UNLV

UNLV Top Tier – Infrastructure/Shared Governance
Communications/Collaboration Task Force

Final Academic Year 2015-16 Report

Task Force Membership: Tony Allen, Media Relations; Erin Azua, Student Recreation and Wellness Center; Shane Bevell, College of Sciences; Neil Opfer, College of Engineering; Cate Weeks, University Communications; Joe Winton, University Communications.

Additional Report Contributors: Vince Alberta, Communications, Marketing and Branding; Sheila Bray, College of Education; Kevin Dunegan, Schools of Allied Health Sciences/Nursing; Hobreigh Fischer, University Police; Gail Griffin, Office of the Provost; Michael Hammer, Faculty Senate; Trish Harrison, Office of Information Technology; Raegen Pietrucha, Research and Economic Development; Nikki Troxclair, University Communications

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Executive Summary

During an August 2015 Top Tier planning retreat, a constant theme percolating through many conversations was a need for enhanced employee communications. The concern was wide-ranging and took aim at how units and the university share news, central communications resources, and the tools currently used to share information. Several participants cited a limited connection with the university and little knowledge of policies that impact them, while others felt informed and engaged. Many agreed that effective employee communications is critical to faculty morale, engagement and ultimately satisfaction, and is a necessary part of UNLV's Top Tier vision.

A subcommittee of Infrastructure and Shared Governance was created to focus on communications and collaboration. Among the committee's AY 15/16 tasks:

- Assess current communications resources and historic and current employee communications practices at UNLV
- Audit use of university website as employee communications tool
- Review current employee communications activities/resources at Top Tier aspirational peers, including role of university website and/or intranet
- Review process for display and dissemination of official university policies (current, new and revised), with consultation from the University Policy Committee

The committee gathered input from both on and off campus – professional and non-professional communicators – to offer background and baseline information on this important issue. The committee proposes the following recommendations:

Employee Communications

Employee communications will be integrated into a forthcoming University Communications strategic communications plan for UNLV, and it will become a core piece of the university's overall communications strategy. The committee's recommendations are therefore directed to University Communications for consideration and future follow up. Continuation of employee communications activities rest within the responsibilities of University Communications and continuation of this committee beyond the current academic year is no longer necessary.

Overall Recommendation: Transition responsibility for continued assessment of and recommendations regarding employee communications to University Communications.

General Recommendation: Conduct campuswide survey during Academic Year 16/17 on employee communications to learn how employees receive information, what's most relevant, what channels they prefer, and what they want to know more about. *Charge to University Comms/Media Relations*

Supporting Interim Recommendation: Following employee survey, develop employee communications plan based on available resources. Plan may also include proposal for dedicated employee communications program with related staff/resources to support it. *Charge to University Communications.*

General Recommendation: Follow website redesign process as directed by UNLV Web Communications; review faculty/staff audience page based on campus survey and incorporate into employee communications plan. *Charge to University Communications.*

Long-Term Recommendation: If/as recommended as part of formal employee communications plan, consider intranet for internal communications through collaboration with human resources, university communications and information technology. Development of this intranet would require a sizable financial investment for the technology and staff devoted to the project.

Communicating University Policy
The University Policy Committee (UPC) process and website are both thorough and transparent, and within the past three years a central policy database was created. This database is easy to navigate and includes links to other UNLV policies not covered by UPC. Additionally, UPC requires policy authors to share proposed/revised policies with the campus during the vetting process and after signature.

General Recommendation: Create annual notice to UNLV campus about University Policy Committee, its charge, and available resources to include the central policy database. Encourage constituent messages from Faculty Senate, Administrative Faculty Committee, deans and department heads. *Charge to University Policy Committee*

General Recommendation: Modify Policy Review Process Flow document from University Policy Committee to clearly explain communications expectations of policy authors; ensure communication is complete before advancing to next step in process. *Charge to University Policy Committee*

General Recommendation: Encourage UNLV Official from university president when new policies complete UPC process and are signed by UNLV President (approx. 3-5 times per year). *Charge to University Policy Committee/President's Office*

General Recommendation: Fill University Communications vacancy on University Policy Committee; list members on website. *Charge to University Policy Committee; University Communications*

Section 1 – Committee Background and 2015-16 Task

Top Tier Introduction

UNLV has always been an ambitious university with a longstanding mission to serve its growing and dynamic region. Within ten years, UNLV will be recognized as a top tier public university in research, education, and community impact.

The UNLV Top Tier Initiative – formerly called the "Path to Tier One" – is, as of March 2016, the official strategic plan of the university. It expands the university's sights beyond research to include creative activity, community impact, student achievement, customer service, and education (teaching).

One of five Top Tier pathway goals is infrastructure and shared governance:

To accomplish the other four goals, UNLV will continually develop and leverage the conditions necessary for success, which will include an effective organizational structure, a state-of-the-art infrastructure, a service-oriented culture, meaningful faculty engagement in shared governance, and the capacity for informed decision-making and informed risk taking.

To satisfy this goal and truly become a Top Tier institution, UNLV has to strive to be better across the board, including communicating with its employees.

