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## Draft College Guidelines

### Communication within ACPE

#### 1 Preamble

Organisational communication is a complex activity that involves many aspects of style, direction and communication channel. Importantly, aspects of the content, mode and medium used will be determined by the purpose of the communication, the originator and the nature of the audience.

Information itself can be used to empower staff. The strategic and appropriate release of information is a powerful motivator for those who receive the information and corresponding, a powerful de-motivator for those denied the information.

The effectiveness of communication processes is reflected in the assimilated knowledge of the staff in relation to the area of content, be that values, philosophies, standards, policies, day-to-day operational matters and so on. Correspondingly, the degree to which staff in executive/management positions are aware of the views staff on the topics communicated is an important indication of whether information has been “communicated” within the organisation.

Typically, the organisational climate is reflected in the perceptions of staff in respect of communication processes within the organisation. Open, constructive communication, built on relationships characterised by trust between individuals, is indicative of a healthy organisation. However, closed, secretive communication processes de-motivate staff and encourage rumours and political infighting.

#### 2 College Commitment

In recognition of the importance of effective communication to the success of an organisation,

***ACPE is committed to open, transparent and timely communication in all matters that are not “commercial in confidence”.***

#### 3 Responsibility

All staff and students are responsible, in part, for the effectiveness of communication.

- Originator must ensure that
  - the communication is relevant, clear and timely, and
  - the recipients have assimilated the information
- Recipient must take necessary steps to ensure that
  - the communication is understood and assimilated
  - action is taken appropriate to the communication
- Senior staff carry additional responsibility because of
  - the volume of communication that originates from their offices, and

- their responsibility for the timely dissemination of information from committees, boards and other activities that occur within and beyond the College.

#### **4 Communication flow**

In effective organisations information flows freely, in a timely fashion. Staff are aware of their policy obligations and feel relatively secure that the information necessary to undertake their role is at hand. Staff who have a concern about the availability of required information should be aware of channels through which they can access necessary information.

Clearly, there are boundaries associated with the availability certain types of information that come within the scope of the College's policies on Privacy.

#### **5 Basic Communication Channels**

There is a broad array of groups related to the College with whom communication is required. These groups include:

- Boards; committees; organisational units; staff; students; alumni; external agencies; stakeholders

#### **6 Issues to Consider When Communicating**

##### **6.1 Purpose**

The following listing provides examples of the various purposes of communication:

- Issuing a directive; giving information; giving an assessment; feedback; seeking or giving advice; organising activities; developing an initiative

##### **6.2 Content**

The following listing provides examples of the content of communication:

- Mission, vision, values, standards; day-to-day management; policy communication; organisational communication such as minutes of meetings and curriculum drafts; developmental

##### **6.3 Style and tone**

The following aspects of style and tone should be considered when constructing a communication:

- Formal; informal; direct; indirect; collegiate; directive; informational; open; confidential

The College promotes the use of language that is non-sexist, simple, clear, jargon-free and non-confronting.

##### **6.4 Direction**

The group with whom the communication is to occur should be clearly defined. The groups include but are not limited to

- academic staff; general staff; sessional staff; students; statutory authorities; stakeholders

The reciprocal pathways for communication with these groups need to be open.

#### 6.5 Channel

The method or channel by which communication the communication is to occur should be considered:

- Face-to face; at a meetings; by email; via the web; by telephone; in writing; electronic notice board;

The absence of forthright communication encourages uninformed rumour.

It is important to note that certain channels are designated as “official” channels and formal communication must be delivered through these channels

#### 6.6 Key Indicators of Effectiveness

Effective communication implies that the audience has received and understood the message. The issue of comprehension is critical to effective communication and is most difficult to assess. Factors that can be used to help in the assessment of the effectiveness of communication include

- Relevance; timeliness; responsiveness; staff perceptions; knowledge at the target levels/ checking of understanding; reciprocal awareness; tracking/monitoring

### 7 Implementation

- The College accepts that the implementation of the principles embodied in the foregoing paragraphs will be ongoing, involving staff development and structural adaptation.
- The implementation of these Communication Guidelines will require the development of specific strategies appropriate to the area in question, for example
  - Staff meetings: level, regularity, content
  - Committees/Boards timely dissemination of minutes
  - CEO Reports availability of reports to Academic Board
  - Feedback checking understanding
  - Web solutions intra-net; student portal

