

Proposal for a UCOP Staff Assembly Communications Advisory Committee

As the subject matter expert office regarding employee communications, UCOP Internal Communications has been asked to assess the appropriateness and feasibility of the Staff Engagement Communications Work Group's recommendation that a Communications Resource Group (CRG) be established under the umbrella of the UCOP Staff Assembly.

Assessment and proposal

UCOP Internal Communications conferred with the UCOP Staff Assembly and we agree that having a small advisory group of OP employees to provide input on internal employee communications matters could be helpful, provided its role and authority are defined appropriately and take into account the needs and responsibilities of the OP Staff Assembly and UCOP Internal Communications.

In recognition of the UCOP Staff Assembly's established role in helping to facilitate communication between staff and leadership, and UCOP Internal Communications' authority and responsibility for employee communications, we agree with the recommendation that this type of group should be a communications subcommittee of the UCOP Staff Assembly, serving as an advisory group to both OPSA and Internal Communications on various topics involving communications with UCOP employees. We believe the group initially should be established as a two-year pilot project, and its effectiveness be reevaluated after two years. We also recommend the group be called the UCOP Staff Assembly Communications Advisory Committee.

Role and responsibilities

At scheduled and ad hoc meetings, the committee would review and discuss past, present and future communications to OP staff, and offer thoughts about possible improvements where appropriate. For example, it would review, as appropriate, status of communications on large organizational change projects (e.g., Efficiency Review, UCPath, Space Initiative). Similarly, the committee would serve as a sounding board for Internal Communication in developing specific communications strategies or programs concerning specific topics, and for ways to build a more informed and engaged community.

Committee members would serve as communications facilitators within their respective departments and to help ensure that important messages from leadership reach all levels of UCOP and also reinforce calls for action (e.g., submitting OP Innovation and Impact Award nominations, spreading the word about flu prevention or the holiday party). They would also serve as a staff feedback channel, bringing concerns and suggestions from UCOP staff to subcommittee meetings.

Subcommittee members would also help plan, promote and staff events such as brown bags and town halls, and could also help in practical ways, such as reinforcing the publicity guidelines and monitoring bulletin boards.

Membership and meetings

The Committee would be lead by two co-chairs: One of OPSA's communications chairs and a representative from UCOP Internal Communications. The co-chairs would provide leadership and oversight to the group, and be responsible for organizing and leading committee meetings. There would be a maximum of six committee members serving 12-month terms. Members must apply to serve and be chosen by agreement of the co-chairs. Criteria for subcommittee membership include a strong desire to help facilitate staff engagement and communication; an eagerness to learn about organizational communication; demonstrated ability to influence others, work collaboratively and solve problems; and broad representation from UCOP locations, divisions and departments. The committee would meet formally once per quarter; ad hoc meetings and other informal interactions would occur as necessary. Occasionally the subcommittee would also hold open meetings (e.g., brown bags) where interested staff could attend, to promote transparency and exchange of information.