Communication and Collaboration

During an August 2015 Top Tier planning retreat, a constant theme percolating through many conversations was a need for enhanced employee communications. The concern was wide-ranging and took aim at how units and the university share news, central communications resources, and the tools currently used to share information. Several participants cited a limited connection with the university and little knowledge of policies that impact them, while others felt informed and engaged. Many agreed that effective employee communications is critical to faculty morale, engagement and ultimately satisfaction, and is a necessary part of UNLV's Top Tier vision.

A charge from that meeting was the formation of a subcommittee of Infrastructure and Shared Governance focused on communications and collaboration.

Subcommittee Task

Investigate employee communications efforts within the units and campus wide, conduct a communications resources audit, and identify how university level policies are disseminated. A report with baseline information and recommendations to enhance the areas listed will be completed. Task force will also recommend long-term activities.

Target Area/Key Measure: Communication and collaboration across campus; how UNLV communicates internally.

APPENDIX A includes an overview of Task Force Membership and its 2015/16 Academic Year action plan.

Section 2 – UNLV Communications Resources

Central University Resources

Employee communications is a part of an institution's overall communications infrastructure. To adequately assess employee communications, it's important to understand the full picture of communications resources at UNLV.

Like other areas on campus, marketing and communications has been impacted by UNLV's rapid growth accompanied by the Great Recession. From 1989 to 2009, student enrollment grew almost 78 percent, surpassing 29,000 students. During the Great Recession, UNLV – like so many organizations – felt the impact of the economic downturn and experienced significant, double digit decreases in resources: 39.6 percent in state revenues and 19.5 percent in staffing as an across the board average.

As a result, the current number of employees in the central marketing/communications office is fewer today than it was prerecession. Because of other demands, the university has yet to fully reinvest in staffing this function – **and there is currently no individual at UNLV dedicated exclusively to employee communications.**

This resource shortage was identified as a concern more than a decade ago. In 2003, the consulting firm of Washburn and McGoldrick assessed UNLV's campus-wide infrastructure for a capital campaign and recommended more resources be invested in marketing and communications.

Hybrid Communications Model

A 2010 study by the University of Florida found the most common marketing/communications model used for higher education is a hybrid approach – a system with a centralized marketing/communications office and individual communicators in the colleges and schools. Most institutions with 25,000 or more students use this model, according to the Florida report.

UNLV has gravitated toward the hybrid model, particularly post-recession. It should be noted that the scope of work among unit communicators varies greatly. Additionally, while most academic units at UNLV now have dedicated communications resources on staff, there are some exceptions: The College of Liberal Arts, College of Education, School of Dental Medicine, Graduate College and Academic Success Center.

Unit-based communicators are less common in business areas, though Police Services, Research and Economic Development, the Foundation, Educational Outreach, Information Technology, and Athletics have embedded resources. **Most notable, several areas most critical to employee relations** significantly lack dedicated communications professionals, including: the offices of the President, Executive Vice President & Provost, Student Affairs administration, and the Executive Vice President for Business & Finance, which includes Human Resources.

A cursory review of PDQs for current unit-based communicators shows that while internal communications is important, it's one of many responsibilities on their often-full plates. Among the most common duties listed as "essential functions" on PDQs for unit-based communicators:

- Strategic Planning
- Project/Program Management
- Online Media Management (website)
- Marketing
- Media Relations

- Event Planning and Support
- Development Support
- Publications/Editorial Content
- Social Media Management

As UNLV has emerged from the recession more thoughtful about its growth, hiring has occurred in many areas directly or tangentially tied to communications both centrally and within colleges and units.

NOTE: *The current organizational structure for central university communications is listed in* **APPENDIX B***.*

A formal, focused central effort – and accompanying resources – has not been made in recent years toward employee communications. Despite this, central communications staff have done an admirable job communicating with university stakeholders on essential news and information about work and life at UNLV.

Section 3 – Employee Communications at UNLV

Resources directed toward employee communications at UNLV have ebbed and flowed over the past 15 years, as have the tools and tactics used to reach faculty and staff.

The committee was asked to audit employee communications efforts at UNLV both currently and over the past decade and offer a snapshot of internal communications within the university's colleges and units.

This section includes a timeline of university employee communications efforts from 2000 to present, an overview of current efforts, the role of the university website, and observations of unit-based internal communicatons from current campus communicators.

UNLV Employee Communications Timeline
Prior to 2000, internal communications was not a discrete or centralized function at UNLV. Responsibility fell to various people on campus, including the president's office and the News Bureau (now Office of Media Relations).

A 2000 university accreditation report called for a review and improvement of UNLV's internal communications systems. Over the next few years, a formal internal communications plan was developed and a staff member was hired to focus specifically on employee communications.

A short time later, the employee communications function became part of a new Marketing & Public Relations Office that was integrated with print, web and marketing efforts. What followed was a retooled faculty/staff web page, a redeveloped print employee newsletter (*Inside UNLV),* and, later, a daily email digest that developed into UNLV Today.

At its peak in 2007, a total of 2.5 FTE were dedicated to employee communications with a focus on human resources, policy and campus issues, features intended to build a sense of community within the university and an emphasis on providing employees with context for major initiatives and change.

