

43 – Student Liaisons

Action Item Template Response

General Action Item Information

Lead Division/Office:

Action Item Number: 43

Action Item Short Name: Student Liaisons

Dependencies with other EP Action Items: 28 (IT News), 47 (Student Communication)

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I. DESCRIBE YOUR PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS ACTION.

A key to effective communication and planning within UITS rests on cultivating meaningful relationships and creating ongoing, two-way dialog with students. Engaging with students provides a conduit for student input on UITS efforts and activities, allows UITS to more effectively disseminate timely and relevant information to students, and increases UITS awareness of the behavior and preferences of students as consumers of IU's IT services and resources. In addition, cultivating relationships with students provides leadership and learning opportunities for students and UITS staff.

To these ends, UITS should continue to expand and fund the newly created Student IT Ambassador program. The program consists of two registered student leadership organizations (one at IUB and one at IUPUI) sponsored by UITS. Leadership and advising for the program are provided by UITS staff in conjunction with Bepko communications interns.

Program implementation is planned in phases. Phase I, establishing the student organizations, is complete. Phase II focuses on creating a series of opportunities for students to learn about UITS IT services and to share that information with peers formally and informally. This phase will help the students gain a solid base of knowledge about IT and UITS, and develop communication skills within their own communities. Phase III involves providing leadership development for the student ambassadors. Phase IV involves utilize advisers from the Student Ambassador program to provide formal feedback to UITS. All phases are critical to the program's success. Each phase builds upon previous phases to allow for participants' ongoing professional development, while balancing their ambassador responsibilities with their coursework and other activities, thereby reducing burn-out.

More broadly, the student groups:

- Assist in planning and implementing UITS promotional events and activities
- Offer volunteers to staff routine campus awareness events
- Serve as campus IT liaisons with classmates and student government
- Serve as advisers to UITS regarding student information technology services

Working closely with colleagues in the Office of Student Organizations & Leadership Development at

IUB and the Office of Student Involvement at IUPUI, the two groups offer leadership-development and community-building activities. Students have the opportunity to expand their leadership skills with seminars, retreats, workshops, and networking events coordinated by the comprehensive campus leadership programs LEAD IU and LEAD IUPUI.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Two robust Student IT Ambassador clubs were formed, with 17 Ambassadors at IUB and 35 Ambassadors at IUPUI. These are official student groups with elected officials, logos and identity, web pages etc. The VP of the IUPUI group sits on the IUPUI student government as a representative. Under the management of the Support Division, these groups are actively engaged in campus IT outreach, leadership retreats, social outings, information sessions with UITS staff, and they provide feedback on student communication, system usability and IT news. The groups have a social networking presence and provide a vital link to the student community.

Note: The IT Communication Office now owns this Action.

II. WHAT ARE THE POLICY AND PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR PLANS?

Because student ambassadors are a voluntary group affiliated with UITS, a number of issues arise. Therefore the following policy and practice implications should be taken into consideration:

- In Phase IV, the program will serve as a conduit for student feedback with regard to UITS services, support, and resources. UITS must create an effective mechanism for capturing, sharing, acting on, and reporting back on that feedback.
- To realize the missions and goals of the leadership aspects of the ambassador program, and to assure continued student interest in membership, we must identify additional staff from UITS and elsewhere to serve as mentors, speakers, and resources for ambassadors.
- Activities to recruit student liaisons will be continuous. The structure of the group does include volunteer coordinators who will conduct outreach and help foster student engagement. But because these are volunteers, we will also need significant, sustained, and coordinated effort from UITS staff to help recruit program members.
- Because students are volunteer members of both groups, their schedules may not align with the communication needs of UITS. We will need to research opportunities for paid student ambassadors to support communications efforts when volunteers are not available.

III. IDENTIFY STAKEHOLDERS.

Stakeholders will include students and any UITS staff who interact with students and who develop and provide IT resources for students.