

# INTEGRATE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND PLAN

September 2008

The purpose of the iNtegrate Communication Strategy and Plan is to ensure the timely communication of appropriate information to the NSHE community about the iNtegrate Student Information System Project, including its benefits and limitations, features, project funding sources and costs, implementation progress, and impact upon business and academic administration practices. This undertaking will cause considerable change in the activities of NSHE administrative staff, and, to a lesser degree, in the way faculty and students exchange information and send and receive information to and from the NSHE community. This strategy defines the goals, strategies, methods, timelines, roles and responsibilities for communicating information about the project to the NSHE community and includes the plan for NSHE institutions to work with the project management office to affect best practices in project communications. Understanding that this project will be a learning experience, changes to this strategy may be made after its initial distribution with alerts to the community posted appropriately.

## ***Communication Goal and Objectives***

As NSHE begins the implementation of a crucial and expansive replacement of its student information systems, the iNtegrate Student Information System Project's executive sponsors have committed to the goal of ensuring the continuous communication of project objectives and progress to audiences both internal and external to Nevada's higher education system.

**The iNtegrate Project's Communication Goal** - Utilizing various available media, NSHE will work to ensure that iNtegrate Student Information System Project information is distributed in an organized manner so that informational and educational communications are consistent with the overall themes and messages of the implementation. The objectives are:

- To accurately **distribute information** in a timely manner concerning important implementation benchmarks and progress to the NSHE community and outside audiences.
- To **use various media** to provide multiple sources from which information concerning the implementation can be accessible.
- To **eliminate confusion** among implementation participants by providing a sole directive and source from which all project information originates.
- To **provide clear channels** of communication within which implementation staff can operate to lead to an expedited solution to issues that arise during implementation and after its completion
- To ensure all information available is **updated and accurate**.
- To **encourage feedback** from the entire NSHE community and outside audiences

## ***Approach to NSHE-wide Communication***

All communications that include audiences outside the iNtegrate teams and committees, concerning the iNtegrate Student Information System Project (including, but not limited to, progress, issues, benchmarks and general announcements) must be authorized by the iNtegrate Project Director. Such authorization will be granted upon the completion of each institution's communication plan. The Project Director will designate the iNtegrate Project Manager as the Communications Coordinator for the iNtegrate Student Information System Project. The Project Manager will rely heavily on the contributions of institution and SCS project leads, institution module leads and the CedarCrestone consultants in developing iNtegrate communications. These are the things the Project Manager will do as Communications Coordinator:

- Ensure adherence to this strategy and overall project objectives
- Ensure proper communication lines are established and utilized correctly throughout the life of the implementation
- Establish schedules for continuous communication to both the community and outside audiences

The iNtegrate Project Director will work with the NSHE Public Information Office to coordinate NSHE-wide communications among the public information offices at NSHE institutions. The NSHE institutions' public information officers will serve as the clearing house for external inquiries concerning the implementation and will determine the appropriate means of distributing a response. Institution public affairs and/or communications representatives will serve as ad hoc members of the iNtegrate Communication Team.

The Executive Vice Chancellor holds the ultimate authority to ensure that all communications are consistent with Board of Regents policy and procedures and that each communication helps to advance the overall success of the project implementation.

### **Critical Communication Success Factors**

The following conditions are critical to the successful execution of this Communication Strategy:

- Communications efforts are validated by the iNtegrate Implementation Team and iNtegrate Steering Committee through feedback from the larger NSHE community.
- Financial support and resources are needed to deliver effective communication materials and events.
- Feedback is kept confidential and used constructively to improve communication effectiveness.
- Innovative use of new media technology is encouraged.

### **Leadership Involvement**

Responsibilities for the iNtegrate Project Director, Project Manager, Project and Module Team Leaders, and CedarCrestone Consultants include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Planning and coordination of communication activities
- Contribution and participation to communication efforts and team meetings, communication events and required training sessions.
- Communicate the goals and benefits of the project within their spheres of influence.

## ***Communication Plan and Effective Practices***

Sections 7.3 through 7.5 of the Project Charter describe the major elements of the NSHE iNtegrate Communication Plan and are included as the major components of the iNtegrate Communication Plan.

### **Leveraging Communication Efforts**

Following are a few techniques to help leverage communication efforts and sustain desired behavior. Each NSHE institution should:

- Develop a plan that is dynamic, interactive and integrated with the overall project plan.
- Incorporate communication initiatives into key project events.
- Develop a clear, expeditious approval process.
- Deliver messages in a style that underscores the new direction, behaviors and results of the project.

### **Internal Communication Effective Practices**

The Communication Team will provide continuous communication of important changes to project implementation activities and status as well as celebrate important benchmarks with the NSHE community. The iNtegrate Implementation Team will utilize all available means to ensure total coverage of the progress and expanded services provided with the installation of each module.