The Great Recession decimated employee communications at UNLV. Staff were eliminated and/or vacancies weren't filled, *Inside UNLV* ceased publication in 2009, and FTE with website content development expertise became much more limited. Internal communications became once again decentralized with the bulk of outreach tools maintained by University Communications staff.

During the Great Recession, staff continued to refine faculty/staff pages, UNLV Today email and the university calendar. The UNLV News Center launched in 2012 for general audiences, and readership remains strong among employees.

*NOTE: Refer to **APPENDIX C** for a detailed timeline from pre-2000 to present.*

Current Employee Communications Efforts
Though UNLV is absent a formal, focused employee communications program, many university staff have shared the responsibility in recent years to keep faculty and staff informed about their workplace.

Both centrally and at the unit level, communicators and administrators have done an admirable job communicating with university stakeholders on essential news and information about work and life at UNLV.

The most widely requested means to communicate "need to know" information to UNLV employees is UNLV Official. [UNLV Official](#) is the university's primary channel to disseminate information to the entire campus, and messages are submitted to any of 17 designated unit representatives.

UNLV Official is just one of the many centralized ways employees receive information about the workplace.

Central Communications Tools for Faculty/Staff Audience

University Official (individual emails)	The primary way that top-level information is distributed on campus. It is intended for information that employees must have to do their jobs. - Employees cannot opt-out of receiving. - Each VP unit has an official account so moderation of messages vary. - Content is written by administrator/submitter.
State of the University/Town Halls	Faculty/staff are the primary audience for these speaking events held by the President.
UNLV Today	A daily, opt-out e-newsletter specifically for faculty and staff. It gathers and distributes: Daily announcements

	• [Accomplishments](#) • UNLV News Center articles • Calendar listings
Faculty/Staff Website	A collection of the most-used resources on the UNLV website.

Related Central Communications Tools

President's Community Newsletter	Sent monthly and intended for external audience, but also distributed to campus
UNLV News Center	A website with general news and features about UNLV • Audience is general, but high readership among faculty/staff. • New Faces series developed specifically for internal audience.
UNLV Calendar	Website with comprehensive calendar of events and deadlines
UNLV Social Media Accounts	Faculty/staff are followers of UNLV's main social media accounts to varying degrees (higher on Facebook, low on Snapchat)
Video displays	Displays are in various buildings around campus. Messages are for both students and faculty/staff.
UNLV Magazine, Innovation Magazine, Premier Magazine, UNLV Law magazine	Primary audience for these publications is external but all are distributed to campus. UNLV Magazine is produced by central University Communications; others developed by units.
Campus mail	Sometimes used to distribute flyers and newsletters.
Monthly Talking Points	Bulleted, two-page document for university leadership, communicators and stakeholders. It includes highlights from across campus keep readers – and the people they communicate with – informed. Companion document includes highlights campuswide with dozens of contributors. Distributed monthly by UNLV Media Relations.

UNLV Website as Tool for Employee Communications
Though UNLV's website is largely aimed at external audiences, especially prospective students, there are many ways that the website supports employee communications.

Work is currently in progress on a complete UNLV website redesign — the homepage and top-level page are scheduled to launch at the end of May 2016 with the rest of the site converted incrementally through the end of 2016. Among the top-level pages launching in May is the faculty and staff audience page.

In December 2015, Web Communications surveyed UNLV faculty and staff to better understand how they use the UNLV website. A total of 308 responses were received with approximately 50% of the respondents being administrative faculty, 25% academic faculty and 25% classified staff. Many of the questions in the survey revolved around the faculty & staff audience page.

When survey participants were asked about their satisfaction with "faculty and/or staff resources/content" on the website, 9% were very satisfied, 44% were satisfied, 33% were neutral, 12% were dissatisfied and 2% were very dissatisfied. Approximately 32% of respondents use the faculty and staff audience page at least once per week while nearly 18% said that they never used it.

One of the goals for the redesigned faculty and staff audience page is that it serves as a homepage for UNLV employees where they can quickly and easily access needed resources. The redesigned page will integrate existing communication sources such as UNLV Today, News Center, and the UNLV events calendar.

How Colleges and Units Communicate Internally

As noted in Section 2, UNLV has emerged from the Great Recession as a different university in many ways, including its allocation of communications resources. Though the committee is primarily tasked with centrally driven employee communications, it's helpful to better understand how college and unit communicators share important news and information internally.

In spring 2016, a brief questionnaire was sent to a mix of academic and business units with and without embedded communications professionals. Participants included:

- College of Education
- College of Sciences
- Schools of Allied Health/Nursing
- University Libraries

- University Police
- Office of Information Technology
- Faculty Senate and Classified Staff Council

The questionnaire sought details on what topics are regularly communicated, who is typically charged with the task, and what tools are used. Participants also offered insight on what works, what doesn't, and what central resources would be helpful as they communicate with faculty and staff in their units.

