communication when it may have nothing to do with the communication, but rather my interest in the topic. So, if I see an email about a particular topic that does not interest me or apply to me, I may choose not to read it, but that doesn't mean it's poor communication on the part of the university.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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- pretty well get everything I need
- Budgets
- Strategic Plan..Please
- It is very hard to find the correct policy/information on a lot of issues; if you try to call and speak with someone they either act like you are bothering them or they have no idea what the answer is. ie controller's office, HR, purchasing
- I would like to understand better how decisions affecting the university are made - at what levels, by whom, what type of information is considered in the process? I also think there's a great opportunity to be more transparent in the process of information consideration and decision-making; that would help with not only informing, but with the feeling of receiving timely information and updates.
- I am a long time wage employee I never receive communication through campus mail, it is sent to the Full time employees only. Sad
- I'm always in search of HR benefits info that is not so difficult to understand. I guess I'm looking for a communication of this nature for "simple minds."
- How about setting up a custom email bulletin? This would be a place where one could go and check off boxes representing areas, issues, and so on that one finds of interest. So, each department could have this, each club, each, office, each interest group. When they post a message, it would be sent to only those who have signed up to receive it. Right now your one size fits all approach is controlling and ineffective. Decentralize, and let the information flow where it will.
- The Daily News is used for personal propaganda rather than to communicate events that are important to ALL campus.
- Governance and Policy Topics
- We are constantly bombarded with expensive glossy brochures from campus organizations I've never heard of, and who seem to spring up from the ground like mushrooms. I get one or two of these things a week, from The Center For Some Thing Or Other, and then the CFSOR apparently vanishes from the face of the earth, never to be heard from again; and a new International Organization For Something Else takes its place in the campus mail. How much money is wasted on this sort of thing? Granted it gives the Printing office something to do, but honestly, in terms of "relevance" to the daily slog in the trenches trying to push back the frontiers of student ignorance, ALL of them are a bad joke. ESPECIALLY if the intent is to "communicate" something to me, since I never heard of whatever it is they're doing, nor does it affect my job in any way.
- State of the university and long term plans... I find out more about large initiatives only once they start... but they often have been in development for years.
- Lack of raises for 4 years
- Better events calendar format, may need different program. More info on staff meetings/events.
- detailed instructions / information about retirement options that are CLEAR
- would like to know more about construction on campus and when parking lots are closed  
would like to know more about weather conditions on campus
- Why are we building in recession time? Why are the salary frozen? Why a bonus based on % to provide advantage to the high earning?

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- I peruse the Daily News email daily, and read the articles and notices often. More content or specifically links to content that would be helpful to faculty and staff such as departmental training opportunities and other updates (UOPD is excellent about advertising their training, but sometimes other training opportunities that are job-specific are hard to track down if you do not know where to look.)
- I'd likely timely information about budgetary changes.
- Status of IT services- what's up, what's down, when it is expected to be fixed.
- New buildings on campus.
- transparency in governance decisions.
- I would like to know how the economy is going to affect our jobs in this fiscal year. We have staff and faculty who are feeling the pressure of doing more and not getting compensated for their hard efforts. It's been a few years since staff have had a raise. Our paychecks are staying the same, but our expenses are going up. It's also very upsetting that someone from a private sector can come to VT and get a job, being paid more than an employee who has been at VT doing the same job for several years.
- Contingency plans for additional 2, 4, and 6% cuts when being told how much state able to save over the \$82m mark for the 3% bonus, 2) when base salaries will increase, 3) why extension is being reorganized, 4) development of new programs, majors/minors, and degrees (and where funding comes from), 5) removal of programs, majors/minors, and degrees, (and where funding will be reallocated), 6) initiatives for the First year experience program, 7) am sure there are more, these are the ones that came to mind in
- End-of-year bonus, where budget cuts are coming out of and why, who decides, what jobs/initiatives/programs/departments have been impacted by the economy, what are ways the university suggests we save money without cutting departments, are there any resources in place for individual employees to learn about this information?
- The questions above are awfully general and vague. I don't know how to answer them.
- There needs to be more oversight of researchers and their reported hours and potential for conflict of interest
- transparency of decision making processes
- Communication within departments. I am isolated.
- I work for dining services and it is incredibly frustrating when an order is handed down from 'higher ups' but a reason is never given for the decision and it can not be appealed in any way whatsoever. Employees get no discussion and all our protests are ignored. And parking SUCKS
- Some of the messages from the provost and/or president are too long and don't get to the point. I'd like to see more concise and deliberate messages.
- Training, resources for staff, HR/university policies, fiscal policies, budget protocols
- I am in Northern Virginia. I feel "left out" of the loop at times. I wish we had more visits from our Dean.
- It is often difficult to dig back into the archives to find information about an event that is coming up. An updated "events calendar" on the front of the web-site would help. It is much easier to get information about any athletic event than a concert, play, reading, lecture, etc.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- Virginia Cooperative Extension field faculty and staff feel a great disconnect between the University and Extension. We do not feel valued by the University in general. We also do not feel that University administration outside of Extension does not fully understand our educational role in localities or the local support we have for programs. In 10 years as an employee, the President of VT has not addressed field faculty at a conference and a Provost has only been to one conference. This issue has been ongoing and is not just a frustration with the Extension restructuring process.
- Why the university is reluctant to endorse a 5.5 million dollar budget amendment to restore Cooperative Extension funding.
- University communication seems to simply be a PR exercise.
- A minor complaint I have with University communications is the organization's tendency to avoid providing information in logical classifications. For example, the "Daily E-Mail" and other mass emails frequently contain useful information, but the useful items are often buried with a lot of unrelated things like special interest stories and publicity blurbs. Emails about closed buildings or university policies get lumped together with seminar announcements, bookstore sales, or announcements of some new research award. I prefer looking in a place for logically related information rather than skimming through a lot of unrelated stuff to find the occasional nugget of important information.
- Too much news, not enough substance, impacts credibility
- Health and wellness and ways for faculty/staff to get more involved with the campus community. I would also like to see "features" on different departments and their inner workings, especially those that "make" the University function on a day-to-day basis. For example: Parking Services, Facilities, Police, Emergency Management, Campus Mail, and the Alumni Association. I think the more people know about how things work and the people behind making them work, the more likely they are to collaborate and collaboration is definitely a key to success!
- We do NOT need any more puff pieces about specific individuals or centers (e.g. VBI) and their accomplishments. Nor do we need any more top-down communication about the Top's concerns. The root problem is that faculty feel unheard, dismissed, and disrespected. Any evidence that Burruss is LISTENING would be greatly appreciated. So, too, would be news of accomplishments that genuinely measure up in national or international comparison. This place has the least faculty governance of any of the universities I've worked at. Everything is about cronyism and bad decisions made in the name of VT's Greatness, as if serious institutions of higher education (public or private) have nothing with which we might compare ourselves. Who buried the news of the medical school's failed accreditation bid...which many faculty predicted?? VERY bad.
- State-university relations; Capital campaign and dedicated funds; university hiring plan allocations; initiatives for competitive faculty salaries; the president's expressed goal to have our faculty salaries in the 60th percentile among ACC faculty; any plans to develop an alumni/corporate giving initiatives to create an Endowment for faculty salaries, status of protection for gay and lesbian faculty.
- the University is good at putting spin on things for public consumption, but not at being honest and open.
- I have no idea about any university-wide initiatives. These are a total mystery to me. Even if I knew what they were, it would be likely that there would be no information on how to get involved in the news articles on initiatives. Is there a way to make the news releases about this type of thing more interactive?

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- Salaries Future directions
- Can we hear more success stories that are not always related to research? I think the Lumenhaus stuff is cool but there is so much good stuff that happens here that is not acknowledged. The only stories that get the top bar are high level research. And if you look at our website, you wouldn't think we even did sports. That info is there but on an interior page. I understand that VT is a quality university but our sports are also part of our school. Let's celebrate that Tyrod is ACC player of the year. Can there be more on the traditions that have made our community great? Wouldn't it be great to have a History and Traditions link on the top bar of the main website? Other schools have that. Auburn highlights all kinds of aspects of their school, not just research, on their main site with beautiful photos of campus, of projects, sports and people.
- Effect of no raises for 4 years on retirement Need more straightforward information on retirement for long term planning (if you are real close - there's lots of info!) if you are five years away it would be nice to have tools to help plan! Insurance options and current costs... calculation of things like our 'bonuses' this year. I might have planned better if I could have easily calculated that I would only receive 1.83% of my annual pay in my net pay! Arts Events, Parking!, TRUTH!
- budget
- Equipment purchases. Maintenance of facilities.
- The University has been increasingly concerned about faculty productivity, but displays virtually no interest in faculty compensation. My impression is that we have fallen far behind our peer institutions and recent hires at the assistant level often earn substantially more than associates. Perhaps most disturbing, the salary data published in the Collegiate Times reveal that some highly-placed administrators have received regular salary increases over the last three years in which faculty salaries have been frozen.
- How university governance works.
- Regular communication from vice president level and above about what their day-to-day priorities are, what's on the horizon, how the institution is changing and moving forward.
- Hopefully the new Dean of the Libraries will communicate with the library faculty and with the university itself.
- It's not more hearing that I need, but more seeing of appropriate action.
- Could we put a section on the daily mail for sports results.
- administrator salaries and why they are so much higher than faculty salaries? we should be discussing as a community the need for much greater faculty, rather than administrator, decision-making as regards research and teaching goals. The decreasing emphasis of high scholarship at VT is noteworthy
- I would like to hear more about future salary increases ...
- AP faculty and what they contribute to the University. There are featured researchers, teaching faculty and staff on the websites but no where is there anything about what AP faculty do or do they feature any AP faculty who do a good job.
- I would like for the daily email to come out the night before. It comes early in the morning and I am so busy during the day that I never have time to read it thoroughly. By the time I have time to check my email thoroughly, it is night and everything that was happening during the day is over.



## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- Institutional budget, state impact on budget, how well is restructuring working,
- facilities provided to international postdocs-there is no clarity on postdocs has to face problems in accomodation as their arrivals are not proportionate to semester periods. drinking warm water on campus during winter.
- How academic units are taking efforts to control costs and maintain the quality of their instructional programs.
- I would like to know more about research going on at the university. Perhaps feature a different department each month and site their research. In other words answer this question for people - "What are we (the university) doing to make the world a better place?"
- How to get involved in research initiatives, e.g., VTCRI.
- Building VT's international and national academic reputation. Coming recently from top 10 universities (BS, PhD, postdoc), this place seems much more concerned with Blacksburg, VT campus, and SW VA than anywhere else - in a word "provincial." This is a dangerous situation for growth, or even maintenance of stature. Promoting "investment institutes" and (excessively) sports over strong academics contributes to this.
- It is hard to be concerned with any issues other than the lack of fair and deserved salary increases for ALL employess, not just Faculty.
- I think there needs to be a better delivery of information on the why of certain initiatives, when state budgets have been cut for 4 straight years. Although I understand the need to diversify our portfolio of educational offerings, many faculty and staff do not understand how we are building efforts in health and the arts and on the other side continue cuts are made at college and budget levels. I think that the President or Provost needs to share why growth in these areas are important and how the university will benefit from them.
- Things that directly affect me and my job. Benefits, compensation, budget, training, wellness (flu shots, diet/exercise), threats, etc.
- The parking issue has gotten out of hand. I work in squires student center near Alumni Mall. Now that they are taking away our parking lot, we literally have nowhere to park. By 7:45am in the morning, all the parking is taken. We pay \$220 a year to not be able to park and have to feed the meter just to be able to park. Since they are taking away our parking lot, I feel they should make some of the carpool and meters faculty/staff parking as well to help alleviate the problem. The carpool spaces are always open as well as the majority of the meters.
- The University does not communicate well at all with regards to wage employees. Wage employees receive no benefits, have no rights, cannot be recognized for exceptional performance, cannot serve on University committees and commissions, and have no voice in University governance. Wage employees were not even eligible this year to receive free flu shots as had occurred in previous years. The "Virginia Tech News Daily E-mail" is of no value to me as a 1500-hour wage employee, and I wish that I could discontinue receiving it.
- Restructuring Budgets as they affect VT and VCE
- I think many people do \*not\* know that anyone can request to post to campus events. This should be communicated better. The means of "pushing" the information seems good. The means of "pulling" information that needs to be distributed seems to be the area that needs improvement now.
- I would like to opt out of the Daily Tech email as it is totally irrelevant to me.
- Vision and strategy for IT overall. Have never heard anything from our CIO. Not once.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- There are policies at this university but it depends on who you are as to what the policy is. The policy is the EXCEPTION at this University. This works the same way with raises and bonuses. If we have a policy--everyone should have to follow the policy--from the president down to the custodians. Also, if you complain high enough, they want the problem to go away--does not matter that the policy is broken. April 16--just make it go away--we are tired of hearing about this. The money that has been wasted on this is ridiculous. I lost a family member to an accident the same year, but nothing was done for our family.--People have lost family to tragic accidents everyday, but these families have been given everything--but no amount of money is ever going to bring that family member back. We all have to go forward.
- 1. Why it's not possible to reward people for jobs well done instead of only hearing "We can't do anything; you're already at the \_\_\_% compared to others in your position." Garbage!! 2. Why certain people in dean's or administrator's offices can get large pay increases when the rest of us no longer make enough to pay our bills. Why new administrative positions can be created and new staff hired or transferred in with big salaries and here the rest of us sit with no salaries or resources to do our jobs.
- There is little warning or opportunity for input whenever the university decides to put up a new building. Given the major capitol that goes into constructing new facilities and the large impact that such additions have on the university workforce and community, I would expect that such decisions and the process behind them be more open and transparent. On another note, information about when the BOV, and Staff and Faculty Senates meet is always readily available, but there is not nearly enough widely published information about what transpired at said meetings. Major decisions are briefly discussed, but there is certainly more that could be covered.
- would like human resources to answer the question asked as well as copying paragraphs from the hr manual. I asked if full time VT staff could be paid to teach exercise classes at the VT Gym during lunch hour. I asked if full time VT Staff could work another part time job on campus - like the bookstore.- after hours or weekends. and was quoted this from employee handbook. ADDITIONAL/OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT During the hours you are employed to work at Virginia Tech, you may not engage in other employment with other state agencies or in any private business. If you work somewhere else in any capacity outside of your normal work schedule with Virginia Tech, the continuance of your outside employment is contingent on whether the additional job affects your work performance in your primary position with Virginia Tech, and whether it is in violation of the Virginia Conflict of Interests Act. You must inform your supervisor or Department Head if you have additional/outside employment. Also, see Additional/Outside Employment Guidelines Policy 4070 ([www.policies.vt.edu/4070.html](http://www.policies.vt.edu/4070.html)) the person also wrote; would suggest that you read the above policy. Need to keep in mind that any hours you work over 40 could be considered overtime and then your department could be responsible for paying you at an overtime rate. How does that relate to my question and any work at the football games.
- Budget. Future directions for the university.
- More specifics regarding Presidential and other high-level goals and strategies for the university.
- Budget, long-term vision and goals, online degree programs, day care concerns
- I think the University should look into giving the 1500 hr employee benefits of some kind. I myself am not a wage employee but some of these fine people have worked for VT for years without any benefits.



## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- April 16 shootings--Pres. Steger handled it extremely well and administrators organized quickly to help people.
- The 12/1 bonus info
- Budget issues/deliberations were well communicated.
- Details about how the 3% state bonus would be implemented.
- handling of state budget cuts
- parking changes for sporting events is probably one of the best reported and alerted issues
- Anytime there is a security issue on campus they are on top of it.
- The initiation of the Campaign for VT
- I was actually impressed with how quickly and completely the University handled the recent missing student issue (Gregory Frasserman). I was approached by the PD less than 2 hours prior to the email going out, and there was NO delay in indicating the situation was resolved.
- VT Alerts seems to be working well; I feel informed about potentially dangerous situations.
- Recent crimes have been communicated well, at least ones that sound scary. The one-time bonus was communicated well, though I think that was more the Governor and not the University.
- Generally, the university does a very good job of communicating the various accomplishments of faculty and departments. In many ways, it seems more focused on external audiences as opposed to university people.
- If I could think of one I would. I believe the university is better at keeping information from me than providing it to me.
- I can't think of a specific event or issue off-hand; however, I do think that the periodic communications from Provost McNamee are informative, comprehensive and well-developed. They seem relevant to everyone. It would be nice to see more of this type of communication to the whole university, as well as similar types of communication from leaders throughout the chain in my part of the organization.
- VT alerts
- Police alerts are very timely and concise. They do the job.
- The alerts sent by VT police, although many of them are sent somehow too late after an event has occurred on campus. We've learned and improve very little since April 16
- Weather issues. Traffic and athletic events.
- You have to be kidding.
- Alerts after April 16th
- Appreciate receiving the informational bulletins on potentially dangerous incidents.
- anything having to do with university closures
- Budget cuts
- Communication is good if the topic is a happy one -- awards, research funding, alum accomplishments

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- The flu shot clinics and availability, and the December Bonus were communicated well with additional information readily available.
- n/a
- Wellness initiatives. I'm always seeing them in mass E-mail and in the daily news.
- game day traffic/parking, etc
- did an excellent job with the 4-16 tragedy. Does ok job through media outlets. Does ok to poor job with representatives coming to departmental meetings periodically.
- The solar house, the energy saving, the robotic, the special project where students are highly involved
- for the most part, the daily email is good about covering things happening on campus and who to contact for more information (or input) about the stories being reported on.
- Parking changes for games, police reports, weather emergencies (when decision can be made in time)
- closings, game day parking
- Flu shot arrangements
- Can't remember any.
- missing student, assaults, police matters
- Carilion Medical School
- The April 16, 2007 shootings
- the shooting, major awards, major budget developments, sporting event parking, weather implications, commencement
- Emergency alerts
- VTTI's successful competition for grants. Here we see real competitiveness and accomplishment.
- Frankly, I am at a loss...
- shootings on campus
- Flu shots.
- none
- The post-April 16 communication was done well. Some of the messages from University Relations and the provost in the months after were so timely and reassuring to so many of us - that the feelings we had were shared by many of us. I remember the 6 months after message just at a time when we needed to hear from a university leader. I hope the university continues to recognize the impact of that event on our staff who were here then. Most of the students are post-April 16 now and it is the faculty and staff that still carries that burden. The university has been pretty transparent about the budget issues which of course are very real in all departments across the university. I also thought that Dr. Steger's letter about the BHS building issue was bold and appreciated.
- Sorry, can't really think of one.
- April 16

