BRIDGING THE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE DIVIDE: EXPERIENCES IN COMMUNICATING IN UNIVERSITIES

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OVERVIEW: LECTURE CONTENTS

• Introduction and Objectives
• Innovative approaches on communication in the university
• Challenges in communication in universities
  Opportunities in communication in universities
• Case study 1: Communicating to the public
• Key issues in public communication
• Summary and Discussion
Introduction and Objectives

• Def: Communication is the ability to ensure that a thought, memory, an idea, historical facts or other forms are conveyed between any two entities
Reasons for communicating are to:

- Raise awareness on a given topic
- Change altitudes
- Achieve a goal
- Reach decisions
- Gain commercial benefits
- Educate/for learning; share experiences
- Give/receive information
- Male/maintain/develop relationships or alter people’s behavior in a given way
Purpose for communicating

• To move people from a position of low interest and little knowledge to a position of high interest and high knowledge
Introduction and Objectives (Continue)

• Introduction:
  i) Internal communication - students, lecturers and other employees
  ii) External communication - parents, researchers, policy makers, media
  iii) Public relations - Public relation departments/managers?
Objectives

To identify innovative approaches on communication in universities

To propose effective communication in universities to various stakeholders

To present practical experiences on university communication

To do SWOT analysis of university communication and develop effective public communication
Innovative Approaches in Communication

Within universities

- Information desks - at main administration, colleges, faculties, departments
- Tele-centers - Information kiosks
- University radio
- Interactive voice response
- E-learning
- Mobile phones and wireless phones
- Internet
With other stakeholders/clients

- publications
- Trade fairs
- Mass media
- Public lecturers/ Inaugural lectures
- Public debates
- Peaceful demonstrations; peaceful strikes

…Mention more approaches …
Major Challenges in communication in universities

- Policy and regulatory framework
- Poor information management
- Inadequate coordination of information based services
- Inadequate resources
- Inadequate human resources
- Inadequate involvement of private sector
- Poor infrastructure
Opportunities for communication in universities

- To refocus resources to information and communication management
- Increased budgetary allocation for physical, human and institutional resources
- Effective and efficient repacking of information for different stakeholders
- Attitude change in university administration and staff
- Formulation of communication policy guidelines in universities
CASE STUDY 1: Communicating to the public

- Electronic media
  - Land grabbing (KTN, October 10, 1997)
  - Documentary on IPM of common beans in Western Kenya (KCB, 1997)
  - Documentary of Bush and climbing beans in Western Kenya (CIAT, 1997)
  - Universities and Trade Unionism (July 2003-August 2005)
• Trade Unionism
• Graduation ceremonies (2006-2008)
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI - 37TH GRADUATION

GRADUANDS IMPLORED TO MAKE RIGHT CHOICES
• RUFORUM Workshop (October 2008)
• GMO Debate (November & December 2008)
• GMO seminar (23th February 2009)
Print media

• Universities and Trade Unionism (July 2003-August 2005)
• GMO Debate November –December 2008
• Feature articles from specialists (GMO Debate-December 2008)
Broadcast media

- Universities and Trade Unionism (July 2003-August 2005)
- An interview during Workshop on AICM (July 2006)
Key issues in public communication

- Formulate policy guidelines
- Allocate resources
- Active lobby and advocacy skills
- Provide feedback to public communication providers
- Ready and willing to release information and innovations
- Information sources
- Innovative technologies
(Continued…)

- Language the audience can understand
- Current information eg GMO, Food security

More points???????????
Summary and Conclusions

• This is an effective means of communication in the universities
• Its channel is accessible to greater audience, broadcast current information and is relatively affordable as a unit production cost

CONCLUSION: Universities should do SWOT analysis and identify critical strategic issues (gaps in public communications)

• PLEASE NOTE THAT FEW PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN PUBLIC SPEAKING OR ENGAGEMENT