- Encourage open two-way communication between those involved in the implementation and those affected by it.
- Promote better awareness of each stage of the implementation process and what those changes mean to the entire NSHE community
- Provide continuous, accurate and timely information to promote a better understanding of why NSHE is engaging in the project and how the educational mission of each institution in the system is furthered through its results

### **External Communication Effective Practices**

The iNtegrate Student Information System Project requires the investment of state resources and it is important to realize that continued communication with audiences outside the system is

crucial to the success of the implementation. This project represents improvements to the services each college or university can provide to increase the standard of higher education available to the community and to the state of Nevada. Students, both present and prospective, as well as alumni, legislative and community members will benefit from the advances made during this implementation. The timely and continuous distribution of information to these audiences is crucial to the overall value of this initiative for the NSHE community and all those associated with it. The iNtegrate Communication Team will:

- Promote better awareness of why NSHE is replacing its core student information systems and the processes involved
- Create a better understanding of how the implementation affects audiences outside of NSHE
- Provide continuous, accurate and timely information to inform audiences outside of NSHE
- Develop a clear, expeditious approval process
- Deliver messages in a style that underscores the new direction, behaviors and results of the project

## ***iNtegrate Student Information System Project Messaging***

This section of the plan expresses, in the simplest terms, the message that the implementation team hopes to convey to its target publics. Variations on these broad messages should be carried in all of its communications during the course of the implementation – internal memoranda, press releases, speeches, brochures, and other publications or medium.

### **Messages to NSHE community**

The following are examples of key messages for inclusion with internal communications:

- The implementation will expand upon the current services used by the colleges, universities and system and provide a number of new services and possibilities.
- The implementation is a timely process and the NSHE community is encouraged to provide feedback and ask questions as opportunities will be available to do so.
- The students, faculty and staff are our most important resource for determining the success of this implementation.

### **Message to Audiences External to NSHE**

- The implementation, with each stage, will build upon the education mission of the each college or university and allow for increased services to benefit the community.

- The implementation is a vital step in ensuring that NSHE stays at the forefront of excellence for higher education in Nevada.

## ***Communication Priorities***

Communication priorities refer to media used to emphasize the preceding section of the plan: an emphasis on student, faculty and staff communication, an emphasis on communication between implementation staff members, increasing the visibility of the implementation, information campaigns and meetings, and other undertakings necessary toward the objectives of this plan.

### **Audiences**

Communication of project activities, status, updates, milestones and notice of events should be directed to the following audiences:

1. Executive Officers
2. Executive Sponsors and Steering Committees
3. Implementation Team
4. Pilot institution functional and technical staff
5. Non-pilot institution functional and technical staff
6. Institution department heads
7. Institution staff
8. Institution faculty
9. Institution students
10. Board of Regents
11. System staff
12. Alumni
13. Community members
14. All-inclusive general communications

### **Media**

The following media are at the core of achieving comprehensive coverage:

- Internal system and institution email messages
- Internal system and institution email newsletters
- Institution Division and Department newsletters
- Institution publications including:
  - Faculty newsletter
  - Staff newsletter
  - Student publications
  - Alumni Magazine(s)
- iNtegrate Student Information System Project Implementation website and Communication Center
  - Public area
  - Protected access area (for implementation staff)
- Institution and SCS iNtegrate Student Information System Project web sites and web pages
- Internal System and Institution meetings

## **Performance Indicators**

Performance indicators establish a standard by which communication efforts can be measured. The iNtegrate Student Information System Project implementation team will measure the success of the communication plan by whether it achieves:

- NSHE community awareness of the current status of the implementation.
- NSHE community awareness of the improvements to services currently offered and the new services now available.
- Public awareness (external audiences) of the benefits of the implementation.
- Greater understanding of the change processes as a result of the implementation and the resolution of any issues that arise as a result.
- Continued evolution of the message as the implementation gains general acceptance.
- Ultimate acceptance of the implementation.

## **Approval Process**

The process for reviewing or approving iNtegrate communications is:

- 1) Institution Module Leads, Project Leads, CedarCrestone Lead Consultants Project Governance Committee Chairs and Executive Sponsors may submit updates, event notifications, newsletter articles, press releases, Board documents and other communications material to the iNtegrate Project Manager for review and subsequent approval by the iNtegrate Project Director.
- 2) Project Status Reports will be submitted consistent with the schedule outlined in Section 4.3 of the Project Charter and will be approved by the iNtegrate Project Director.
- 3) Approved communications will be shared with the iNtegrate Communication Team for development of additional public information media.
- 4) Institution Project and/or Module Leads will be notified immediately by the Communications Coordinator when communications are approved for their use in institution specific communications.

## **Communication Schedule**

The iNtegrate Project office will adhere to the following communication schedule:

- NSHE iNtegrate Website Updates – At least Monthly and as required
- Project Status Reports – Monthly (to Steering Committee and Executive Oversight Committee)
- Project Summaries – Monthly (on iNtegrate Website)
- Project Activities – Monthly (on iNtegrate Website)
- Major Milestones – As achieved based upon Project Work Plan
- Board of Regents Updates – At least once per year

Each institution may determine its own schedule within its institution communication plan.