Overall Feedback:

- The level of engagement in internal communications varies widely, but is most robust in units with dedicated communications staff.
- Employee response is best when messages are sent by the dean/unit leader.
- The "point" person for unit-based employee communications is typically the communicator, if a communicator exists within the unit.
- Information regularly communicated at the unit level includes staffing changes and other administrative changes within the unit, accomplishments and awards
- *The most successful internal efforts – based on the questionnaire – include redundancy, where information is communicated by email, in meetings, and through personal conversations between managers and employees.*

Tools frequently used:

- Employee listserv and/or focused email groups.
- "Trickle down" method, where deans/unit leaders share information with leadership team, who are expected to share with faculty/staff.

- Regular all-staff meetings that include agendas with unit updates.

Other tools used successfully:

- Password-protected intranet for relevant departmental info.
- Technology solutions to streamline communications and cut down on need for emails/voicemails and unnecessary meetings.
- Activities/events that encourage large participation and promote pride in the unit.
- "Meet and greet" sessions at the beginning of each semester to encourage interaction between staff.
- Staff awards for "internal value".
- Encouragement from unit leadership to attend all-campus meetings, including university town halls, Faculty Senate meetings, Board of Regents meetings, etc.
- Printed newsletter that pulls together essential information from "one-off" emails to reinforce key information and engage staff and available for employees without regular access to computers.

The questionnaire revealed that while unit efforts to communicate with employees vary, they all acknowledge the importance of an informed, engaged workforce. Most participants, when asked, would look to a central employee communications team for training on best practices, tips/tools/templates to aid unit-based efforts, coordination of campus groups to share ideas and encourage dissemination of information, and as a source to bounce ideas and share feedback with.

Committee Observations and Recommendations

UNLV, despite the devastating impacts of the Great Recession, has tools in place to communicate with its employees. It's worth noting that many of the tools used are the same used at Top Tier aspirational peers. The difference? Most of our Top Tier aspirational peers have dedicated staff resources to internal communications.

As this section and accompanying appendices indicate, UNLV once had a staffed and thriving employee communications program. It still employs talented communicators (both centrally and within the units) dedicated to arming employees with needed information about their workplace and features that build a community within the university.

It's clear to this committee that for UNLV to successfully meet its Infrastructure and Shared Governance goals and become a Top Tier institution, employee communications – and resources to support it – are paramount.

On a related note, this committee focused on employee communication resources — how are employees *informed* of policy changes. However, ensuring policy compliance often requires ongoing training. It appears that training employees on how to carry out the business functions of their roles can vary greatly depending on the office for which the employee works.

Recommendations – Employee Communications

Employee communications will be integrated into a forthcoming University Communications strategic communications plan for UNLV, and it will become a core piece of the university's overall communications strategy.

That said, the committee's recommendations are directed to University Communications for consideration and future follow up. Continuation of employee communications activities rest within the responsibilities of University Communications and continuation of this committee beyond the current academic year is no longer necessary.

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Long-Term Recommendation: If/as recommended as part of formal employee communications plan, consider intranet for internal communications through collaboration with human resources, university communications and information technology. Development of this intranet would require a sizable financial investment for the technology and staff devoted to the project.

Section 4 – A Look at Our Aspirational Peers

The UNLV of 2025 will be high-performing in research, education and community impact. It will uniquely serve the needs of Southern Nevada's diverse and growing population and make an impact in the region and around the world. There's no one-size-fits-all model to get us there, but it's important to look at peer institutions that have experience similar growth patterns and have become (or are on their way to becoming) top tier schools.

UNLV has identified roughly a dozen "aspirational peers" to compare its growth in key areas, with three – University of Houston, University of Central Florida, and Arizona State University – as primary comparison schools. Other aspirational peers include the Universities of Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Oregon.

The committee looked at central employee/internal communications resources at the seven colleges listed above and engaged in in-depth conversation with representatives

from the University of Houston and University of Arizona. Outreach to the University of Central Florida was not returned by the date of this report. **APPENDIX D** includes a detailed look at employee communications efforts at seven Top Tier aspirational peers.

Some general observations:

- All peer institutions evaluated dedicate some central resources to employee/internal communications, typically at least one full-time staff member

- Committed resources come from central university marketing and communications and are a key part of overall institutional communications

- Tools used to communicate with employees include dedicated faculty/staff websites, e-newsletters and printed newsletters, campus e-mail blasts, and curated university events/activities calendars

Section 5 – Communicating University Policies

A secondary yet equally passionate topic during the August 2015 Top Tier session on communications and collaboration was university policy. The discussion was not centered on how policy is made; rather, how university level policies are disseminated.

University Policy Committee
The University Policy Committee (UPC) is authorized by the President's Cabinet to review all university-wide policies that require the President's signature.

The UPC has 14 voting members from across campus and works in partnership with the Office of General Counsel and individuals from campus units who are developing university-wide policy. The committee's goal is to ensure that proposed policies are both needed and aligned with institutional mission, goals, and priorities.

The committee reviews policy drafts to ensure that they are concise, consistent in format and scope, and accessible. It should be noted that the UPC does not make university policy but rather facilitates the process for review and input by campus stakeholders of proposed policy before review and formal approval by the president.

In Fall 2015, a change was made regarding university policies that directly impact UNLV faculty. The process for review and input on these policies will now be driven through the Faculty Senate, not the UPC.

Communicating University Policy
The UPC guides individuals who wish to create or update university policy through the process. An eight-step process flow is clearly articulated on the UPC website, with two steps focused on communicating to stakeholders.

