UNIVERSITY OF
WISCONSIN SYSTEM
UW

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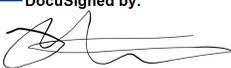http://www.wisconsin.edu

July 6, 2021

To: Provosts
        Chief Business Officers
        Senior Student Affairs Officers
        Chief Diversity Officers
        Shared Governance Groups

From: Stefan Fletcher, Director, Administrative Policies, Projects, and Academic Fellowships

Re: Policy Communication Survey – Feedback & Action Plan

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In March 2021, the Office of Administrative Policies distributed a survey to policy stakeholders from the UW institutions and UW System Administration to obtain feedback on the current practices for policy development and communication. The survey centered on the UW System Administrative (SYS) policy set.

The survey was distributed to the Provosts, Chief Business Officers, Senior Student Affairs Officers, Chief Human Resource Officers, Chief Information Officers, and our standard policy distribution listserv.[1] Recipients were also encouraged to further distribute the survey to other individuals at their institutions. In total, there were 62 survey respondents, and each institution provided at least two responses.

The questions in the survey focused on:

- The number of policies the respondent reviewed and commented on in the last year;
- Rating satisfaction with the current process for providing feedback on draft SYS policies;
- Rating communication effectiveness regarding approved new/revised SYS policies;
- Rating satisfaction with current support provided by UWSA during policy implementation;
- Current practices that the respondent finds most useful; and
- Potential avenues for improvement.

In general, survey respondents expressed appreciation for elements of the current practices, including the ability for stakeholders to review and provide feedback on draft policies, the standard processes and timeframes for policy distributions, the policy summary documents, and the policy approval communications. They also provided valuable insights into opportunities for us to improve the policy process to increase transparency and stakeholder engagement. There were several common themes that emerged in the responses from commenters who had suggestions for enhancements. I have grouped the themes by question below and included the action steps that either have been or will be taken to address the feedback.

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[1] The policy distribution listserv is comprised of individuals identified as relevant stakeholders by the leadership on at their institutions and is updated quarterly.

I.   CURRENT PROCESS FOR PROVIDING FEEDBACK

Themes from Survey Respondent Comments:

- Broader distribution and more consistency in the groups who receive the distribution notices to provide comments on draft policies and approval notices once a policy has been finalized.
- More context regarding the rationale for a proposed policy revision to guide stakeholder feedback.
- More transparency regarding the consideration of stakeholder feedback in the post-comment period and explanation of why certain comments are not reflected in revisions to the final policy.

Actions:

- Beginning in May 2021, we sent all institution policy distributions and policy communication emails to Shared Governance Groups as well as the standard stakeholder groups and subject matter experts.
- Beginning with the July 2021 institution policy distribution, we will use a revised comment form to assist stakeholders in leaving actionable feedback that policy owners can respond to and implement.
- Beginning with policies in the July 2021 institution policy distribution, we will add a section to the policy summary for approved policies to address the themes from comments left on draft policies and to explain how comments were addressed (or why they were not addressed) in the final draft.

II.   COMMUNICATION EFFECTIVENESS REGARDING APPROVED SYS POLICIES

Themes from Survey Respondent Comments:

- More widely distributed notification messaging once a policy is approved to reach a larger group of campus constituents.
- Between the distribution comment period and the policy being finalized, increase communication to campuses about where the policy is in the finalization and approval process.

Actions:

- Notice about policy distributions and approvals are posted to the UW Policies RSS feed. To subscribe to the RSS feed and receive notice of all SYS policy communications, follow the instructions here: https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/subscribing-to-the-rss-feed/
- Beginning in July 2021, we will add a list of policies that are in the final review period to the monthly policy action summary to remind institutions of policies that are still to be finalized. This should help with tracking outstanding policies that have gone through the comment period but have not been finalized.

III.   SUPPORT FROM UWSA DURING POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

<u>Themes from Survey Respondent Comments:</u>

- Many survey respondents reported not being aware that UWSA offered support to campuses during the policy implementation period.

<u>Actions:</u>

- In 2020 we drafted a UW System Policy Style Guide to assist policy owners and stakeholders in their drafting and interpretation of SYS policies. It can be found on the SYS Policies Webpage here: https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/download/Policy-Style-Guide_Final_July-2020.pdf
- Beginning in July 2021, we will modify the policy summary document to add in a policy contact to ensure stakeholders know who to direct their questions to during the comment period and during the policy implementation period.

My sincere thanks to all who responded to the policy communication feedback survey and provided invaluable feedback that will help to shape future enhancements to the UW System Administrative policy process.

cc: Jim Langdon, Vice President for Administration
        Anny Morrobel-Sosa, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs
        Sean P. Nelson, Vice President for Finance
        Laura Dunek, Special Assistant for Governance & Strategic Initiatives
        Finance and General Administrative Policy Committee
        Office of Academic and Student Affairs Policy Committee