

UTIA Communications Recommendations
By UTIA Advisory Council
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The UTIA Advisory Council recognizes that communication is an essential process for successful execution of the UTIA mission. About one year ago an ad-hoc committee of the Council began a deliberate inventory of communication mechanisms used by The Institute of Agriculture and by each major unit (Extension, College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, College of Veterinary Medicine, and Agricultural Experiment Station). The inventory process also identified frequency, purpose, distribution, and some suggested improvements. Over the past year the table of communication mechanisms was updated to reflect on-going changes. It should be noted that the Council observed a high level of Institute-wide communication that may be improved with a few specific recommendations as follows:

Specific Communication Recommendations:

1. Distribution and availability of administrative and unit meeting minutes have improved communications, and the degree of improvement varies by unit. The Council recommends that conveners of unit-wide meetings make prior arrangements for taking meeting minutes that include copies of handouts/presentations of relevant business items.
2. Some meeting minutes/ unit newsletters/ etc. are posted on internet/intranet servers, either directly by meeting conveners, or through distribution channels. The latter can result in duplicate effort to post/distribute Institute or unit minutes by departments. The Council recommends that a central server site, either by Institute or unit, be uniformly established for the purpose of reducing duplication in posting, and to reduce inadvertent filtering of information. Faculty, staff, and administration should then have direct access to the minutes. The Vice President and Deans should determine whether access across units is appropriate.
3. Informational publications and newsletters produced by the Institute and major units can have different objectives and audience targets. Some constituents have raised questions regarding the process for identifying the effectiveness of UTIA publications and newsletters in meeting objectives and targets. The Council recommends that developers of publications and newsletters critically identify objectives, targets, and a process to identify whether these are accomplished.
4. The new UT Faculty Handbook addresses some aspects of communication for personnel procedures. The Council recommends that Institute, major units, and departments should examine the Faculty Handbook and their own procedures to ensure communications.