During the policy review process, each revised policy is posted both on the UPC website and shared twice through UNLV Today for comment. For policies where specific groups are more affected than others, the UPC may direct the policy author to communicate directly with stakeholders (ie. Faculty Senate, college-based forums).

Once the policy author completes the UPC process and the policy is signed by the author and the UNLV president, the policy flow dictates that the campus community is notified of policy adoption.

University Policy Database
Within the last three years, UNLV web communications partnered with the UPC to create a [central policy database](#) that serves as a repository for all policies conferred under the authority of the UNLV president. The UPC plans to expand the database to include all university policies in future phases. According to the UPC website:

At present, UNLV does not have a single document that serves as an administrative manual or faculty handbook. This site intends to fulfill that responsibility to the faculty by providing a single entry point to access university policies, which are currently posted in various locations on the UNLV website.

Committee Observations and Recommendations
The University Policy Committee process and website are both thorough and transparent, and committee leadership is determined to make the process both as efficient and effective as possible.

Answering a call from faculty and staff to assemble university policy in a single location, the UPC worked with UNLV Web Communications to create a central policy database. This database is easy to navigate and includes links to other UNLV policies not covered by UPC. It may be possible that many faculty and staff are unaware this database exists.

Regarding communication of policy, the UPC requires policy authors to share proposed/revised policies with the campus during the vetting process and after signature. Upon review and discussion with committee leadership, a few simple modifications will set clear expectations for outreach by policy authors and improve general awareness.

Recommendations – Communicating University Policy

General Recommendation: Create annual notice to UNLV campus about University Policy Committee, its charge, and available resources to include the central policy database. Encourage constituent messages from Faculty Senate, Administrative Faculty Committee, deans and department heads. *Charge to University Policy Committee*

General Recommendation: Modify Policy Review Process Flow document from University Policy Committee to clearly explain communications expectations of policy authors; ensure communication is complete before advancing to next step in process. *Charge to University Policy Committee*

General Recommendation: Encourage UNLV Official from university president when new policies complete UPC process and are signed by UNLV President (approx. 3-5 times per year). *Charge to University Policy Committee/President's Office*

General Recommendation: Fill University Communications vacancy on University Policy Committee; list members on website. *Charge to University Policy Committee; University Communications*

APPENDIX A – Top Tier Subcommittee Overview

UNLV

UNLV Top Tier Planning – Infrastructure/Shared Governance
Communications/Collaboration Task Force

Task Force Members
Tony Allen, media relations; Erin Azua, SRWC; Shane Bevell, sciences; Neil Opfer, College of Engineering; Cate Weeks, university communications; Joe Winton, university communications.

Target Area/Key Measure
Communication and collaboration across campus: how UNLV communicates internally.

The task force will investigate employee communications efforts within the units and campus wide, conduct a communications resources audit, and identify how university level policies are disseminated. A report with baseline information and recommendations to enhance the areas listed will be completed. Task force will also recommend long-term activities.
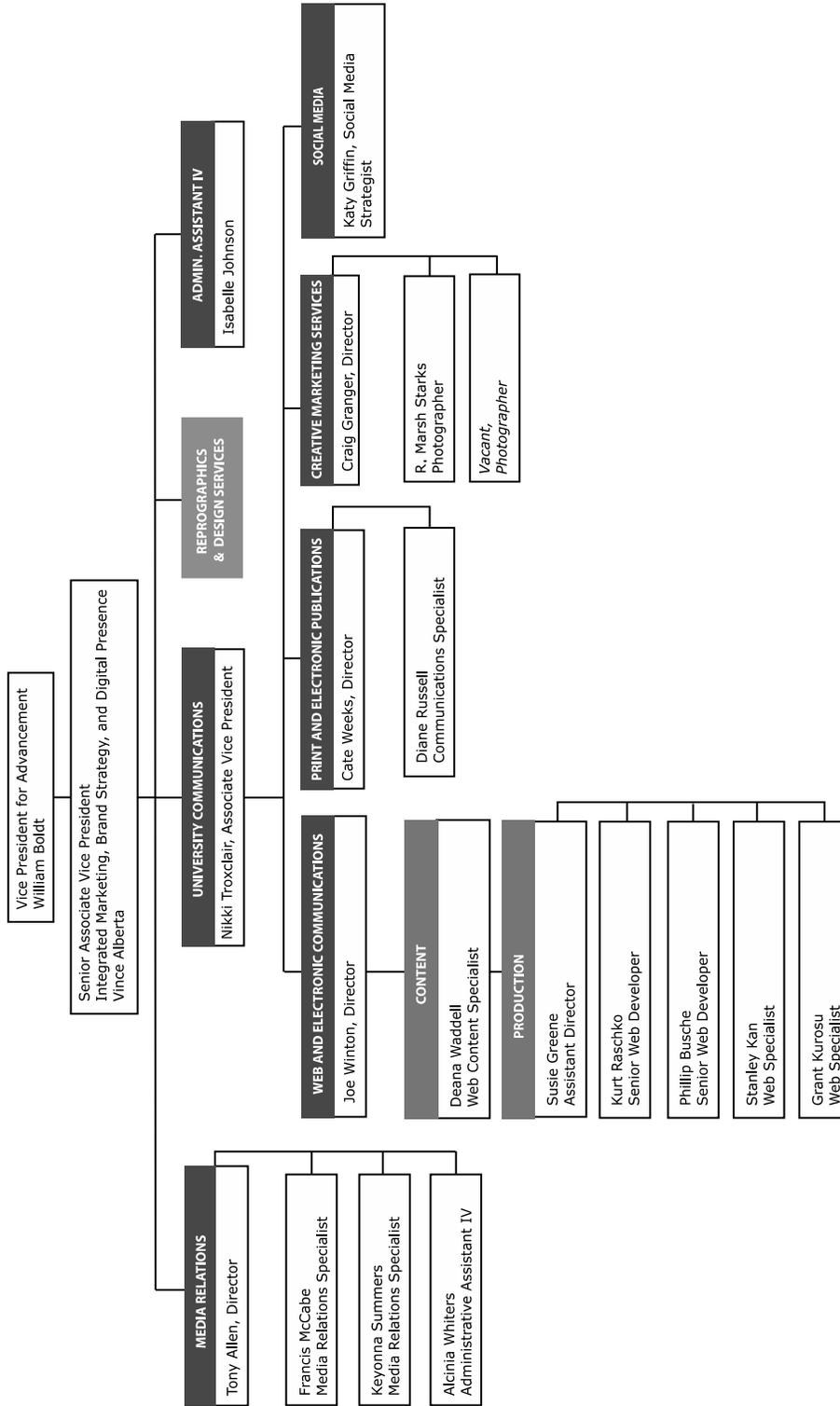
Action Plan for 2015/16 Academic Year

