



How COVID-19 has changed the way we communicate – so what's next?

Presenters: Amanda Whibley and Melissa O'Leary

Chair: Amanda James

Presentations will be made available on the Conference website for your reference.

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Introduction

- 1. Our new normal: how the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we communicate.**
- 2. Understanding our audiences: identifying our internal and external stakeholders.**
- 3. Getting the message across: deploying different channels as part of the communication mix.**
- 4. Team work: why collaboration has been critical.**
- 5. Take our audiences on the journey: moving from crisis to recovery.**
- 6. Sharing our stories: learning from each others' experiences.**



Setting the scene

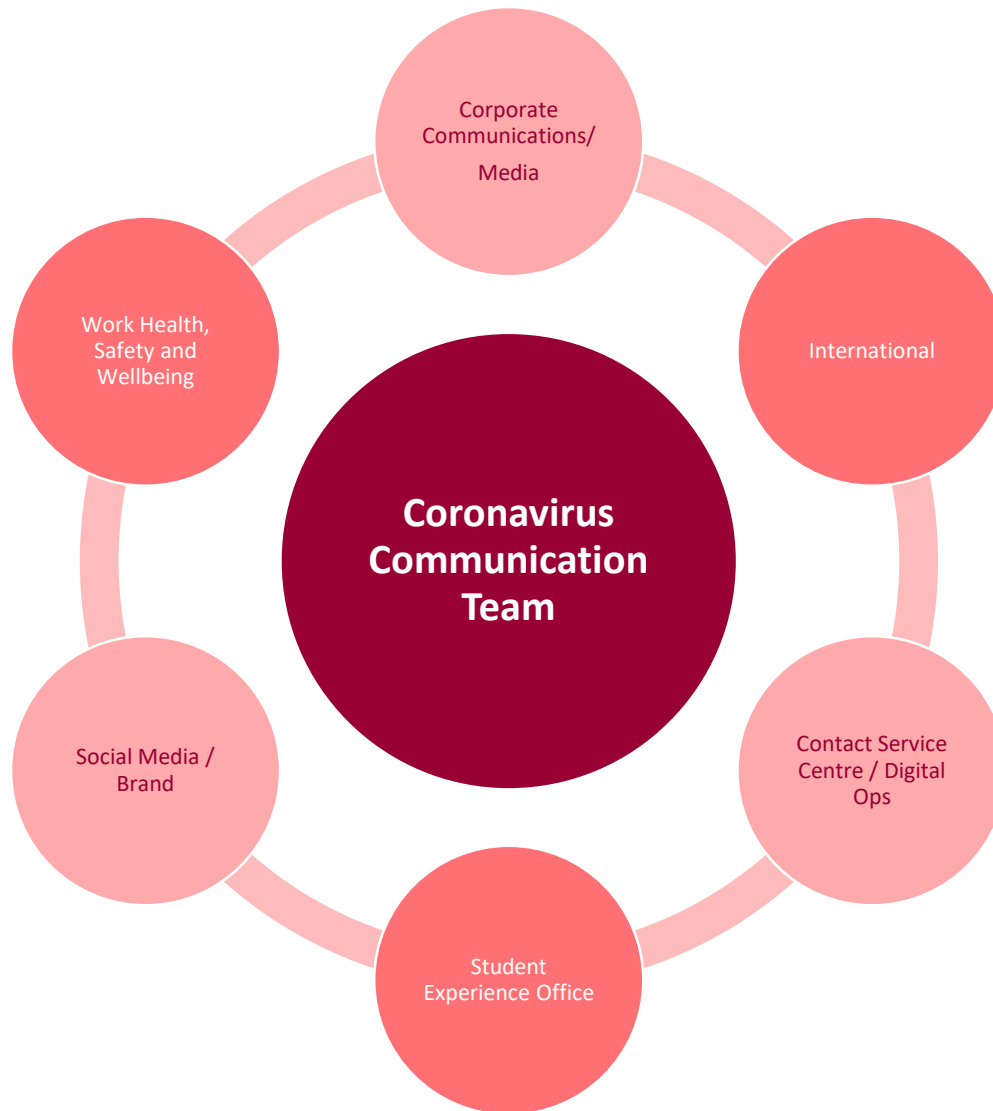
January and February

- Situation emerging in China and other parts of the globe
- Chinese students offshore
- Staying across latest government and health authority advice
- Students returning for semester

