Improving Communication between Advisors, Staff, and Student Workers
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Road Map

Communication can always be improved no matter the situation. Below is a roadmap to help you improve communication within your own office.

1. Identify possible communication barriers.
2. Research how other offices have improved communication and, if appropriate, interview different people in your office to see how they view the current situation and how they think it can be approved – *do not just communicate with one group or position* in your office.
3. Identify ways that would work best for your office to improve communication – different methods will work better for different offices. You'll need to find what fits.
4. Implement changes to improve communication. Get continual feedback to see what works and what doesn't. Changing how an office operates can take time, patience, and training.

Things to Consider:

- What are the main communication barriers in your office?
- How large/small is your office? How does this impact your communication?
- What resources do you have to improve communication – technology, finances, other employees, web technician, training offered by your institution, etc.?
- What has/has not worked in your office?
- Is there someone in your office with whom you could collaborate to improve communication?

- Is the problem office-wide, or just with one or two individuals? Address individuals one-on-one.

Possible Barriers:

- Office Structure/School Structure
- General Office Attitude
- Training
- Schedules and lack of time
- Funding
- Access to Information
- Technological Barriers
- Language Barriers
- Cultural Barriers
- Poor Retention
- Complexity of Information
- Loss of knowledge upon retirements, resignation
- Other barriers...

Possible Ways to Improve Communication

Once you have identified the communication barriers in your office along with your resources here are some ideas to consider to improve communication:

- Use Technology
  - ISSS WORLD like program
  - Instant Messaging
  - Studio Abroad
  - If your office is limited in technological resources brainstorm ways to take a "tech" idea and turn it into a "non-tech" idea. For example, ISSS WORLD has an online "board" to posts tasks. Consider creating a bulletin board or notebook with tasks listed.

- Improve Office Meetings
    - If small groups have regular meetings, the group should have a clear purpose/focus
    - Make an agenda
    - Put someone in charge of running the meeting
    - Take notes (rotate taking turns)
    - Focus on decisions (w/brief rationale) and action items
    - Start meetings on time – don't cater to late-comers

Communication problem	Barriers	Solutions	My next step(s)