1. Employee Communications Audit
   a. Define employee communications at UNLV
   b. Survey employees on current employee communication tools – **Move to AY16-17**
   c. Audit employee communications activities at the central university level, to include both historical (last 10 years) and current efforts
   d. Audit employee communications activities at the unit level, focusing on 3-5 representative groups (college/school, business unit, VP/Provost)
   e. Audit use of university website as employee communications tool
   f. Review current employee communications activities/resources at Top Tier aspirational peers, including role of university website and/or intranet
   g. Create summary report with recommendations

2. Understanding Communications Resources
   a. Audit current communications resources
      i. Include administrative or academic faculty with communications function for their unit
      ii. Include core communications duties
      iii. Focus on employee communications roles
   b. Assess communications resources (by number and function) at Top Tier aspirational peers, with focus on employee communications.

3. Communicating University Policies
   a. Review process for display and dissemination of official university policies (current, new and revised), with consultation from the University Policy Committee
   b. Recommended action plan.

Task force will convene in person and/or by email as needed.

APPENDIX B – UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS/MARKETING ORG CHART

Org Chart Break-out: University Communications / 19 FTE

Vice President for Advancement
William Boldt

Senior Associate Vice President
Integrated Marketing, Brand Strategy, and Digital Presence
Vince Alberta

REPROGRAPHICS & DESIGN SERVICES

ADMIN. ASSISTANT IV
Isabelle Johnson

UNIVERSITY COMMUNICATIONS
Nikki Troxclair, Associate Vice President

MEDIA RELATIONS
Tony Allen, Director

Francis McCabe
Media Relations Specialist

Keyonna Summers
Media Relations Specialist

Alcinia Whiters
Administrative Assistant IV

WEB AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS
Joe Winton, Director

CONTENT
Deana Waddell
Web Content Specialist

PRODUCTION
Susie Greene
Assistant Director

Kurt Raschko
Senior Web Developer

Phillip Busche
Senior Web Developer

Stanley Kan
Web Specialist

Grant Kurosu
Web Specialist

PRINT AND ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS
Cate Weeks, Director

Diane Russell
Communications Specialist

CREATIVE MARKETING SERVICES
Craig Granger, Director

R. Marsh Starks
Photographer

Vacant,
Photographer

SOCIAL MEDIA
Katy Griffin, Social Media Strategist

APPENDIX C – UNLV Employee Communications Timeline: Pre-2000 to Present

Pre-2000

Internal communications was not established as a discrete or centralized function.

- General responsibilities fell to various people on campus, including the president's chief of staff and special advisor and staff in the News Bureau (which is now referred to as media relations)
    - o In 1999, an issues management group forms with representatives from the university's key audiences. It provides advice to the president and top administrators on both internal and external constituencies.

- Key tools directed at Employees:
    - o Inter-campus mail (memos, flyers, departmental newsletters and brochures) — This was a primary way for more complex policy information to be shared
    - o State of the University and several annual Q&A sessions held by the president with specific stakeholder groups
    - o Update, a weekly print newsletter that contained administrative news, campus announcements, media releases, and campus classified ads
    - o UNLV Official — an email list-serv reserved for high-priority announcements
    - o UNLV Information — an opt-out email list-serv; any employee can submit

2000-2009 – Growth period

During this period, internal communications became a discrete, staffed function within what is now called University Communications.

- A 2000 Northwest accreditation report called for a review and improvement of the university's internal communication systems.