March onwards

- Government posture change
- University's rapid transition to online learning and working from home
- The establishment of the University's Crisis Management Team and framework for crisis management
- Key decisions of the University and external stakeholders that required complex suite of communications

How COVID-19 changed the way we communicate



- Bringing together the communications teams in OMC
- Identified critical priorities and BAU on hold
- Establishing daily stand ups
- Response through audience needs
- Leveraging information across channels
- Assigning audiences/responsibilities across team
- Establishing systems and processes for two-way communication and information sharing (website, hotline/email address, issues form, regular internal, exec and stakeholder emails)
- Collaborating with key areas of the University
- Being agile – streamlining approvals with Executive

How COVID-19 changed the way we communicate

Western Sydney University 10 April · 🌐

Western Sydney University advises that one of our students has tested positive for COVID-19. This is the first confirmed COVID-19 case among our 48,000 students and 3,000 staff.

The student is in good spirits and experiencing mild symptoms. The student is self-isolating and we are providing support and extend our best wishes to the student for a speedy recovery.

We have been delivering all classes online since 30 March. The only time the student attended campus in recent weeks was on 3 April to return a library book to the Liverpool campus. The student had no close contact with anyone while there.

As a precaution, we have closed the Liverpool campus until Tuesday 14 April while we undertake a sanitising deep clean of the site. Students who wish to find a quiet place to study over the weekend can find an alternate Study Hall location on our website, such as the nearby Bankstown (Milperra) campus. The health department have taken the lead on managing the student's situation, according to their response protocols, and they are satisfied that the University has responded appropriately.

We are committed to supporting our students and staff. You're not alone and support is available through our student and staff wellbeing and support services. Further information on our coronavirus response can be found in the link below.

Coronavirus Update



WESTERNSYDNEY.EDU.AU

Information on Coronavirus | Western Sydney University

During the rapidly evolving coronavirus situation, the health, safety...

👍👎🗨️ Clare Patience and 299 others · 337 comments · 57 shares

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**WESTERN SYDNEY
UNIVERSITY**

Dear Corporate Communications,

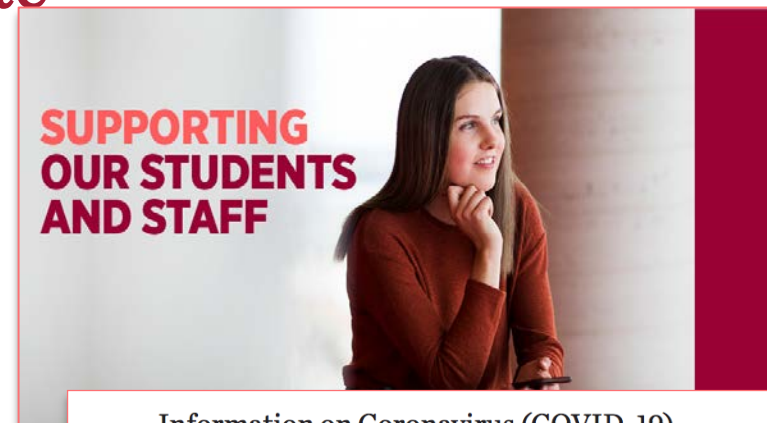
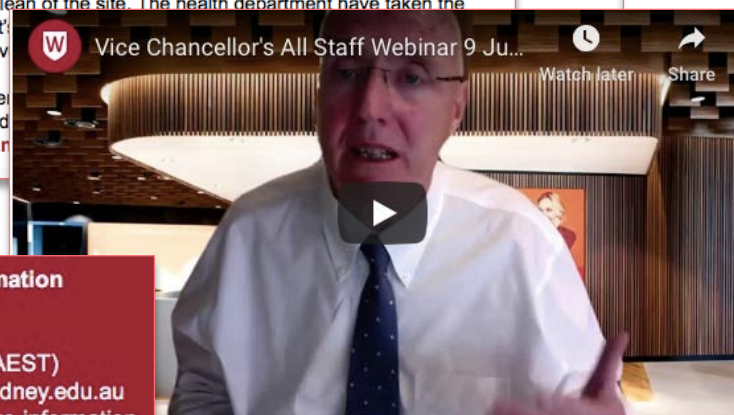
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I realise that this announcement... to supporting our students and staff wellbeing and support services. Further information on our coronavirus response can be found in the link below.