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- Day of Remembrance events.
- Parking information on game days is usually expressed clearly
- The early days following the shootings.
- Lack of state support for higher education and how to communicate budget situation with outsiders
- I think that the University did a stellar job on all of the April 16th fallout.
- Flu shot clinics that were being offered all over campus. It was easy to find the information over several weeks so if you missed it the first time you can get to it easily at another time.
- The shooting.
- The bonus!
- library training program, job postings, cranwell weekly information.
- April 16th tragedy.
- University budget reductions resulting from the state's sagging economic environment.
- I really appreciate when Tech officials give us their take on what is going on in Richmond legislatively that will affect us as state employees and university employees.
- 4/16 - wonderful.
- During the shootings of 2007 I really appreciated the emails detailing the investigations, memorials, and support information. I felt that I was well informed without having to listen to the emotionally overwhelming news channels. Thank you.
- I think the university has done a good job on explaining the budget issues facing it, but again see note above.
- Information about raises.
- Flu shot availability.
- N/A
- 4/16 commemorative events and schedule
- Recent attacks on campus -- timely, informative reports as well as follow-ups.
- I appreciate the Daily emails from VT. This is a good publication that keeps me up to date on what's happening. I would like to see VCE included more, we seem to be the black sheep a bit.
- I appreciate the notices that the cannon will be firing. My office faces the drillfield, and even though I am still startled when it fires, I immediately know what the noise is from. I appreciate that for a time after 4/16/07, these notices came via direct e-mailings.
- April 16 - regardless of what people who weren't even here keep saying!
- The recent bonuses were covered very well. Information was readily available and widely publicized. The university, as well as the Governor's office, provided frequent status updates as well as supplemental information, such as investment options for the funds.
- When there is a ball game they let you know ahead of time concerning parking. Through the Dailey News they let you know when streets are going to be closed. I think they do a great job now at keeping everybody inform.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- hiring process for Central District Director
- Budget updates are generally good.
- We are getting a Bonus
- The April shootings event I think was handled well regardless of what the media says -- they were not here and could not know how we felt. I never once felt as if I was in danger and I am proud of the way the University handled the whole thing.
- Any heightened concerns addressed by the Alerts system; changes to street use and parking.
- Budget problems
- Random, recent criminal events in Blacksburg or on campus
- alerts
- Campus safety
- University policies
- hokie football, VT is know as a football school not a land grant university ... from all appearances VT does not embrace the importance of local outreach programs or its land grant mission, nor does it care based on administrative actions...
- Whenever there is a security issue or altercation, the email updates are helpful.
- Northern Virginia pay differential for Administrative III employees and the refusal of the university to acknowledge or comply Institutionalized equal pay for equal work disparities  
Institutionalized age and wage discrimination Lack of enforcement for stated policies, such as smoking violations
- This year's bonus
- football games
- I learned of the recent update to the Business Conduct Standards policy from the daily VT email.
- I think the University did a better job communicating inclement weather closings and late openings last year. Getting the information earlier really helps those who have a long commute to work.
- Fortunately and unfortunately, the April 16th tragedy.
- They do a great job of communicating the parking issues with sports.
- flu clinic
- The events of April 16





## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- Why are more cuts being made to College of Agriculture & Life Sciences than the other schools. Since we are a land grant school I don't understand reducing extension and attempts to get my questions answered were unsuccessful
- I'm almost always disappointed in the calendar information that is available in the daily e-mail. There is little description of the event and often no easy way to get better information. There's a lot going on around campus, but no reliable way to discover what and where.
- Heads should have rolled when the University did such a disgraceful job communicating the problem of an armed murderer loose on 4/16/07.
- The whole restructuring process with extension is handled pretty poorly. I find it hard to believe that no one knows anything and when we are informed it happens to be the same information from last time. I completely understand that no one knows what will happen but surely by now someone would know how many positions will need to be eliminated.
- April 16, program restructuring due to budget cuts, employee layoffs because of budget deficits, issues relating to contingency/adjunct faculty
- I do not think, that the University has a formal communication issue, I think the major challenge the University has is how people in the "middle management" level either interprets or manipulates the information.
- Whatever is going on near the airport on Tech Center Drive--there is a sign with President Obama's name, and there is a bulldozer in the field, but will it be a new building? Will the runway be moved?
- The shrinking of the Schultz parking lot over Thanksgiving Break - no word from anyone on that one, was just a surprise one day.
- the medical school and other research initiatives. Seems that the provost's office wants to shift monies to these programs and activities and doesn't really want people to be aware of problems that occur, such as the accreditation snafu..
- I do not think having training on-line is always effective, especially to persons who are not in an office situation where it is conducive to have privacy not to be interrupted during the session or having the session interrupting others who are working in the same area.
- 4-16 readily comes to mind
- Bad weather, closing the university when is needed
- This is an ongoing problem with most things.
- There hasn't been frequent enough communication about the budget over the past couple of years. I think that's probably because of the infrequency with which there's been confirmed new information to share. However, it is helpful to share periodic updates even if the update is "we still don't know anything new; here's how we're continuing to prepare/operation." That prevents gossip, anxiety, paranoia, etc.
- The ones we have not heard about.
- The occasional wordy emails from the Provost are tiresome to read and not very substantive.
- Too many to list because there is NO transparency in anything that the university wants to communicate. Messages are always vague and lacking in substance, specially from the president and the provost.
- See above.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- Mass rounds of policies after Restructuring Act - Particularly IT-related policies. I'm in IT and didn't know about policies until after audit findings.
- Restructuring of Extension
- April 16th
- HR-- poor communication about benefit options.
- Diversity related issues
- Communication is poor regarding thorny decisions -- funding for departments, curriculum demands, challenges to the university
- A recent problem with HokieMart indicated some aspects of the problem, but left departments unaware of other aspects of the problem. Updates and information related to Budget and fiscal concerns could be more clearly communicated and shared with departments.
- When the general assemble cut the budget of cooperative extension, it was the local offices that found out just before the vote through word of mouth while university leadership did just about nothing and provided no effective communication about what was going on and the university's efforts (or lack there of) to do anything about it.
- The April 16th tragedy.
- New buildings on campus, their completion dates and what they will look like. I've driven past the new construction near VBI, yet I have no idea what it will be or how it will improve/worsen parking in the area around VBI.
- I think the university communicated poorly on 4/17/07. Although no one could see what was going to happen, I strongly feel that this situation could have been and should have been treated differently.
- Why enrolment keep going up and why salaries are frozen, Why class are growing and ressources are frozen.. please don't tell me we are state university. why the president doesn't reach out student and faculty more often? Why don't we explain clearly the big raise in the administration? Why are we not transparent on these issue and explain the pros and cons? Provide more explanation on sensitive issues. Police success should be made public. Instructors shoud be also get a stage along with successful researcher
- Budget - it's complicated, get that, but with all the new buildings and parking structures being developed, more about where/how the funds for renovations are still coming through (understand the ones ear-marked prior to the economic collapse, but it seems there have been more pushed through even though there was a moratorium on new capital projects.
- have not heard one thing from anyone but the governor's office about end-of-year bonuses
- Any of those long, long letters from the Provost or the President are not helpful. I've learned to delete them as soon as they hit my inbox.
- Library employees were not alerted immediately when the finalists for the dean's position were made public. That has more to do with departmental communication than university communication.
- Parking. There is never anywhere to park. I am paying \$250+ dollars for a freaking parking pass and I STILL get ticketed because there are never any free spots so I am late to work. I cant come in early because I can't park before 5 so I am always late trying to fight for a spot. Wage/salary need their own separate lot or guaranteed spaces.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- Anything related to money or education.
- The previous general assembly budget negotiations with legislators.
- Strategies it is following to address budgetary problems. How university initiatives like the Arts initiative, ICTAS, VBI, VTCRI are being funded.
- april 16
- changes to the website or software on the web - ex. Scholar
- April 16 2007
- I think the university did a poor job communicating to the campus community on impact the April 16 tragedy had on the administration, faculty, and staff, individually and collectively. In addition, they did a poor job communicating about the recovery process and the things that were being done/offered to the campus community to help with the process.
- Frankly, I'm having a hard time thinking of one. I suppose most negative impressions are localized to my college/dept, for instance the recent SCHEV happenings in CNRE (this is not going well). Aside from this, what do Deans do? Seriously, as a group, what do the Deans do; how do they work together?
- Morning of April 16.
- Med school's failed accreditation tops the list. I also rate most of the press releases about VBI as poor because they are not based in any reality that the external scientific community would recognize. Meanwhile there are MANY units on campus that go unrecognized because they don't have a PR person on staff who has the job of feeding the University's press machine (such as it is).
- Response to Cuccinelli regarding homosexuals and protected class.
- Increase in student enrollment. How tuition money is being spent. there have been numerous cases where higher admin promised things (no across the board cuts) , failed to keep the promise and never explained why.
- April 16, 2007
- The changes in parking due to construction were communicated in a not so effective way. I went to the lot I normally use, and it was closed. Advance notice would have helped.
- most - like reading polititions speacks
- The recent forest fires. It was 'town thing' but town and VT are joined at the hip. When you see smoke all over campus, there is concern. The Collegiate Times did a better job than even the Roanoke Times. The news digest picked up the stories after the fact probably because the fires were partly on Virginia Tech property.
- Health Benefits - there is a need for a simple explanation of benefits. also getting a benefit should be the default (whereas now you have to sign and submit papers to get the benefit - if you do not it is considered waived).
- budget
- 4/16
- How parking will be handled that recognizes the Shrinking spaces.
- shooting