- In 2001, the president approved a formal Internal Communication Plan developed by the Marketing office in conjunction with the News & Public Information Office.
    - o First formal Employee Communications Survey was conducted
    - o The News Office launched *Inside UNLV*, an eight-page tabloid newspaper targeted specifically at employees. It was intended to provide much more context to policy and campus issues as well as build a sense of community
    - o 1 FTE was created for employee communications (Inside UNLV editor)
    - o The faculty/staff page was retooled after survey research.

- **Between 2003-07 — Unit/College Communications Grow**
    - o A 5-person Student Life Communications team was created with dual reporting to the Marketing Office and VP of Student Life. This team produced the division's employee communications content as well as all student-focused marketing, publications, and website materials.
    - o In addition, staff with either full or shared communications responsibilities were added in Research/Graduate Studies, Hotel Administration, Business, Engineering, Libraries, UNLV Foundation, Information Technology, and Law School.

- 2003 — *Update,* a weekly print newsletter, was suspended and its content was redistributed through websites, email, or UNLV Today. Classified ad service eliminated.
- 2003 — A reorganization formally establishes the employee communication function and moved the responsibility for most of its tools from the media office to Marketing & Public Relations (now University Communications) office.
  - Employee communications was established as a staffed function integrated with the print publications, marketing, and web communications teams.
  - Inside UNLV (print) was expanded and redesigned
  - A writer was added to the publications team to focus more writing on organizational explainers, "service journalism" pieces, strategic planning, facilities, and human resources. (1.5FTE total dedicated to internal comms)
- 2004 — Formal survey research was repeated and showed improved satisfaction among employees with UNLV's communication.
  - More than 70% of respondents said they were familiar with UNLV's strategic goals — up from only 50% four years prior.
  - 76% agreed that UNLV strives to inform them first about important info.
- 2005 — UNLV Information list-serv (individual emails could exceed 15/day) replaced with daily digest and renamed UNLV Today.
- 2006 — A presidential communications specialist is hired and housed in the Media Relations office. Focus on columns and collateral print materials.
- 2006 — Issues management group disbanded.
- 2006 — David Ashley becomes president. Turnover in media relations office.
- 2007 — Presidential communications specialist moved from media relations office to University Communications editorial team, bringing the total assigned to internal communications to 2.5FTE total with 1 specialist focused on human resources articles, collateral, and websites
- University Communications internal communications products & services:
  - Inside UNLV (monthly employee publication, print)
  - UNLV Today (daily employee enewsletter)
  - UNLV Official
  - Presidential column writing and collateral development for top projects
  - Website content development for including Human Resources, Faculty/staff page and other administrative websites
  - Led internal-focused communications campaigns for various units, including President's office, VP of Diversity, Controller's office, Purchasing, Parking, Ask Me (orientation campaign)
  - Internal communications support for universitywide projects, including New Faculty/Staff Orientation, 50th Anniversary Celebration, Foundation Capital Campaign, Community Engagement/Ambassadors program, Professional Staff Committee

2008-2015 – Budget Cuts

Recession leads to several years of budget cutbacks that significantly weaken infrastructure in general. Internal communications returns to being decentralized and unstaffed.

- July 2008 — Several positions related to employee communications duties were eliminated in budget cuts
  - 1 Communications specialist (the only one dedicated fully to internal communications)
  - 2 Student Affairs Communications Specialist
  - 1 Web Content Specialist (dedicated to Student Affairs)
  - 1 Web Maintenance Specialist

- 2009 — Neal Smatresk named president. Primarily uses town halls and UNLV Official emails to communicate with employees. Presidential communication duties primarily reside in president's office.

- 2009 — Inside UNLV print publication eliminated; budget to conduct campuswide employee communications survey also eliminated. Significant decline across campus in printed collateral and distribution through intercampus mail.

- 2010 — A contractor is hired by Media Relations primarily to serve president's requests for video messages and social media. Contract is not renewed in 2011.

- 2011 — A communications specialist position in University Communications is vacated and not filled. Editorial team shifts all remaining resources to developing tools and content for general/external audiences.

- 2011 — University Communications assumes Master Campus Calendar responsibilities and overhauls system. Prior to this, there were several competing events calendars.

- 2011 — Campus phone directory, which included department guide, ceases to publish.

- 2012 — UNLV News Center launches. It's intended for a general public audience, but readership is strong among employees.
  - UNLV Today integrated in News Center and systems improved
  - The Faculty/staff accomplishments, a former feature of the print publication, is revived online
  - Employee profiles published online

- 2014 — Top-level administrative transitions occur
  - Neal Smatresk leaves UNLV and Don Snyder is tapped as acting president.
  - Several changes occur in Provost's office; University Communications being regular meetings with provost staff
  - Senior Associate Vice President of Marketing, Communications & Branding position created; presidential communications, particularly with regard to business and government relations, becomes a priority.

- o   Media Relations office begins transitioning into a Public Affairs office

- 2015 — Len Jessup is hired.
  - o   Presidential enewsletter launched for external stakeholders.
  - o   State of the University event communication better coordinated; supporting collateral developed

- 2015 — Campus Google Mail conversion allows for design enhancements to UNLV Today. Accomplishments now post daily. Feature stories pushed out to campus with photos.

