IAP: Optimizing Communication in Academic Medical Careers

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The goal of my IAP was to assess faculty perception of our current communication strategies and determine what strategies would be most effective moving forward.

Methods

With the guidance of department chairs and the faculty senate, a 12-question communication plan survey was developed to determine the value of the 20 information sources currently employed by the Dean’s office for communication. The survey was distributed via email to all faculty three times to maximize response rates. Chi square analyses were conducted on all data.

Our response rate was 24%. Participants included 47/188 basic science faculty, 121/188 clinical faculty, 10/188 basic/clinical faculty and 10/188 administrative faculty. Participants found video updates (73%), departmental meetings (62%), departmental emails (57%), the Dean’s newsletter (56%) and the internal website (51%) most helpful. The least helpful were reported to be social media (18%), flyers (18%) and reports from the monthly system-wide managers’ meeting (13%). When asked about optimal future communication strategies, most stated they would value a weekly emailed newsletter (74%), monthly video updates (69%), and town halls (57%). The need for an ombudsperson and anonymous suggestion box was highlighted.

Utilized Qualtrics to Develop 12-question communication Survey; Emailed to Faculty ListServ three times to increase response rate

Results

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Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for medical schools and the education community to quickly disperse information. The most effective means of communication in academic medical center has not yet been defined. Here, we examine faculty perception of current communication venues at our medical school and propose methods to aid in more effective distribution of information.

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Discussion

Our survey revealed that a combination of video and email correspondences were most valued means of communication, emphasizing concise, consistent interventions. These strategies need to be augmented through departmental updates and institutional town halls. Two-way transfer of information is essential.

Different groups prefer different modes of communication

- Two-way communication is essential
- Centralizing communication allows staying on message

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