



Communications Advisory Committee (CAC)

Minutes of Meeting: 12/14/23

Circulated: 3/1/24

Approved: 3/8/24

Present: Cliff Lampe (Chair), Pat Herbst, Richie Hunter (VP of Communications), Dave Reid (OVPC), Stefanie Galban, Alex Yasha Yi (SACUA Liaison), Laura Beny, Jim Cranford

Absent: Ellen Bauerle, William A. Calvo-Quirós, Sarah Murray, Maheema Kohli, Malinda Brunk

Faculty Senate Office: Eric Vandenberghe

9:04am: Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Minutes

The agenda was approved. The minutes for the November CAC meeting were approved.

9:04am-9:07am: Update from the OVPC

Summary: VP Hunter provided a brief update on OVPC activity related to the Israel-Gaza crisis, groundbreaking on the new Detroit Center, and the recent Regent's board meeting.

Action: Update

9:07am-9:24am: Updates/Reflections on crisis messaging

Summary: A question about social media is posed. Social media is used for broadcasting information rather than direct engagement with the community. There are hundreds of channels that are not managed centrally, although the groups that manage the local social media channels are brought together from time to time. OVPC is heavily monitoring social media for general awareness, as well as crisis management. It can be difficult to engage, because it cannot be subjective in who is responded to. The University would not be able to pick and choose.

What are the upsides and downsides of engaging directly online? Various channels are discussed, including Reddit. How do we keep faculty safe via on social media? This is a work in progress. Providing general guidance to faculty is a good starting point.

FOIA requests are discussed. These requests go directly to OVPC. It is recommended to be careful when communicating via email. FOIA requests are increasing, with most requests coming from media. The University complies with these requests. A request is made to provide more FOIA education.

Discussion around reading emails by faculty takes place. Going through the unit level is suggested, as the closer you get to the faculty's work, the more likely the communication is to resonate. The message needs to be succinct. Using TL;DR is suggested for informal communications.



The amount of email to faculty, students, and staff is discussed.

Action: Discussion

9:24am-9:36am: Charge item: Explore and offer recommendations, if needed, regarding how the University considers storytelling with the public in order to promote faculty research and greater community engagement.

Summary: The Chair introduced this topic. Trust in higher education is something that is brought up as being lower at this time. How do we combat this? An approach locally could be establishing a component of community outreach within units. This would require training.

One solution offered is direct story-telling. Are Units and the University working well on this? Trust issues can lead to narrative issues. Negative press attention can hinder story-telling.

Action: Discussion

9:36am-10:00am: Discuss whether the university should issue statements about world, national, and local events not tied to the university

Summary: The Chair introduced this topic. It is a conversation that is being had across Higher Education. The issues surrounding these decisions are discussed. The reaffirmation of free speech in recent messaging was applauded.

The Key Issues OVPC page is discussed. Media are referred to this page for a single source. A rubric has been made and can possibly be reviewed at a later date. The discussion about the recent testimony to Congress by the Presidents of Harvard, Penn, and MIT is discussed.

The concern is that it detracts from the mission. The positions can come off as biased in certain instances. There should be statements made when the issues directly affect people on campus. The institution is not a moral agent.

Different opinions are shared on what should be shared, and what should not be. The more we can reaffirm our values, the better.

The perspectives of donors is discussed. It is important the University's values stand firm even in the face of pressure to act otherwise by donors. This is something that the donors should be aware of. A discussion on the dichotomy between donors and universities ensues.

Action: Discussion

10:00am: Adjournment

Respectfully submitted,

Eric Vandenberghe
Faculty Governance Coordinator



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