- 2015 — Climate survey conducted by Diversity Initiatives. Although not a communications survey, it noted: "In 2010, 62 percent agreed that there was sufficient opportunity for discussion on issues affecting the campus. This number fell to 45 percent in 2015."

2015 — Top Tier Infrastructure subcommittee tasked with reviewing internal communications infrastructure.

Appendix D – Employee/Internal Communications at Aspirational Peers

UNLV has identified roughly a dozen "aspirational peers" to compare its growth in key areas, with three – University of Houston, University of Central Florida, and Arizona State University – as primary comparison schools. Other aspirational peers include the Universities of Arizona, Colorado, Utah and Oregon.

The committee looked at central employee/internal communications resources at the seven colleges and engaged in in-depth conversation with representatives from the University of Houston and University of Arizona.

Here's a look at the universities and how they communicate with employees.

University of Houston
The University of Houston has a central division of University Marketing, Communications, and Media Relations. The team reports to a vice president, but the position is currently in transition. The division consists of six units covering creative services, media relations, marketing, social media, web, and executive communications.

The executive communications team is tasked with:

- Internal communications *(one dedicated employee)*
- Presidential and related executive communications
- Emergency communications

The team produces a daily faculty/staff website and e-newsletter, both named UH Today, and a quarterly printed UH News publication. It should be noted that the daily UH Today e-newsletter is "opt-in," meaning faculty and staff must sign up to receive it. The dedicated staff member functions as an editor for the UH News Digest and collects and requests content campuswide to include in the daily and quarterly publications.

Central staff assist, but do not oversee, a university e-mail blast (similar to UNLV Official). Human Resources oversee this function.

University of Arizona
The University of Arizona's Office of University Relations - Communications is the main source for news and information about the campus. The office is one of several that report to a senior vice president for university relations who sits on the president's cabinet. The communications team is primarily responsible for:

- Media Relations
- Internal Communications
- Crisis and Issues Management
- Leadership and Executive Communications

The office has two staff members dedicated primarily to internal communications, though both staff members contribute to the office's other core functions. A 10-hour-a-week student worker also contributes content and provides additional support.

The team manages the university's master calendar. Additional Internal vehicles include:

UA@Work website: Houses news stories, memos and employee-submitted classified ads. Content comes from central staff and unit-based communicators.

Lo Que Pasa: E-newsletter sent once a week to all UA employees. The content included in this is published on the UA@Work site. A special "Legislative Update" edition of Lo Que Pasa is sent to employees as needed during the legislative session to keep them up to speed on any issues there that may impact the university. This special edition is managed by another employee.

UAnnounce memos: Any campus department/employee can submit memos through this online system. Memos are distributed to employees in a weekly digest, although subscribers can elect to receive them more frequently (daily or immediately). We have two types of memos: All-UA, which go to all employees and concern the university at large, and Campus Notes, which are opt-in and are used to publicize items with a smaller audience.

Arizona State University
Central staff dedicated to employee communications: yes
Notes:
ASU News publishes two newsletters, ASU Now (daily) and ASU Insight (weekly) . . . ASU Now includes major research stories, breaking news, top university headlines, and multimedia . . . ASU Insight publishes each Friday and is targeted toward faculty and staff with relevant news and features. . . President's office includes two staff members dedicated to executive communications and presidential communications.

University of Central Florida
Central staff dedicated to employee communications: yes
Notes:
University of Central Florida's University News & Information office produces a UCF@Work four-page newsletter that appears to be published online and periodically in print. It may or may not be still active, but interesting noted its inclusion of a printed newsletter "because many employees do not have Internet access or email." A news editor/writer is responsible for the newsletter, among other job duties. . . . UCF Today website assembles stories written by authors from across campus and features both internally and externally focused news . . . An HR connection blog, offered through the HR department, offers human resources news and information to all employees and departments.

University of Colorado
Central staff dedicated to employee communications: yes
Notes:
University of Colorado has a Campus Communications team that oversees CU-Boulder Today, a digest sent three times weekly to faculty, staff and students containing campus news, important announcements, campus events, and other stories; Buff Bulletin Board with campus job, event and service announcements; and administrative e-memos, which seem to function similar to a hybrid UNLV Today/UNLV Official message . . . University also has a University Media Relations and News Services division and consolidates releases, multi-media, features, events and employee info on its online News Center.

University of Oregon
Central staff dedicated to employee communications: yes

Notes:
The Office of Public Affairs Communications is the University of Oregon's primary office for news, as well as internal communications. Professionals in this office serve journalists, the campus community, and the public . . . The office produces an "AroundtheO" website to promote relevant campus news, events and activities to both external and internal audiences. . . Internally focused news from "AroundtheO" is distributed twice weekly to faculty/staff through an e-newsletter . . .

<u>University of Utah</u>
Central staff dedicated to employee communications: yes
Notes:
University of Utah has more than 30 staff members in its University Marketing & Communications office . . . It has a Campus and community communications specialist in charge of campuswide emails, newsletters and community relations . . . Hosts a website dedicated to faculty and staff news "@theU," which curates relevant content from central staff and other campus contributors and lists campus events and activities.