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- Closing of College Ave. for an EA Sports Promotion! COME ON... REALLY? Traffic Alerts... When should I expect game traffic and parking problems. (As one of the employees that works unusual hours I find it astonishing that I have to beg to park in a faculty/staff lot - EVER!) I hate coming into campus from Ramble Road and discovering I'm in a virtual parking lot due to a Basketball game... I don't begrudge the audience or attendance - I just need to know when the traffic will be bad! Dissappointments, under budget conditions, ANYTHING even slightly negative about what the university does! The Theatre 101 building COULD have been and was planned to be a LEEDS Platinum Building Gold is good, but why did we have to compromise?
- The president's communication style is very guarded, private, and there have been a number of times, especially racial incidents, the crisis with the board in 2003, possibly the shootings, and others when he was unwilling to speak publicly in a timely manner. I know his preference is to deal with things behind the scenes, but it often leaves the university community untethered and uncertain about the values and principles that the leadership stands for. The same applies to budget reduction issues, which have recurred several times. It would be helpful if the president were more visible and forthcoming, despite the uncertainty. I think it is this reluctance to be genuinely open and available at times of crisis that gives the university community a feeling that communication is not what it needs to be. University leaders also make MAJOR decisions without communicating about them -- starting the medical school is just the most recent. Important to bring the university community along in decision making about such critical initiatives, yet there is little if any attempt to communicate openly the what and why in a timely manner.
- 416
- I can list many, many. Among those many, the bird flu vaccine last year the poor climate in departments that have failed to get raises or job replacements so that more and more faculty depart
- April 16th I got the phone mail at 11:30 a.m.
- I would like to know a lot more about opportunities that are available to faculty for health and well-being.
- Generally, it appears that at some level the old DDD list still functions. This is problematic for me since my Director is out of the office perhaps 60-80% of the time. As an associate director, I need information but I am not always in the loop. While I realize this is not a university communication issue specifically, closing the gap would be helpful. I like to forward campus notices to staff when appropriate. The lack of a share button to email the information creates difficulty in not being able to forward clean HTML design.
- bonus information,
- Resource allocation among colleges and other initiatives. Persistent lack of teaching facilities, etc.
- The selection of programs and locations to implement campuses and academic programs outside the USA.
- I cannot think of one. I am definitely not a disgruntled employee.
- Did not hear that the one-time bonus would be taxed at the regular rate until after I had completed paperwork to have it tax deferred.
- See note above
- April 16th, 2007. I learned more from Channel 7 about what was going on.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- Changes within facilities. Hard to have effective communication when you are flat out lying to your staff.
- N/A
- Did not hear anything about the CVC until yesterday 12/2/2010 when there were only 15 days left in the program.
- towing my vehicle from an employee parking lot with a pass to park in that lot, during working hours. that ultimately cost me \$200, with tow bill, tickets and knocking my front end out of alignment. with no reimbursement. Gee thanks
- Authorized closing for the evening football game was not communicated clearly. Most of the information about this was communicated in a news article from Parking Services. Employees who do not park on campus can't be expected to read these articles but still need to know about authorized closings.
- April 16, 2007, tragedy (report of initial shootings was much delayed).
- How the budget cuts are specifically affecting VCE. There has been a lot of non-information floating about disguised as information. Also, in the 'year in review' video that was sent out about this time last year, there was a lot of great footage about the teaching and research aspects of VT's land grant school, but nothing (and i mean nothing) about extension. That was very disappointing and disheartening. It was a real slap in the face to realize VT did not recognize VCE as an integral part of the land grant mission.
- I hate to say that this is really the "university," but calendar events often contain inadequate information and link to sites without appropriate information (or even broken urls). Perhaps some education (of people who submit to the calendar) about the basics that should be included (who, what, when, where, why, contact, cost, intended audience, etc.) would help with this.
- This spring Virginia Cooperative Extension was listed in the proposed state budget to eliminate county offices. All aspects of communication related to this issue were extremely poorly handled. The release of the information was found through other agencies before the college made unit offices aware. Talking points were released very late and most units were left to develop their own. Units received floods of questions with no support from the University.
- I don't have a specific--but I can tell you this university has gone down hill in the last 10 years. This used to be a great place to work, but I would not recommend this is a good place to work. The top administration is the problem and when everyone is afraid to say NO that we cannot do this because of the policy--if you are not a YES person you cannot work here. If you are a person that follows policy, you cannot work here. It is so stressful.
- The university's legal concerns, though of great interest and concern to the community, are rarely discussed in a forthcoming manner. For example, our president is going through a legal battle regarding his personal liability over the April 16 events; the first I heard of this was through the Roanoke Times, not from any university source.
- A lot of people would say during the time of the shootings here on campus. Maybe there were things that should have been done differently, but you really don't know if a different decision would have changed the outcome or not. You never know what you might do in the same situation. I guess, they should take all matters with the utmost importance and if it turns out different, great!!
- The most recent events: blocked parking lot in Latham/Hutcheson was a security issue while police searched for an individual who posed a danger to everyone and no building in the area was evacuated. Flasher in Latham.

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- Well, twice this Fall I contacted the state 4-H office (as a 4-H volunteer in a locality that now has no 4-H agent) to ask questions about National 4-H Week (Ms. Carmelita Bishop did a great job in providing me with information!) and another time to ask about a rumor I had heard from a very reliable source that 4-H is losing its tax exempt status. State office Personnel forwarded my email to the head person, but my email was never responded to. I still do not know if it is true that 4-H is losing its tax exempt status- or how this will affect my club and our 4-H camping program. We still have no 4-H agent, so we volunteers are all that is holding this program together. Having my request for information ignored is not helpful, but this particular person has twice not responded to requests for information. I would not ask if I knew the answer, and we need to know if this rumor is true and how we can minimize the impact of the change. Ms. Bishop so kindly helped me the first time, but she had no information that she could share with me the second time, and forwarded my request for information to her boss.
- Sporting event delays and/or cancellations continue to be a problem. For example, soccer game vs. Radford was cancelled at last minute. When I got home, after coming all the way to campus, I saw a posting on hokiesports, but that was too late. Very frustrating. A similar thing happened last year for a basketball game when a truck hit the water main near Cassell. I guess we cannot treat these as "emergencies" and send out broadcasts to phones/emails, etc, but there should be a way to opt in for sporting related announcements and to get those on cellphones so I don't waste time going to campus for events which are cancelled/delayed.
- Bonus details, when, how, delivery method, taxed how, can move to shelter, etc.
- I do not feel it was right to give the Graduate Students that work the bonus this year and not give something to the wage people. Shame on you VT !
- Budget issues. The new medical school partnership. Board of Visitor actions. SACS accreditation and the new first-year initiative.
- Was promised a pay band adjustment over 3 years ago that never came, yet many supervisors continue to get adjustments on regular basis. management should not make promises they do not intend to keep. This causes bad morale problems. Management often does not address problems directly, but instead answers in circles that is more confusing than original problem!
- Guidelines for structuring and offering Alternative Severance Option's last year.
- Most everything else that is going on
- Virginia Cooperative Extension restructuring is a disaster relative to effective communication from Virginia Tech to the field faculty and stakeholders. VCE is how many in the Commonwealth relate to Virginia Tech away from campus, and poor communication and leadership from Blacksburg within this segment of the University has tremendous negative public perceptions across the state. I'm not sure if these are felt on campus until the legislators or Board of Visitors are engaged enough to ask VT the hard questions.
- i've heard about additional budget cuts in the paper in the last couple months, but nothing from the university
- Budget cuts, retirements, planning for new hires or positions

**What could be done to support supervisors in being more comfortable in discussing strategy or future direction of their unit or the university with their direct reports? \*\* Asked of 1,165 respondents who indicated supervisory responsibilities as part of their role \*\***



*Word cloud generated from themes present in 282 narrative responses.*

**Verbatim narrative comments:**

- providing clear information in a timely manner or just updates and status reports
- A less hostile more welcoming environment that encourages out-of-the-box thinking as well as challenges the status quo. Brainstorming needs to be emphasized without judgment.
- Generally more transparency. Make information available about almost everything.
- More honest discussion rather than smoke and mirrors
- Making sure the integrity of the information and the university are in tact.
- More staff meetings.
- nothing much; I see it as my job to get the info I need to inform my students and staff
- To know more about it and participate more often in setting direction.

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- annual state of the university speech/communication like other presidents do; good way to share major accomplishments and talking points for initiatives in the year ahead
- teach with inspiration and modeling acceptable behaviors. Not petty bickering or territorial nature among themselves. work for the good of the organization not to be self serving but self sacrificing. Morale is awful in classified staff and field faculty in extension, partially from partials or ineffective leadership and communication and not holding people accountable for their required duties.
- Please have our supervisors communicate this information to us in a timely manner, so the grapevine doesn't get to them first.
- How about an up front honest assessment of where the university is spending money and why I get the same amount of teaching support dollars despite my student contact numbers going up TEN FOLD in the last 2 years.
- Frankly, the issue for me is not the University, it is the senior management structure of the organization I am in and their inability to get along. Too many games being played. My interaction with the senior University management and leadership has always been positive.
- We have to have some idea what our management thinks our future direction is, and agree that that is a worthy goal, before we'll be comfortable communicating this with our direct reports. Also, it would help if suggestions from our direct reports could be carried forward to our supervisors, but that doesn't happen here.
- I would say hiring people with management skills in the first place would be a good start. But, since that's not an option at this point, how about some mandatory classes on managerial skills? The people that really need the help would never volunteer. Perhaps part of new hire orientation? Add an extra day to the mandatory HR orientation if the person is going to be in a supervisory position?
- More should be done to provide management training to supervisors and provide incentives for them to take courses on issues related to organizational psychology, project management, and team building, issues where timely communication is core.
- It seems that every time we create another VP position, there is another report / request for information coming to department heads. This puts enormous stress on faculty who are asked to assist, when even the Department Head is unsure if it has any value. I'm asking people to provide information which takes quite a bit of faculty time, with little sense on my part of the value and need for the information.
- I'm much more comfortable discussing the future direction of my unit than the future direction of the University because I'm involved with the strategic planning for my unit and I know what's going on. With the university, I feel like I'm waiting to hear about decisions that have been made just as my supervisees are - - so we all learn about things at the same time.
- Having more information handed down from upper administration. Even if it's not "everything", sometimes just being given a heads-up on something that is being discussed would be helpful than knowing nothing and being blind-sided.
- Being given sufficient information such that what we say to direct reports is more than "guesswork".
- Get out of our way with the "policy direction" stuff and let us get on with the job. Give us the tools and the MONEY to teach and do research as WE feel it should be done, not as some administrator thinks it should be done to impress someone in the government of the state or the nation.



## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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- The degree to which there IS strategy in each unit is highly variable; the understanding of how each senior management area, department, and then unit fits into the overall university strategic plan is also highly variable. It would be helpful to have some simplified tools and resources representing university strategy that enable all of the layers of management to have a more succinct understanding to draw from in aligning their own strategies and approaches, and then communicating those to employees.
- LOL! Everyone knows that where the Provost goes, so go the votes! How about appointing a "devil's advocate" to officially speak up at meetings so alternate ideas can be discussed?
- Actually known what the heck is going on will be nice. Direct talk without sugar-coating and political correctness in needed.
- Public comprehensive plans. Periodic strategic plans.
- Open communication from the highest levels of the organization(s).
- Give us detailed, and clear information
- with having several different supervisors in a unit, there is a difference in how and what the staff member is allowed to do
- For new supervisors, there should be training on creating work-place satisfaction. Or on how to deliver news that may not be favorable and you may even disagree with, but you must support the decisions that have been made - even if they weren't yours. And I understand that role and can embrace the decision even if I disagree, but it is hard to deliver the message. And I have witnessed supervisor who do NOT embrace the role and do "finger pointing", but that behavior undermines departmental and university leadership. We need to find ways to help these supervisors and their interaction with their staff.
- more town halls
- Too many unknowns about funding for the future or programs and long-term employment of instructors; frequent changes in higher levels of university administrative decision-making often leave folks in the lower levels confused; sometimes one branch of university administration sets a deadline that can't be met until another branch is forthcoming with information -- for example: summer school schedules were due before summer school budgets were disclosed, leaving supervisors in the position of asking instructors if they want to teach summer school without the ability to determine how many courses would be funded.
- If we understood what the strategy was. The strategic plan is way too complex and not relevant to me.
- Keep them informed. If information comes from the top down, they won't be afraid to talk about it. Send notices about goals, problems, initiatives, etc., and mention the details that should be spread to employees. Communicate with ALL employees so supervisors aren't needed to break the news (where chain of information sometimes fails), but encourage them to discuss it with their employees after they hear.
- Provide us with more information, particularly budgetary information.
- There has to be real, pragmatic, actual channel(s) to adapt the suggestions.
- It seems like we are asked to prepare report and justifications for our ideas on how to grow our programs in a relevant and in a way to attract external funding and these reports and justifications simply go into a "black hole." I now feel it is a waste of time to prepare anything in writing for the Blacksburg campus about anything in Northern Virginia.

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February, 2011

- I literally work under several different types of managers in my dining hall: operations manager, general managers, student managers, supervisors, ect and I hear them all contradict everything the others say on a regular daily basis. Important decisions are made about my dining hall without actually informing (or half ass informing) my managers, who then spread around what they hear and it makes everything very difficult. I shouldnt have to wait until the day before something happens to know about it.
- To feel that administrators really value our input and not just provide lip service to concerns. A more open sharing of funding/budget arrangements would better help supervisors, faculty, and staff understand why programs or startegies need to be changed.
- Better information from above, transparency, and accountability for actions taken by administrators.
- Providing an oppportunity for direct reports to provide feedback to the administration. It would also help if individuals in supervisor roles were more familiar with other constituency groups across campus.
- More money equally distributed and not just for the commercial class.
- Clear plans from executive levels + ending of budget cuts or at least some discretion used in applying them. Across the board cuts are cowardly and leave insufficient resources for some areas. Some intelligence should be applied to how they are applied instead.
- buy-in for the future direction through more communication/forums/etc. that are made available through a variety of methods. Long days/hours do not lend themselves to reading even more emails, newsletters, or attend discussions that occur only at one time of day.
- more involvement in decision-making process
- Getting honesty from the highest levels on strategy and future direction.as I said before, we see mostly spin and not open honesty.
- openness
- There is too much information and my greatest challenge is to sift out what is worthwhile to know. Something 'at a glance' would be helpful.
- Seems more an issue of personalities than institutional policy
- The AVP for Student Affairs, Dr. Shushock should make time to talk to Assistant Directors and front line managers so he isn't making decisions in a vacuum. Sometimes it seems decisions that affect peoples' lives are made without complete information and at times after hearing only one side of an issue. Perhaps he hasn't fully trusted front line managers to make decsions on personnel matters and has kept too many decisions too close to his office. Why have Managers and Directors if they aren't allowed to make decisions?
- More timely information before the grapevine.
- Supervisors must share strategy or future direction with me first.
- Having accurate info from the dept head would help
- Give them more information!
- To value the thoughts of ones who do the work and receive the communication concerning the department.
- comfort isn't the problem, it's the lack of uptake by the university in making changes recommended by faculty

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- Have departmental meetings to let us know what to look for
- There is a feeling that opinions outside of the level below the Deans or so does not matter. Those that do speak up are often quashed. Perhaps it is time to truly open communications so that all can feel they have a voice. When was the last time that the faculty senate was actually relevant within the upper management circle? If it were, you would find that more than just the fringe members would be active.
- Units should be required to develop goals and objectives that are collaborative with the university's strategic plan. I hear excuses that the strategic plan does not include us, however, we need to acknowledge the ways that we can support the plan as well as other developments that influence the direction of the university. If communication flows both directions in defining the expectations and outcomes of the goals and objectives, it should create familiarity that will allow employees to take ownership of the discussion.
- Establishing a culture in which the discussion of the strategic plan is an important component of university life.
- Allow ideas to be heard without fear of retaliation. we may preach about the openness of the university community but we don't practice it in the higher divisions of management.
- Consolidated input would help in information dissemination.
- Provide complete information to supervisors and give them the opportunity to make suggestions before final decisions are made. Then provide final information to allow them to communicate with their staff, especially decisions that effect the areas that supervisors and managers work in.
- I believe clarity from upper administration on exactly where the university is headed under uncertain budget times.
- It is difficult in an extremely political environment, such as Virginia Tech to convey why things are done the way they are done.
- Giving mid level managers more information as to how and why decisions are made/actions are taken in a timely manner
- I am a 1500-hour wage employee who supervises two 1500-hour wage employees and a student. I do not believe the University provides such support for wage employees.
- Provide information to the supervisors before the employees hear things through the grape vine.
- Additional training to improve office related communication skills.
- Know more about what is happening in our area and be informed in a timely manner.
- Give supervisors a clear cut picture of what the strategy or direction is!
- Too much information that is too scattered. Too many kings making proclamations. No central place to go. No way to even know what is occurring everywhere on campus today. Webpage could be improved to find latest information on mission topics: research, academic, business, etc.
- We'd need to know the strategy for the unit in order to do this.
- a more concise description, ease of delivery, not so many points
- University and college administration is autocratic and doesn't solicit or if input is provided, it is ignored.
- having ANY knowledge of direction--just found out about diversity plan last week

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- Insure that upper administration (Deans, Provost, President) actually seek out and utilize input from faculty when making decisions. The last 6-10 years have seen an increasing disconnection between the administration and the faculty and departments.
- Seems like the default at VT is to NOT communicate. Also, my direct reports are students, so it is a different dynamic.
- Supervisors need the information to be able to pass along to direct reports. Information is guarded closely and often not completely honest or transparent.
- I am comfortable talking with my direct supervisors, but feel strongly that what is shared is largely ignored. Comfortable conversation is overrated. Poor employee morale in VCE is not the result of lack of "comfortable" feelings. Poor morale is the result of avoiding hard, uncomfortable discussions with tangible outcomes.
- Future direction must be well defined, transparent, and involve partners from its inception ... otherwise failure and alienation of key stakeholders is imminent ... resulting in lost funding and legislative support ... administrative folks seem to lack the ability to discern what is really needed to thrive ... the tendency is to follow the lead of other universities ... vt should lead not follow and be the model for others!
- More clearly defined strategy and future directions from the University administration, as well as expressed expectations that these discussions take place
- It's hard to discuss the strategy of the university when one feels rather distant to the process by which real decisions are made. We have a strategic plan, and yet decisions are made that fall outside that plan (e.g., Carilion Medical School).
- Vet med has alot of administrators making decisions without directly engaging inpput from the life-long employees experiences and knowledge.
- Being at the bottom of the line, I am not really involved in setting the direction of the department. I would like to be included in discussions that directly affect the courses I am involved with.
- Any time we have face to face meetings and communications it is beneficial. Would be good to have more of those opportunities.
- Supervisor should be open to problems. Currently mine is not and I had to contact Internal Audit because my current supervisor "Didn't understand" the Accts Receivable problem and only accused me of "being a trouble maker". Making it personal when there are errors in handling payments/invoices for the University.
- I'd have to be too specific and personal for this to be a proper place to discuss this.
- Nothing. It's good now.
- Provide more relevant information in a timely manner. If something is unknown such as a restructuring, don't tell about the possibilities until there is something concrete. Partial information is just like rumors; it causes worry and strife without anything to base decisions on.
- More Town Hall types of meetings about information critical to the success of university initiatives.
- I understand my unit, but would appreciate more frequent and or comprehensive communications from the administration regarding university strategy/direction.
- Some people are more comfortable discussing that type of thing than others.
- more information about the whole budget process

## Perceptions of Internal Communication

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February, 2011

- let supervisors know more about future direction plans, including during developmental stages
- More attention from supervisor and AVP
- For supervisors to know what is happening at the university-level. Key decisions are made at Academic Council and other venues that in many cases no information is shared with the dean/vp staff.
- n/a
- The university tends to announce initiatives (e.g., creation of new research institutes) effectively but could do more to provide a rationale for how and why resources are allocated. Most colleges could do a better job at communicating and motivating their strategic decisions.
- Actually receiving information from your own supervisors/directors/deans, most information is kept secret and only announced after decisions made



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- I think we're all trying our best, but there seems to be a lot of compartmentalizing. If there was a way to teach all of us to think more wholistically or big picture it would help. I do not know how to do this unfortunately or I'd be telling you how.
- The College Communications officer (s) tend to be very selective about "what is news" and it is rather discouraging.
- Get us a new phone system! Ours is totally antiquated!
- Steady and consistent leadership for some length of time with support from the top administrators with transparency and communication about decisions made.
- Open accounting. Let everybody see where the money for VBI came from .. how they can justify outrageous 300,000/year salaries. Why do people educating students get the crappy end of the stick time and time again. How about we have a discussion on that?
- be open and honest and people will respect leadership more.
- I am off campus and thus not concerned with a lot of the issues in the daily email.
- I feel like the only times that I receive the most timely, relevant information is for problems / threats (VT Alerts, budget cuts, etc), with development / donor issues, and faculty research / awards. So fear, \$, and tenured star faculty. Everything else falls of the radar.
- create an intranet; too much stuff in the vtnews is crafted for public consumption and not useful for employees to act on.
- An anonymous "suggestion box" or some way that employees could say things without fear of retribution...I do think the Administrative Quality and Improvement efforts are a positive step.
- Give us the option to opt-out of the daily email - even though most people wouldn't, I think people may be more apt to read it and participate if it wasn't "mandatory." If I give you the option of freely participating in an event, or tell you that you have to, which option would make you a happier employee? Someone high-up needs to get on departments like parking and CNS and get them to share information more freely. Even though CNS has a site that reports system outages, it's never updated. You have to call to find out what's going on. Parking, as far as I know, never shares information with the University in general. Updates on when parking lots will be closed, spaces reserved, etc, could help people plan their day. If I knew that parking in my area would have been closed today, I would have ridden the bus, instead of parking downtown and walking in.
- Get rid of half the VP's in Burrell Hall.
- I rather like the Daily news, it keeps me current with what's going on and it is nice though to be able to click on a link for more info. 16 emails back and forth to take care of something that a phone call could answer in 2 minutes is a huge waste of people's energy and vibrancy.
- Hold people accountable to relaying information to their reports; check in with staff at all levels to confirm that they're aware of information that should have been passed down. Make sure that staff has access to the information; i.e. not everyone is able to be connected to email throughout the day.
- Some college and department web sites are more informative and easier to navigate than others. Some department web sites are just impossible!
- It would be great if VA Tech would consider long time wage employees part of the University.
- I think that emails for special events are better than sending out expensive copies in campus mail.

