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COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

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Summary	The Communication Strategy sets a long-term orientation of the university communication. This document outlines messages, stakeholders, channels, roles and responsibilities, and strategic priorities. The document is to be used as both the university's communication policy and communication strategy.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Introduction

This is the University of Gothenburg's communication strategy. It lays down the long-term direction of the communication work – how the work should be carried out and which choices should be made – and describes key messages, stakeholders, channels, responsibilities and roles as well as strategic priorities.

The communication strategy is based on a thorough current situation analysis conducted in autumn 2012. This analysis describes both the University's present communication work with conclusions and recommendations as well as the external view of the University of Gothenburg.

Purpose and aim

The purpose of the communication strategy is to support the University of Gothenburg's work to achieve the aims of Vision 2020. It is also intended to contribute to a communication model that makes the University be perceived as a coherent organisation with a clear sender. The communication strategy is to support the efforts to find paths for communication that leave room for branding also at other levels. The aim is to find a format where the different parts reinforce the organisation as a whole.

The communication strategy is University-wide and covers both internal and external communication. It provides a regulating and supporting framework that will be useful in the University's communication work at all levels.

All communication work at the University of Gothenburg must be carried out in a professional manner. This implies that the work must be based on a clear process consisting of analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation. The aim is to establish a well-coordinated and resource-efficient communication structure for the entire University.

Communication as a success factor: Why do we communicate?

The communication work shall increase the awareness of the University's activities and provide a clear and representative view of the University of Gothenburg. The University has a special responsibility to present all academic information clearly and make it easily accessible, as well as to find effective forms of communication with current and future students. Also, well-planned and well-designed communication helps create, maintain and further develop relations both within the University and in contacts with external actors and the rest of society.

When the communication perspective is considered in for example projects, collaborations and processes of change, there is an increased possibility of achieving stated objectives. Also, without adequate communication, there is an increased risk of rumours, speculations and the harm they may cause.

Our communication

Core values

The core values have been developed from the University of Gothenburg's vision, Vision 2020: social responsibility, openness and versatility. The intention is for the University's core values to, at an overarching level, represent what the University and its activities stand for as well as its fundamental values.

The view of the University of Gothenburg

The University of Gothenburg shall be perceived as a coherent university, both internally and externally. This requires that the view of what the University is and stands for, and of its role in society, is uniform and clear both internally and externally.

One aim of the University's brand management work is for the different parts of the organisation to reinforce the organisation as a whole and for the organisation as a whole to reinforce the different parts. The different parts comprise for example faculties, departments and centres of expertise and research. There are also many personal brands at the University. The different parts can communicate their own brands, but must always make clear that they are part of the University of Gothenburg.

Language

The University of Gothenburg shall be an international University. The official language is Swedish, yet the internationalisation requires that English be used alongside Swedish. All relevant internal information, oral and written, must be presented in both Swedish and English. There may also be situations where there is a need to translate material to other languages. The information must be equivalent in both languages, at the same time as the content of the communication of course must be tailored to the receiver's needs and conditions. As regards external communication via for example the University's website, social media and different types of events, it is important that the needs of the target stakeholder(s) are taken into consideration when determining whether material should be available in Swedish, English or both. Thus, different language versions of for example a text must not always contain the exact same information.

The legal framework

The University's internal and external communication is subject to many laws and ordinances:

