

## Communications Planning Guide

A solid communications plan is essential for action plan implementation. A well-designed plan should foster engagement by providing a mechanism for actively soliciting input from faculty and staff, educator candidates, and community members. The plan should help partners challenge assumptions and determine whether strategies are appropriately aligned with identified objectives. Finally, the communications plan should include the ways partners will share partnership progress and plan modifications with members and other stakeholders.

The following questions should be considered when developing a basic communications plan:

1. Who is our intended audience?
2. What is known? What is not known? Consider who, what, when, why, and how. Are there any complicating factors? If so, how will these be addressed?
3. How are stakeholders most likely to become aware of this information? What is the news potential? Is the best approach a pre-emptive or reactive strategy one? Is there a need for a plan B?
4. What is the likely reaction and impact? (Consider both short and long-term potential; consider perceptual and actual possibilities.)
5. What strategies could be implemented to minimize negative impact/encourage positive impact?
6. Why do we want/need to communicate this information? What should be achieved by this communication?
7. What needs to be communicated? What do we want the audience to know and why do we want them to know this? Keep it clear and concise.
8. Who needs to be involved in framing the message? Staff? Communications? Leadership? Who has final approval on this communication?
9. How will this be communicated? Format? By whom? To whom? When?
10. What resources are needed to fully implement the communications plan once it is developed? Time? Funding? Manpower?
11. What subsequent communications need to be formulated to reinforce and follow up on this communication?
12. How will we know if the communication was successful? Did the communication meet the desired outcomes?