- Overall, "communication" is one of those topics that always seems to have room for improvement, in even the best-run organizations. One of the challenges at Virginia Tech is that the degree of decentralization which so many enjoy because of the freedoms and independence it brings also creates some ambiguity and disarray in terms of communication. The more communication there can be about the "how" and "why" of things (transparency of process) the better of we will be. I think our issues are more about that than about content.
- I have served on many governance committees in my 35 years at Virginia Tech, and I felt informed while serving. Even though minutes of meetings are posted, it is difficult to understand all of the input that has gone into a decision without being there. I don't have a real solution for that. Coverage of Faculty Senate meetings and discussion of issues like the lack of raises for so many years, changing requirements from SCHEV, student issues, etc. (like we had in the old faculty/staff newspaper) would be helpful. For example, I remember reading an article on the front page of the faculty staff newspaper in the early 1990s about faculty perceptions of the current students and how they were different. I thought it was just my students who seemed different and that maybe I was not as effective as a teacher as I thought I had been. The article helped me realize it was not me, but a different generation of students who I later learned would become known as Generation X.
- Just be open and honest would be a marvelous start.
- It seems like some things are a secret or some are treated differently some get special treatment
- Perhaps I feel disconnected because I'm an employee at the NVC. It seems that while keeping up with the daily emails can keep us in the know a bit, it still doesn't make the sense of community much greater. Unfortunately, we're the last to find out about many initiatives and are behind on many things due to budgetary constraints of training and the like that are available to the folks on the main campus on a daily basis. If there is at all a way of enhancing connectivity between the main campus and satellite campuses, it may be beneficial. It seems to be the case at other locations around the Commonwealth, too.
- What about truly COMMUNICATING, which means "let us know", what goes on at the administrative level and how decisions are made. You should learn from the communications from the Governor's office, nobody has time to read more than a page of stuff. Cut the wording and the circling around and simply land straight and quickly to the point.
- Webcasts. I want to get my information from the source and not through some letter an administrative assistant wrote and had a DDDH sign. There's no reason we can't have periodic messages from upper administration in the form of an online broadcast.
- Outsource all university print jobs. Eliminate the intercollegiate athletic program. PAY ATTENTION to what the rank and file faculty have to say about what works and what doesn't.
- The univ has grown a lot in the last decade but the mechanisms for communication have not changed (or not enough to keep pace with a larger university)...
- More transparency and being open among departments who interact and do business amongst each other on a regular basis.
- It would be nice to have a university intranet, a concise place for all the pieces of info that we use daily. Perhaps a personalizable aspect.
- be sure to set a policy and communicate it clearly;
- i believe time clocks or sign in - sign out sheets are necessary for staff. staff come and go as they please and supervisors who are normally faculty don't care what staff do.



## Perceptions of Internal Communication

Prepared for: University Relations & Human Resources

February, 2011

- People may call it problems with "communication", but I really believe it is a problem with decision making by not providing the transparency in decisions that many individuals believe there should be. If the decision process is explained, as well as the decision, that would help. Train supervisors to have sensitivity to the employee, (some are very PRO-University message so they do not even want to hear the employee's perspective) Others need to be trained to have sensitivity to the university, so they are not so sympathetic to the employee that they also end up on the side of complaining of the "bad decision" or the "bad communication" or whatever the employee gripe against the University may be.
- occasional video presentations online by president, provost, various vice presidents, for internal consumption
- I enjoy reading the daily on-line communications to keep informed. This allows me to opportunity to participate in many on campus events, because I am in the know. However I know many faculty and/or staff who don't (by choice) receive it or just delete it. This action creates a weak link in communication within departments, especially when those people are supervisors and should take the time to know what is going on on campus outside of their own office. Sad.
- I know that quite a bit of effort goes into communicating with faculty staff and students. So, lack of effort isn't the problem. Perhaps relevance is. After some time it gets tiring to read about a hundred research projects as they seem to be the head line of the Daily News. I know research is really important to the mission of the university but it's not relevant to me. So after a while I just skim the Daily News because it seems more like a marketing effort rather than a news effort. Perhaps the Daily News should be more like a newspaper informing about happenings on campus and not mostly about which professor brought in an NSF grant or which donor gave a million bucks to the University (both of which are vital to the university but not so interesting to me). Thanks for asking for our input.
- More town hall meetings and maybe general online discussion forums. I see more interesting discussions occurring in the comments section of the collegiate and NRV online paper than in the articles themselves.
- Links to special pages on the VT webpage (such as the Holiday Office Closures currently being submitted and updated actively for this season), provides employees with one centralized location where we know we can find the information we are seeking. We know that this info is accurate and up-to-date and don't feel like we have to look in many different places to find everything. That is effective AND efficient communication! thanks.
- Deal with direct reports. Since my department head arrived three years ago 5 people have quit or retired as of this academic year. She constantly interrupts at faculty meetings and routinely chews people out in public.
- The more, the merrier, keep the lines open, try to say you don't know when that is the case instead of dancing around questions. People who are further down the hierarchy are not necessarily less intelligent than their supervisors and they can tell when they are being treated as such.
- Too many glossy publications are distributed from way too many sources. These seem to be about internal self promotion and pit one unit against another. I'm sure they are expensive and, along with the phone book, go straight from the mail box to the trash box.
- Have some honest communications about money, particularly salary.
- Change the focus of the Daily email to highlight important information pertaining to employees. The current format focuses mostly on PR items with the notifications hidden at the bottom of the email.

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- Get rid of the mandatory daily e-mail for staff that's general in coverage and replace it with one that communicates ONLY what staff NEEDS to know. I don't care on a daily basis about distinguished professors or research projects, landscape competitions, honorary degrees, Hokie Heroes (using 11/22 as an example). If and when I want such information, I'll seek it out. By pushing it to all staff in the current format, I suspect most people do what I do and delete it without reading it.
- Mr. Hinker does a good job. We should hear from other member of his team. We should hear story about people who have been working behind the scene in the Billion campaign. We should be invited to submit stories from the all level of university: Students, Staff, Faculty and all different level of administration. . Sport is a very good aspect of our communication but we need to hear more about student life, arts, success and challenges of different segment of our community.
- Hard with a university this large... the daily email has been helpful, not sure if there could be one similar that is strictly for university governance issues? The programs, news, and other things the daily email highlights are nice, and I like learning more about faculty across campus, though admit, I get this more from the daily news, as I don't go to the VT home page and see the stories that are covered there as well (maybe integrate some of those into the daily email as well?).
- Stop with the releases about strategic initiatives from certain committees, etc., etc. Put names and faces to messages and give people a place to go for more information, so we know who is saying what and why. Steger's messages are wonderful, but too few.
- Thanks for asking us for feedback. It would be better to solicit this information with each piece of communication rather than out of context like this. How about for each VT News mailing, have a check box with something like, "Which information on this page is or is not especially helpful to you? Why? \_\_\_\_\_ Send feedback for improving this mailing to: \_\_\_\_\_ It's easier to tell you whether a specific piece of communication is helpful or not than to try to think in the abstract about all the information that's dumped on us! One final suggestion...long newsletters, online or otherwise, and glossy publications, whether electronic or hardcopy are a waste of time and energy. I don't read them, and I doubt other people do either. I feel kind of guilty about throwing away those hardcopy publications unread, so they tend to hang around and clutter up space.
- Stop treating everything like it's a big secret. Knowledge is treated power around here, but it's really not power. It's an absence of ability.
- When changes to policy are made (ex: when ABP picked up a late night shift on the weekends, no one bothered to tell us that we can only have 2 employees working until the week before.) Things like this make doing my job very difficult. When are there EVER just 2 people running the kiosk at ABP? If the person who is reading this has ever even visited the ABP location and looked around you would see very clearly that it takes a MINIMUM of 3 people to get anything done. When we asked about the policy we were told no one knows why it was changed and we could just suck it up. The employees of dining services have literally no say in anything.
- Meetings, public hearings, online podcasts of meetings archived... We do too much electronically
- Don't think top down, command and control.
- The daily email is not compatible with webmail and the stories are incomplete and links do not work. it's basically useless in this format and usually overlaps with what is on the home page. and when there is something there I want to read I can't figure out where it is on the web site because of the poor formatting in webmail.