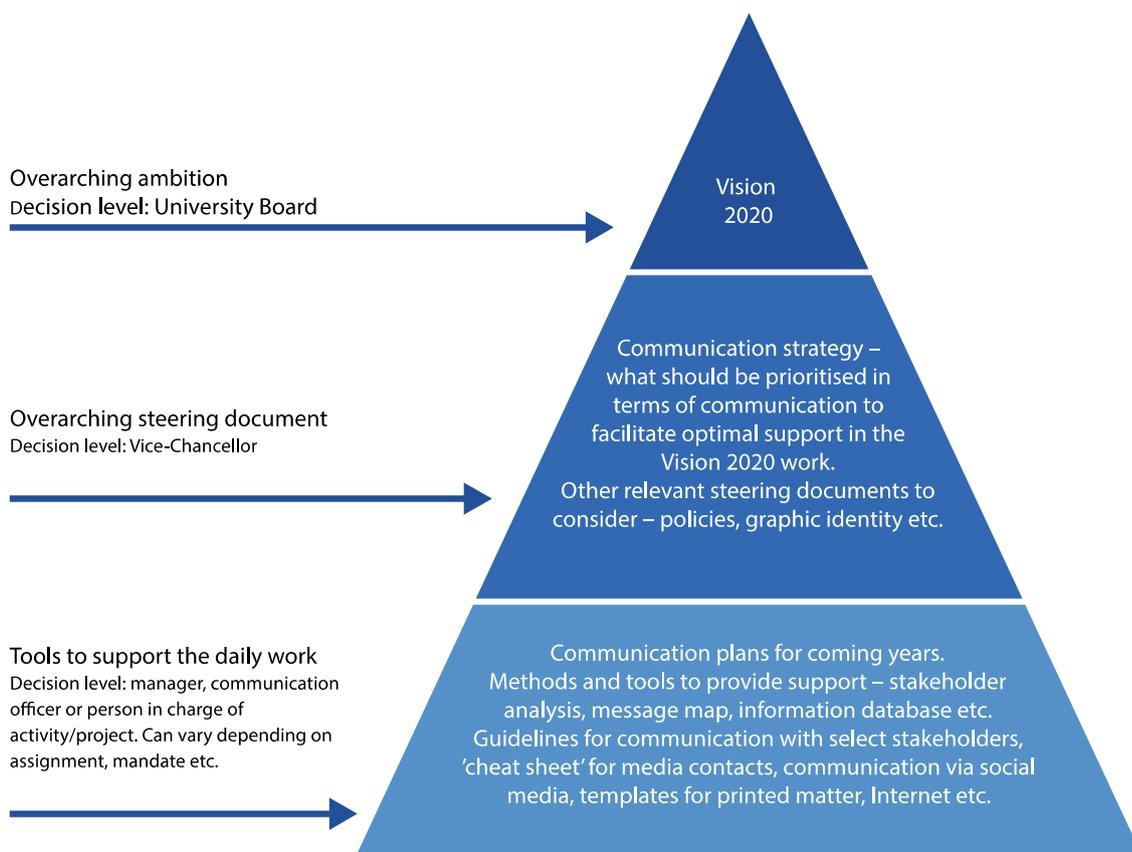
- The Instrument of Government (*Regeringsformen*) and the Freedom of the Press Act (*Tryckfrihetsförordningen*) regulate all people's right to freedom of opinion, freedom of expression and

freedom of information. All University staff are covered by the constitutional protection of ‘whistle blowers’.

- The Administrative Procedure Act regulates the duty of public authorities to provide services to citizens.
- The Higher Education Act regulates the duty of higher education institutions to cooperate with the surrounding society and provide information about their activities.
- The Higher Education Ordinance regulates the right to information about higher education.
- Laws such as the Copyright Act, Personal Data Act, Gender Equality Act, Equal Treatment Act and Co-Determination in the Workplace Act must also be considered in the provision and communication of information at the University.

Connection to other internal steering documents and plans

The communication strategy is one of several documents regulating and guiding the University of Gothenburg’s communication work. The figure below describes how the communication strategy is linked to other communication documents and decision-making levels.



Stakeholders/target groups

A distinction is made between stakeholders and target groups in the communication work. Stakeholders are individuals and/or groups of actors that in various ways have an interest in the University and want to impact its operations. The stakeholders cannot be chosen; they exist and exert an effect on the University whether the University communicates with them or not. 'Target group' is a more narrow concept, where the University has clearly defined and selected individuals and/or groups of actors as receivers of messages. This document will from here on use the broader concept stakeholders.

To develop a relevant and effective communication, we need to know stakeholders' motivation and also understand their habits, needs and expectations, how the University is relevant to them and how they view the University of Gothenburg.

The University of Gothenburg has a number of principal stakeholders, which are listed below. In most cases, they can be divided into subcategories. The level of specificity of communication depends on its purpose, but also on the receiver's needs and conditions.

Our stakeholders:

Co-workers

Presumptive co-workers

Students

Presumptive students

Alumni

Business and industry

Research funders

Research and education organisations

Politicians and political organisations

Interest organisations

Media

The public

Message

Three University-wide messages have been developed based on the University's core values – social responsibility, openness and versatility. They consist of one primary message and two supporting messages that apply to all parts of the University.

