What are our challenges?

1. Are we communicating with our students effectively?
2. Are we working in silos in relation to student communications (messaging, timing, frequency)?
3. Are we consistent, clear, equitable, addressing specific audiences, accessible and addressing our brand in all student communications?

What are the best solutions/outcomes?

1. Positive responses from students in relation to communications; incorporation of ways to measure
2. Communication Plan Development—understanding of overall communications to students
3. Way to manage new communication plans to address specific audiences and ensure overall College branding
WSCC Communications Audit Timeline

Communications Audit Committee Formed
- September '19
- Recommendation from ATD initiative
- VP of Marketing and Communications, Committee Chair
- Key member groups included: Student Services, Purchasing, Faculty

Committee Recommendation and RFQ
- November '19
- Recommendation to begin with a student communications audit with assistance of firm/consultant with community college student communication expertise
- Committee moved forward with RFQ
- College funded via Marketing budget

RFQ Narrative
- January '20
- Audit/analysis of student communications
  - Recruitment-completion/graduation
  - Review for consistency clarity, equity, audience relevancy, accessibility, brand uniformity
  - Communication frequency/timeline and methods
  - Staff focus groups

Consultant Selected/Focus Groups
- August-November '20
- Clarus Corporation awarded bid for communications audit; Kathi Swanson, President.
- Submission of all communications to Clarus Corporation and secret shopping
- Staff focus groups hosted with purpose to examine communications flow of enrollment processes and evaluation of effectiveness

Audit Findings
- February '21
- Process Mapping
- Applicant Communications Flow
- Communications Modalities
- Communications Messaging

- Development of new student communication plans
• Received proposed communication flow from Clarus Corporation; provided suggested changes—moved toward high school and adult audiences.

• Weekly communications meetings began
  • Review of new communications; opportunities to provide feedback
  • Implementation discussion
  • Need for system to manage communications for multiple audiences, timing and multi-method modes

• Identification of internal workflows to be changed to improve communications
  • CRM approved for purchase; plans beginning for communication flows/plans, audiences, etc.

• Continuation of weekly meetings with various stakeholders; finalizing new communications to be prepared for CRM implementation
  • Addressing how to utilize 3rd party vendors/products; virtual tour, online Orientation

• Initial results promising; implementation of targeted communications
  • WS Scholarship Application (example)
    566 more applications in 22-23 AY
How often do you hear this from students?
Nashville State Process

- SEM Goal – focus on improving the student experience
- COVID impact on student communication
- Goals of audit:
  - Review process mapping to identify where current processes impede communication
  - Review current applicant communication flow
  - Communication modalities
  - Communication messaging
NSCC Communications Audit Timeline

- Utilized the work from Walters State to submit an RFQ.
- No response back, denied response from Clarus.
- Contacted Kathi Swanson and received acceptance.

- In-person interviews scheduled for Clarus to understand our processes
- Received ideas for immediate implementation

- Uploaded documents from
  - Admissions
  - New Student Orientation
  - Financial Aid
  - Records
  - Bookstore
  - Student Life
  - Testing
  - Bursar

- Tough conversations with many opportunities to improve
- Communications received a score (use of name, subject line < 30 characters, subject line benefit focus, logo, etc. Gunning Fog index-readability formula, call to action)
- Text messaging

- Small group review of initial communications
- Currently editing all documents
- Purchased Slate and plan to automate and implement many changes there
- Social Media changes, include Tik Tok
Beegle Poverty Institute

**Oral Culture**
- Relationships—people are priority
- Spontaneous—go with the flow
- Repetitive---storytelling and repeating info
- Holistic—Focus on big picture
- Shows emotions easily
- Present-oriented (here and now)

**Print Culture**
- Time—is at the heart of everything and has high priority
- Linear—organizes thought and actions by “first this, then this.”
- Analytic/Abstract—knowledge outside self
- Self-Disciplined/Focused
- Strategic—ability to plan ahead and set goals
- Delay Gratification—ability to break things into parts promotes ability to connect small efforts to end desires

Strive for balanced communication.
Questions?

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