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- 1. Unnecessary informations has to be filtered out. I in person do not read the most of mails (electronic, paper, etc) from VT, because the 99% of information is not critically important in VT life - You can see that most of us are still doing what we have to do with current situation. In fact, when I in rare case found good, helpful, interesting information, there is not the sufficient amount of details, because of, may be, space-limit ! Should provide only good, necessary, important and helpful information. 2. Actual, simple and direct suggestion channel is needed. In addition, there has to be a fast, confidential, and upto-date tracking method to pollow how the suggestions have been processed. Current method, even this survey imply, is that A talks to a supervisor B, B talks to a supervisor C, C to D, D to E and going on and on. Nobody knows what and when anything will be happened, or even what is going on. 3. Remove bureaucracy and hypocrisy; I do not know at this point how many smart (?) people in the upper level of VT administration actually concern about developing the effective communication processes. If there is/are, why they have not made one single method working properly for, say, last over 100 years. If there is no one capable of making it, then just hire smart people and fire not-smart, position-occupied, 9 to 5 rendering employees.
- The university does OK with communications. Communications problem within the department are on a behavioral level. The notices that can be sent via email are OK within the department, but interpersonal communication relevant to performing one's responsibilities and fitting in with the organization are deficient. The departmental administration is too insaccessible. I have never had much in the way of discussions with supervisors or administrators. One-line responses spoken with authority are the rule.
- We have two problems, 1) too much information and 2) not enough important information. We get way too many emails that are more less irreverent. I don't have the time to sift through each email to decide if there is anything important to me or my people. I often overlook/delete emails which are important because so many of them are completely unimportant. Replace the word "email" with "web site", "online forum", "print addition", etc. and you have the same problem. Some sort of filtering of information is necessary. These days we have too much information. There may be a technological solution for this, but the good old fashion method of having the top management tell the next layer of management, which in turn filters the information and tells the next layer is completely broken. --- In general, communication on this campus seems top-down. We routinely get mandates from out of nowhere, completely unexpected, completely unmotivated (not explained). --- There seems no way to get information from the bottom (where I work) to the top. --- I've worked at 5 different universities in my professional life, and this one has the worst communication I've ever seen. At times it is extremely frustrating. In the last ten years, we have endured the most difficult times Virginia Tech has ever had. From great tragedies, to unprecedented budget short falls, to never before seen recessions. I feel the people of Virginia Tech have worked unbelievably hard, pulled together, hung in there, given it all we've got. I strongly believe in the leadership of Virginia Tech, Dr. Steger has truly done an commendable job. I personally put up with this communication problem because I know that when I actually go and talk to someone, I will find a good person who cares, who will give me the information that I need, who will explain things to me. It is because of this, that I don't find the lack of communication to big of a problem. However, it would really help if we could get better at filtering information and communicating in a bidirectional mode.
- More focus on life sciences
- As hard as it is to make happen, I have greatly appreciated college visits paid by the Provost. This should occur more often, and why not bring the President along? I am also overworked, but some things must happen.
- Stop the spin and just tell the truth

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- Actually listen to faculty, rather than ignore them. The questions posed by Hardus Odendaal when he was Senate President are examples of why the faculty feel the university does not care what the faculty think. Why do we have 13 vice -presidents and yet seem to want to layoff custodians to solve the budget problem (our building are starting to show the lack of care).
- Teach the administration that communication is a TWO-WAY STREET.
- This survey was not particularly relevant for faculty (e.g., items about supervisors and supervisees).
- Perhaps unearthing the deeply rooted "good old boy" network that runs the university might be a good place to start. Institutional divisions between higher-ups and worker-bee minions are expansive and purposely maintained, undermining truly effective communication among employees. One might call it the trickle-down effect. In University Relations, information slowly trickles down from VP to middle management to low management to minions, and at each level, details are omitted or skewed so that the final arrival of any news is often useless, much like a rumor making the rounds.
- We want to know it all but how do we manage all that information?
- The Daily e-mail is completely ineffective! Many of us have to wade through literally 100's of email's every morning (and twice that on Monday!) No one I know of personally on the faculty of my Dept. even opens that email.... it's just more words to wade through and less time to do what we need and love to do! TEACH STUDENTS!
- Have all Vice President level authorities set aside time each week to meet with front lien managers/directors and staff. Perhaps invite staff to provide feedback directly to the VP's in an open forum once or twice each semester.
- Don't send out a daily email.
- Inform us how we can provide information to pr or other units.
- A weekly short message from Steger or provost or others. About what they do, what's important that week and after.
- The university's information and communication system is highly commendable.
- Many hardcopy publications we receive (research awards, university awards of various types, grant opportunities, etc.) could be distributed in softcopy. I expect this would be more economical and more ecologically friendly too.
- Minutes of all meetings should be taken and be archived on the web for easy public access
- Online video broadcasts
- I don't think the most serious problems of the university are in the realm of communication, with which the university is clearly concerned. I think the serious problems have to do with the education of students in critical thinking and liberal learning, with which less real concern is obvious.
- Fewer gloss print internal communications would save paper and perhaps money. The provost should visit college and/or departments to speak with faculty.
- Periodically the Provost sends a note out on what is happening. He may want to make this more frequently. When I receive notes from the Provost or President, I normally pay close attention to them. I think they want to be careful of not only sending notes out when there is a major issue. I think a regular university update from one of them would be appreciated by faculty and staff.

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- the daily e-mail is a complete waste of time and worse, it serves the OPPOSITE to what it was intended to achieve. After the VT massacre, there was feeling we had been poorly informed during the day which is true. However, by placing the identical subject on a daily e-mail, VT has ENSURED THAT EVERYONE WOULD OVERLOOK IT IF AN EMERGENCY AROSE. We get zillions of e-mails and can't be bothered to open one that comes every day with minor trivia. There should be a SPECIAL e-mail for alerts, like an alarm system.
- You have not defined the meaning of "direct reports," so these questions are meaningless.
- postdocs career
- First, there has to be a willingness from the university administration to communicate with the faculty and other stakeholders in the university.
- There should be an electronic forum where employees and students should be able to submit questions and receive responses from appropriate university officials.
- Sorry I cannot think of anything
- replace most upper managers For some reason university hiring policies have caused the hiring of inadequate personnel in many positions of authority. We get the cast offs from the public sector, not the best out there.
- Distribute campus news as a link to an HTML page, as opposed to an HTML email.
- Profession/duty or task specific training sessions as well as interactive gatherings with others performing the same type of work. Example: individuals responsible for budgets should be learning, training, and networking on a regular basis. That way those folks can bring the message back to the department in a concise and consistent way--the message is the same from one unit to the next.
- Actually this survey isn't structured to address the NCR, so my responses might not be all that useful.
- Information sent to "Deans, Directors and Department Heads" rarely, if ever, goes any further than the top of the chain. Information just does not filter down through channels. If information needs to go to everyone in a department or unit, then send it directly to all the people, not just to the top tier. There also seems to be tacit agreement at VT that, if you don't have a PhD, then you don't deserve to receive some information, as if we all were stupid or uneducated. This has to stop. When someone in your own department discounts information you provide, even though you are the "authority", because you don't have a PhD, and therefore can't have anything useful or important to say, is ludicrous.
- Make it more about the entire VT community, not just the faculty members, alumni, and higher authority people.
- Having management do what they say without being dishonest about it. Upper management are too busy trying to make new changes look beneficial that the level of BS has reached all time highs. It amazes me that the money spent and lack of leadership is not looked at the top levels.
- I get two of these emails every day, once indicates it is just for employees. How do I make the other one stop?
- Please see my previous responses.
- I have enjoyed listening to Dean Grant speak with VCE. He is honest, transparent and giving us as much information as he knows. Please continue this! It is greatly needed and appreciated. Thank you Dean Grant!

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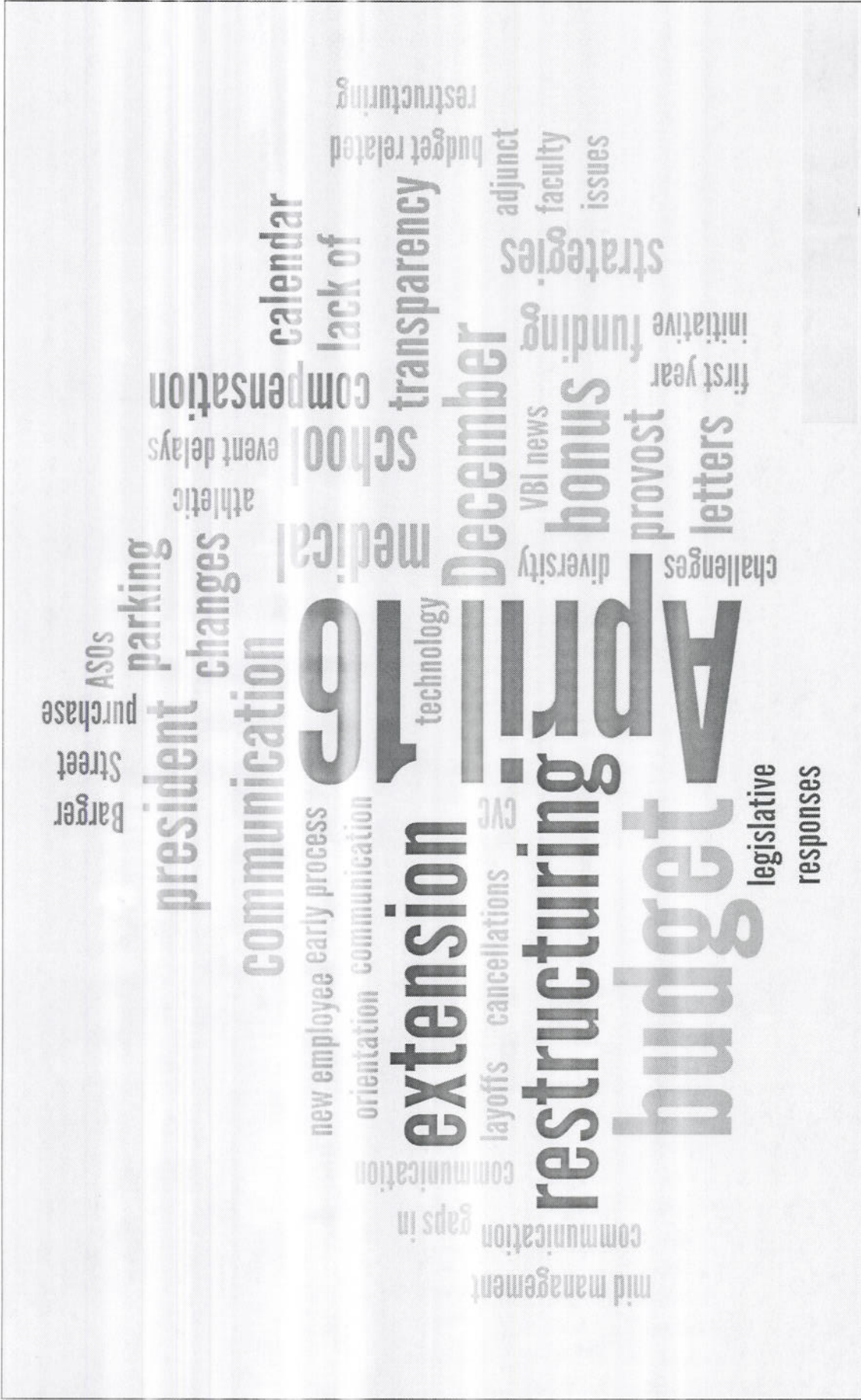
- When important information is to be shared, send it to all employees. There is a huge delay when things are sent via the DDDH list. People out of town or busy may delay the information being forwarded. It just takes too long, and some Dept. heads like to filter what they think people need to know.
- More transparency, more communication and interaction.
- Because I work at a remote campus, items sent via campus mail are considerably delayed sometimes to the point of arriving after the fact. Our campus mail is collected for awhile by the CVM dean's office and then mailed USPS in a bundle. Other deliveries are picked up irregularly by faculty traveling back and forth to teach. Campus mail is ineffective for us. We always use USPS or UPS to send to the main campus. Some of my answers reflect the extent of attention I give to electronic and other sources of information rather than the content of information provided. Time constraints limit the amount of attention I can give to the morning email so I skim it and give further attention only to items and articles that interest me as a remote campus employee.
- There is SO MUCH to communicate. I know it is very hard to find a balance between information overload and providing the information. More categorization of information might help people make choices about what to view. Currently the daily e-mail highlights what is "cool," rather than what is necessary. Perhaps that works simply because more important messages are sent directly. It seems to me that should not be the primary purpose of the daily news. On the other hand, I enjoy many of those "cool" stories.