The messages form a basis for what we want to communicate. Their purpose is to strengthen and clarify the view of the University of Gothenburg and all of its activities within research, education and cooperation. In all communication, these messages must be modified to reach the stakeholders as effectively as possible. They must always be concretised with facts and arguments to suit the given context. 'Message' here means the meaning of the information conveyed, rather than the exact wording. The messages can be expressed in text but also visually in various ways.

Primary message (related to the core value Social Responsibility)

The University of Gothenburg contributes to a better future

The University of Gothenburg contributes to a sustainable development of society with new knowledge and new perspectives. It educates and inspires people, helping them be active and knowledgeable in society. Researchers and students offer new perspectives and contribute to solutions to the major and global challenges of our time and of tomorrow. All research and education are built on a critical approach free from political, economic and ideological commitments. This includes to get involved, to question and to challenge.

Supporting message (related to the core value Openness)

The University of Gothenburg engages in an open dialogue with the surrounding society

Openness – inwards and outwards – is a key feature of the University of Gothenburg. It permeates all operations and activities. We participate in the debate and are visible in important arenas nationally and internationally. We listen to the surrounding society and initiate dialogue on urgent issues. Research and education are strengthened through the new knowledge and perspective generated via close contacts with external actors.

Supporting message (related to the core value Versatility)

The University of Gothenburg approaches challenges in the world with diverse knowledge

The University of Gothenburg welcomes diverse thoughts, subjects and perspectives. Disagreements are allowed. Multifaceted knowledge and different perspectives offer answers to complex questions and contribute to solutions. Different disciplines cross-fertilise each other to form new creative subjects. The breadth in the University's research and education keeps yielding new specialisations. Strong research and attractive study programmes attract researchers and students from around the world.

Channels

Channels are the different paths through which the stakeholders are reached with information or communicate with or within the University. Channels can be oral or written, printed or digital. The communication strategy describes which channels should be prioritised.

To facilitate effective and resource-efficient communication, we need to actively select our communication channels. The chosen channels should correspond to the stakeholders' needs, knowledge and conditions.

The University of Gothenburg shall be well coordinated and give a clear and coherent impression.

Communication based on dialogue and interactivity shall be prioritised. For effective and current communication, which is consistent with sustainable development, we must always ask ourselves whether printed matter/paper-based communication is necessary.

Prioritised channels for staff

The Staff Portal

The Staff Portal, *Medarbetarportalen*, is a University-wide website for internal information and communication. All relevant University-wide information must be made available via the Staff Portal. The Staff Portal will be developed into an intranet that will include all University staff.

To facilitate a resource-efficient flow of information, posting of information via the Staff Portal must always be considered as an alternative to e-mailing and newsletters. A sender of an e-mail must always question the necessity of it, formulate it with the intended receiver(s) in mind and be selective when distributing it; mass e-mailings must be avoided unless determined necessary.

GU Journalen

GU Journalen is a publication for University staff. It is intended to complement the Staff Portal's daily flow of information with in-depth articles, interviews and analyses, and is also meant to serve as an arena for debate.

Meetings

Effective channels and processes for the internal communication are very important in order to reach out with decisions and achieve an organisation that staff perceive as rational and transparent. However, for individual staff members, the most important source of information is the immediate manager. A truly communicative manager and leader can be the carrier of leading objectives and decisions by concretising them in dialogue with staff. Thus, direct personal interaction is an important cornerstone of every manager's communication system.

Prioritised channels for communication with students

Personal channels to reach students

The oral and written communication that students receive from teachers, academic administrators and other

University staff is very important. It is also very important that the students receive relevant information and are treated the same in this respect regardless of where in the organisation they belong.

The Student Portal

The University of Gothenburg provides student services via its Student Portal, which will soon contain all University-related information of relevance to students.

Service centres

The University's service centres provide academic information and other services. They serve an important function in the communication with current students in particular.

Prioritised channels and methods with external stakeholders and target groups

The University's website www.gu.se

External stakeholders will be provided broad and easily accessible information about research, education and other activities through the University's website. The content of the website will have a clear structure, high quality and high searchability, and will be designed to maximise accessibility. The site will invite interactivity and offer easily accessible and user-friendly e-services.

