

Effective Strategies and Messaging for Communication and Engagement

Purpose: This resource can assist working groups to define and develop effective communication and engagement strategies while examining effective messaging related to mathematics pathways.

Users: State- and/or institutional-level working groups

Effective Strategies to Develop a Communication and Engagement Plan

Effective communication strategies build awareness of mathematics pathways within and across institutions. Engagement strategies enable people to process and act upon their awareness of information to build ownership. Both communication and engagement are essential practices that require planning and subsequent action among different stakeholder groups.

Working groups at the state and/or institutional levels should examine the following strategies to determine which ones should be incorporated into their action plan. If a separate working group is established solely for communication and engagement, then use the *Communication and Engagement Plan* (<https://tinyurl.com/y7ptpg9w>) alongside coordinated discussion with other working groups to create an aligned, cohesive plan for both state- and institutional-level activity. Click the hyperlink text to view a *Sample Communication and Engagement Plan* (<https://tinyurl.com/ybcjyu7v>).

Communication & Engagement Strategies	Considerations
Build champions and advocates among working group members or interested individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide champions with tools to inform stakeholders. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prepare talking points for common messaging. ○ Create a PowerPoint slide deck and informational materials for presentations. ○ Help people practice for presentations and for representing the work, and to prepare for tough questions. • Ensure champions have up-to-date information. • Create mentoring opportunities to bring new champions on board.
Create an online repository of information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide any resources, references, or data that are especially useful or enlightening to the mathematics pathways initiative. • List events. • Post updates and informational materials. • Prepare videos of champions talking about the work.
Think about ways to engage, not just tell.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create opportunities for discussion around data, research, student interviews, etc. • Hold town-hall style meetings and departmental meetings. • Organize site visits to model programs. • Help departments and colleges to organize local events.
Think broadly about stakeholder groups.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider who will be impacted by state- and/or institutional-level implementation of mathematics pathways: administrators, advisors, other student support staff, client disciplines, etc. • Research how these groups receive information (professional

	<p>associations, events, discussion forums, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine ways to engage in effective bidirectional communication—both receiving and disseminating information.
<p>Think in multiples: multiple delivery methods, multiple audiences, multiple times.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple delivery methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State and regional events, local events, virtual events, newsletters, blogs, listserv, email blasts (general or targeted) • Multiple audiences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask: Who is the audience? What is the right message for this audience at this time? Who should deliver the message to this audience so that it has legitimacy? • Multiple times <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consider how communication and engagement activities work together: people need to hear things multiple times, people want to deepen their understanding over time, and people want to be respected and contribute (approach each activity with the assumption that the audience is a valuable part of the math pathways effort).
<p>Define means to continuously improve communication and engagement strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create surveys to measure the effectiveness of communication and engagement strategies across the institution and diverse stakeholder groups.

Effective Messaging in Promoting Mathematics Pathways

Developing effective messaging is the centerpiece to advocating the implementation of mathematics pathways successfully. Although numerous communication channels exist or are more available than ever before, it takes careful planning to craft and convey a message that is clear and concise, and resonates with stakeholders’ interests and values.

The “Effective Messaging in Promoting Math Pathways” webinar is designed to support institutional leaders to plan effective messaging about mathematics pathways. The webinar is aimed at individuals and teams who are leading mathematics pathways work, which may include faculty, administrators, student services staff, and institutional researchers.

In the webinar, participants will:

- Understand the value of careful and strategic messaging.
- Understand basic effective practice in messaging.
- Examine specific, critical messaging challenges common to mathematics pathways.
- Identify messaging challenges unique or particularly sensitive to their institutions.
- Plan strategies to prepare champions.

To access the webinar, click the link: <https://dcmathpathways.org/resources/effective-messaging-promoting-mathematics-pathways-webinar>

Additional Resources

Azziz, R. (2014). Like waves in a tarpit: Academia's internal communications problem. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, (46)2, 32-35.