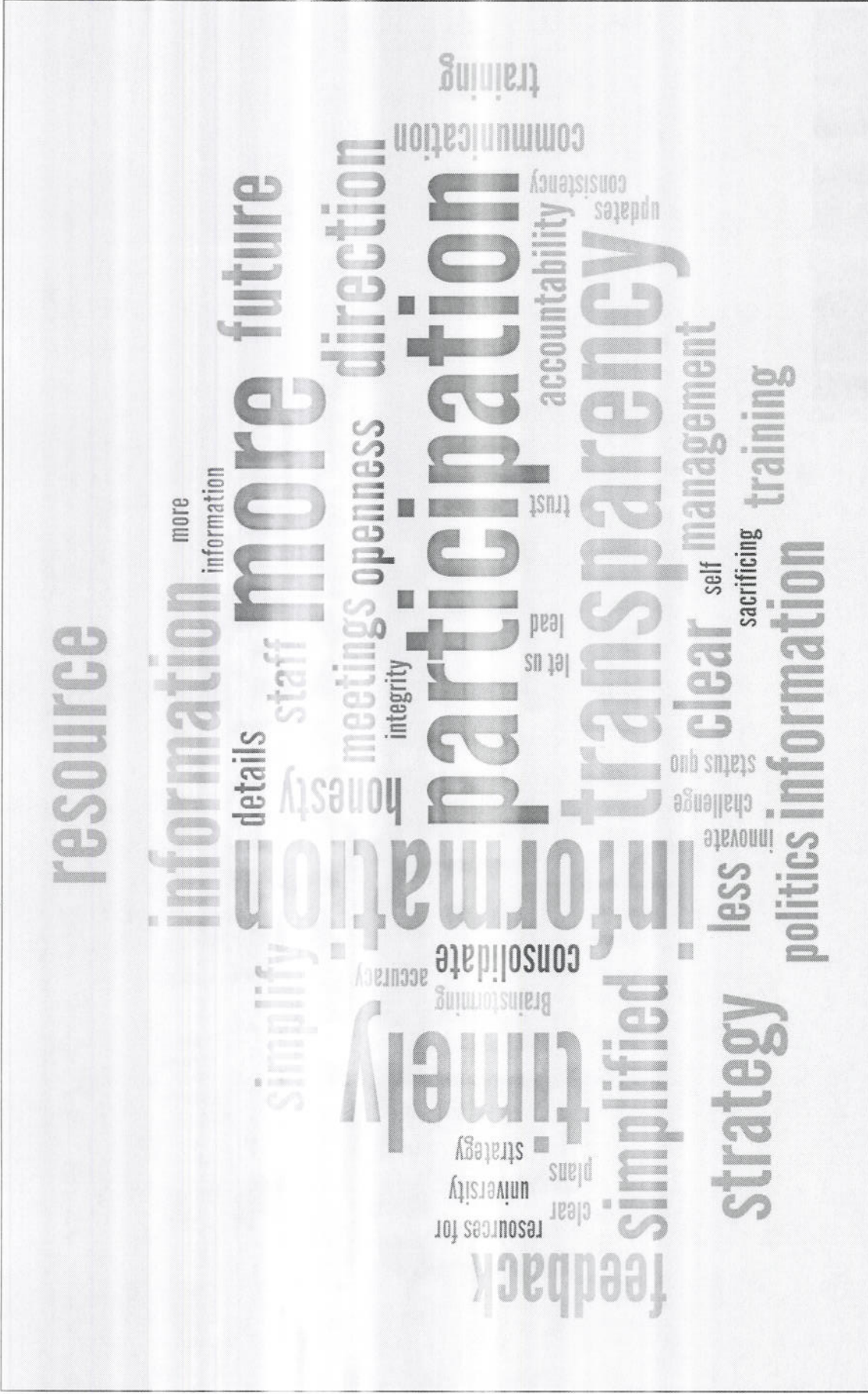


Please give us an example of an issue, problem, or event for which you think the university communicated poorly:



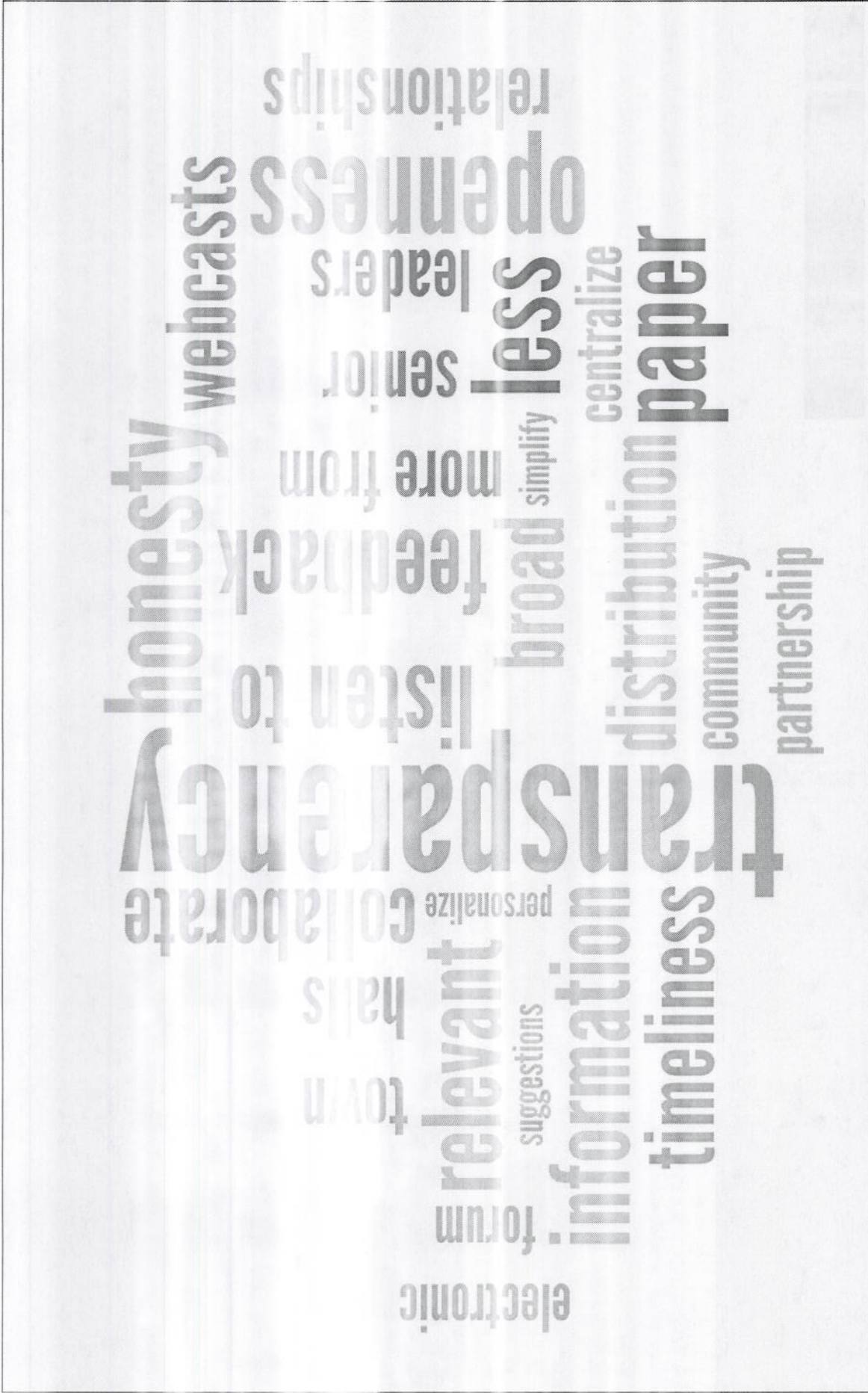
Word cloud generated from themes present in 360 narrative responses.

**What could be done to support supervisors in being more comfortable in discussing strategy or future direction of their unit or the university with their direct reports?**



Word cloud generated from themes present in 282 narrative responses.

**Please share any other suggestions you have to enhance communications within the university:**



Word cloud generated from themes present in 360 narrative responses.