Exhibitions, seminars and other meetings

The University of Gothenburg shall be present in the community and establish good relations with the surrounding society. The planning of the University's open activities, such as public lectures, must leave room for events scheduled with short notice in order to address current issues. The events shall reflect all of the University's activities.

Traditional media

Here we have chosen to consider media a channel. Communication through mass media offers an opportunity to reach a large number of stakeholders. What separates mass media from most other channels is that we are not in charge of them. To reach media successfully and achieve impact, it is important to both work proactively and ensure high news value of the material we want to communicate.

Social media

The University of Gothenburg shall participate actively in social media. This channel will help us communicate and build relations with students, the public and other actors in the surrounding society. Social media will help build networks both nationally and internationally.

Roles and responsibilities in the University's communication work

All staff members at the University of Gothenburg share a responsibility to communicate in accordance with the intentions of the communication strategy.

All University employees are required to search for, gather and distribute any type of information that is necessary for the daily work within the organisation. Each employee must contribute to openness and participation through communication with colleagues, managers, students and external target groups. Similarly, our students have a responsibility to search for and gather whatever information they need for their studies.

Managers

Managers' operational responsibilities include communication responsibilities. This means that all managers are required to consider the communication perspective within their respective domains. Their leadership assignment implies a responsibility to explain the University's vision, aims and decisions and to facilitate each staff member's participation and motivation.

Communication officers

The communication officers shall support managers and other co-workers in the communication work at all levels and within different parts of the University.

Seven strategic priorities

The current situation analysis that the communication strategy is based on has identified three areas where the communication work needs improvement: *from organisation-oriented to needs-based, from ad hoc to structured* and *from 'we and them' to 'we'*. This means that all communication at the University of Gothenburg shall be based on the needs of the receiver and be well planned and effectively structured. It also means that the communication shall make all staff members feel that they are part of the University of Gothenburg.

Based on the identified development areas, the University of Gothenburg declares the following priorities:

- 1. Communicate the University of Gothenburg as a coherent university**
Giving the University of Gothenburg a clear profile and communicating it as *one* university will make it more attractive. The separate parts are at the same time enabled to give a clear profile to their respective roles within the university.
- 2. Develop the University's internal communication**
The University needs to prioritise among and further develop its internal communication channels as well as more clearly define managers' and staff members' communication responsibilities. This will require communication support, training opportunities and clearer rules. Increased cooperation at all levels between the communication and staff (but also other) functions will strengthen the internal communication.
- 3. Strengthen the communication work between the different parts of the University**
Improved cooperation between the different parts of the University will contribute to clarity and coherence regarding who we are and where we are going. This will in turn strengthen the University's identity and staff members' team feeling. A shared commitment and responsibility for the University as a whole will create synergies, increase creativity, facilitate exchange of good ideas and experiences as well as reduce duplication of work and territorial attitudes.
- 4. Develop the communication with students**
Each current and presumptive student is valuable. The students are important ambassadors for the University, both while in school and as alumni. Today, there are many differences in terms of organisation and resources, mandates and responsibilities for communication with students. The University shall work with student communication in a coherent manner across the organisation.
- 5. Focus on quality instead of quantity**
Good communication is preceded by analysis. It is also relevant, well planned and effectively structured. This requires clear and measurable communication objectives as well as evaluation and follow-ups.
- 6. Establish continuous monitoring of the internal and external environments**
Monitoring and analysis of the external environment are important prerequisites for successful communication work. Since it yields useful knowledge about for example competitors, trends and current issues in society, it helps the University address relevant issues, participate actively in the debate, build relations with stakeholders and be visible and active in important arenas. Monitoring of

the internal environment is at least as important, meaning systematic monitoring of current events and issues within the University.

7. Choose the issues where the University of Gothenburg wants to have an active role and build relations with important stakeholders

In order to contribute to social development and help solve problems in society, the University's researchers, teachers and managers show their presence in the debate and have good relations with the surrounding society. In order to reach out as effectively as possible, we need to dare prioritising and profiling the University of Gothenburg in our communication. What, how and where we communicate shall be based on well-planned prioritisation.