SD 2020

Communications Expectations for Faculty and Staff Analysis/ Recommendation Team

Work Charge

Finalized September 13, 2011

This team will be activated fall 2011 to take the lead in addressing a critical area of Strategic Decisions 2020. This committee will consist of two sub-groups: Staff and Faculty. Both sub-groups will review current communication assessment practices (the SLPI) and communication expectations and requirements for both groups of employees and make recommendations to the NTID Administrative Council (NAC).

More specifically, the Staff sub-group will determine minimal levels of required sign language skills for exempt and non-exempt staff and the required timelines for achieving those levels, and will review the effectiveness of existing incentive policies regarding sign language skills, including the continuation of pay incentives related to SLPI results. With regard to faculty, the sub-group will review and evaluate the appropriateness of existing policies regarding expectations and requirements for sign language communication.

This team will address the following SD 2020 goals:

**C3, Communication, p. 20 of the SD 2020 document, ‘Faculty, Staff and Students’ Commitment to Continuous Learning’.**

“All faculty, staff and students within the NTID community are expected and encouraged to continuously increase their skill and versatility in communicating with one another in diverse situations. Versatility includes skills and strategies in both ASL and English (written and spoken), and the use of access services and technologies to facilitate communication. The choice of communication strategies will vary depending on the skills of the communicator and the audience. The expectation is that communication skills and flexibility will continue to develop over time, throughout the span of an individual course, a student’s college experience, and an faculty or staff member’s professional career”

**C6, Communication, p. 21 – 22 of the SD 2020 document, ‘Communication Expectations for Faculty and Staff’.**

*Faculty:*

“For tenure and promotion, the expectation regarding sign language competency will continue to be the Advanced skill level, with Intermediate Plus skill level acceptable only if there is clear evidence of sustained effort and progress towards the Advanced level.

Individuals in lecturer positions will have the same expectations and timelines for sign language proficiency as individuals in tenure-track positions.

*Staff (Non-exempt and Exempt):*

An implementation team will be established immediately to determine:
- Minimal levels of required sign language skills and required timelines for achieving them (determined according to specific job responsibilities);

- Institutional resources required to optimally support staff in achieving these required levels and timelines, and a determination as to how existing support mechanisms and strategies can be improved in this regard;

- Effectiveness of existing incentive policies regarding the development of sign language skills by staff, and if determined to be ineffective, what changes are needed; and

- Implications of this additional requirement regarding sign language skill for NTID staff salary schedules in comparison with RIT-wide staff salary schedules”

The staff and faculty sub-groups of this committee will perform the following tasks and make recommendations to the NAC:

**A. Staff:**

1. Review existing procedures for evaluating sign language communication skills at NTID, including use of the SLPI, and investigate the feasibility of using additional assessment tools as options.

   1. Clarify and determine minimal levels of required sign language skills, according to the Sign Language Proficiency Interview (SLPI) for various job functions, and the required timelines and resources for achieving them.

   2. Assess the effectiveness of existing incentive policies regarding sign language skill level according to the SLPI, including the continuation of pay incentives as related to SLPI results.

**B. Faculty:**

1. Review and evaluate existing policies regarding expectations and requirements for sign language communication, particularly for tenure and promotion. Use the 1991 NTID Steering Committee on Communication report and recommendations, and the 2011 Final Report of the Communication Task Force Five-Year Review Committee for reference, found online at:

   [http://www.ntid.rit.edu/president/academic-affairs/communication](http://www.ntid.rit.edu/president/academic-affairs/communication)

Special consideration should be given to section D: Communication Skill Development, and Section E: Administrative Procedures.
2. Review existing procedures for evaluating sign language communication skills at NTID, including use of the SLPI, and investigate the feasibility of using additional assessment tools as options.

**Committee Membership:**

Two co-chairs; four faculty members; four staff members

   Faculty sub-group: One co-chair and four faculty members

   Staff sub-group: One co-chair and four staff members

**Consultants:**

   Dr. Kim Kurz, Chair, ASLIE

   Geoff Poor, Coordinator, SLPI

   Larry Scott, Chair, Communication Studies

   Dr. Rico Peterson, Assistant Dean, Access Services

**Timeline:**

1. Submit a draft of recommendations report to the NAC by March, 2012

2. Provide opportunity for faculty/staff review and give feedback by April 2012

3. Working with the NTID Student Congress and Student Assembly, establish student focus groups. Work with these groups to: a) understand their expectations of faculty and staff communication skills, and b) review and provide feedback on the draft of the revised communication expectations for faculty and staff.

4. Submit recommendations to the NAC by May 2012

5. Review by NAC and final decisions by the President of NTID

6. Implementation beginning academic year 2012-2013