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CUSP (CU I&E) Submission: UIS Project Communications Templates [1]

Description

UIS's Project Management Office (PMO) is a new team within our department and as such, the team as a whole has spent the last two years putting processes and practices in place to add rigor and governance around how we implement projects. The communications role within the project process is even newer and as such, all processes and practices that align with how CU works needed to be built from the ground up.

As the Communication Program Manager, my task was to develop the full process around project communications. This entailed analyzing how we performed project communications in the past by reviewing past implementations and reaching out to customers to learn what their pain points were and what they needed from us from a communications standpoint.

From this data and aligning with our new project process, I built the tools and templates to help us be effective in our project communications. These included developing a detailed communication plan template with instructions on how to use it for all UIS project managers and leads. I also implemented a stakeholder register to help us understand the full range of customers served within a project and to build the communication plan to meet the needs of each stakeholder group and ensure that we did not miss important communication touch points. I also built process around which communications should be integrated into the main communication plan.

Other communication templates and tools were developed in conjunction with the new project communication process. These included a stakeholder status report, consultation with all project leads during the planning phase to help jump start their communication success, and training and information about how to identify stakeholders and how to plan to meet their needs. I also identified key stakeholder groups and when/if they should be brought into the process, like campus service desks, communication teams and Employee Services.

Communications is now a fully-integrated component of the UIS project process and the tools and templates are used across all projects.

How does this impact the University?

From the standpoint of project implementations, having these processes, tools and templates in place has greatly improved how UIS interacts with and informs our customers and partners. We know at the beginning of a project who we need to connect with and can build our communications and ensure they go out at the right stage of the implementation to ensure none are missed. We also now identify all of the stakeholders we need to meet with and

when, which benefits those stakeholders by their knowing everything they need to know in plenty of time for them to respond, rather than have to move into crisis mode or miss what is happening that affects them altogether.

Another benefit is that UIS can and has shared our tools, templates and processes with other System teams and with campus partners to help them put more rgor around their own processes. These teams take our tools and modify them to meet their specific needs without having to start from scratch. This in turn helps their customers stay informed and their implementations run more effectively.

Implementation Status

The full process has been in operation for approximately 10 months. Building the process began about 1.5 years ago. Attached is just one of the tools, our stakeholder status report, that was implemented as part of this initiative.

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