Information on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The COVID-19 global pandemic has created many challenges for our student and staff community in terms of study, work and social connection. During the ever-changing coronavirus situation, the health, safety and wellbeing of our students and staff has been our highest priority. We are continually reviewing all University operations; acting on the latest Australian Government, health authority and regulatory advice; taking all of the necessary precautions; and doing our part to slow the spread of the virus. For the latest on these measures, visit the [News and Updates](#) page.

As restrictions begin to ease, Western Sydney University is implementing its carefully managed four-stage return to campus plan, to gradually recommence teaching and learning and research activities on campus. Stage 1 of our plan sees the return of limited essential practicals and essential research activities on campus. For more information, visit the [Return to campus](#) page.

Western Sydney University continues to operate in an online capacity while we carefully manage the transition back to campus. Our teaching and learning activities and study and support services continue to be available online and we have made changes to the spaces on our campuses to ensure physical distancing requirements - these include Study Halls that continue to be open and accessible for students who need to come on to campus to access a quiet space to study and use the Wi-Fi.

Coronavirus queries and further information

Info line: +61 (0)2 9852 5399
(Monday to Friday, 8.00am and 5.00pm AEST)

Email address: coronavirusadvice@westernsydney.edu.au

Website: www.westernsydney.edu.au/coronavirus-information

STUDENTS

STAFF

NEWS AND UPDATES

INTERNATIONAL

RETURN TO CAMPUS

STUDENT SUPPORT

Understanding our audiences – internal audiences

Current continuing and commencing students

- including The College and Sydney City campus
- Offshore Chinese and other international students
- Student residents
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students

Staff

- including The College, contractors, casuals
- Student facing teams – Student Central, CSC, Counselling teams, Western Success team
- School Deans and School Managers, Directors of Academic Program (DAPs), Associate Deans International (ADIs)
- Research Institute Directors and Managers, and Graduate Research School
- Managers and Supervisors and Senior Leadership Group (SLG)

Stakeholders

- Board of Trustees, Navitas, OES, tenants/co-located organisations (Early Learning Ltd, Campus Living Villages)

Understanding our audiences – external audiences

- **Prospective students**
- **Government representatives – local, state and federal**
- **DFAT, NSW Health and other government departments/agencies**
- **Primary and high schools**
- **Donors, supporters and partner organisations**
- **Campus visitors and community members**
- **Australian Research Council and research partners**
- **Universities Australia, Innovative Research Universities (IRU) network, NSW Vice-Chancellors' Committee**
- **Media**

The communication mix

- **University website and FAQs**
- **Broadcast emails for students and staff**
- **Webinars with VC and senior staff**
- **Coronavirus hotline, online form and email address**
- **Videos**
- **Targeted communications and templates**
- **Briefings for student-facing teams**
- **Yammer**
- **Social messages**
- **MyWestern and vUWS**
- **SMS**
- **Web banners**
- **Digital screens on campus**
- **Media statements**

Team work

- Collaboration has been critical
- Identifying the key areas of the University that need to be part of the communications response
- Information sharing and triaging
- Centralised communications -> cascade out to key stakeholders; use of briefings and templates to help support their own needs and communications response to ensure standardised, consistent messaging

From crisis to recovery

- How do we keep staff, students engaged with the information?
- Avoiding communications fatigue
- Return to Campus Plan and phased return of essential classes and activities to campus
- Move from functional messages to sharing stories and news that speaks to the positive and exceptional efforts underway across the University
- Use of video content, social messaging and 'good news' stories to bring staff and students on the journey

From crisis to recovery

Western Sydney University 26 April · 🌐

Meet John, who has managed cleaning and waste services at our University for the last 15 years. This year, his role is more important than ever.

"Right now, what I keep at the top of my mind is our cleaners' safety. When COVID-19 appeared and sanitising cleans became part of daily operations, I knew we had the right people for the job – they had pandemic cleaning training – but I still think about them because they're at risk, too.

So I focus on ensuring they have the right gear to keep them safe: gloves, sanitiser, face masks. And I check in every day – it's important to have a chat and find out how they're feeling.

This was not how I imagined this year would be. We moved into a really intense cleaning phase early on. When students were still on campuses, everything, and I mean everything, had to be wiped down: laboratories, books in libraries, bathrooms, plus we put in sanitising stations throughout the University – and we have a lot of campsuses! I just didn't want anyone to get sick at our University, and they didn't. But I'm still vigilant.

It's the not knowing, we don't know when it will end, why it's happening. But what I can control is making spaces as safe as it can possibly be. This is our time, and I'm proud to step up and deliver."

[#unlimited](#)

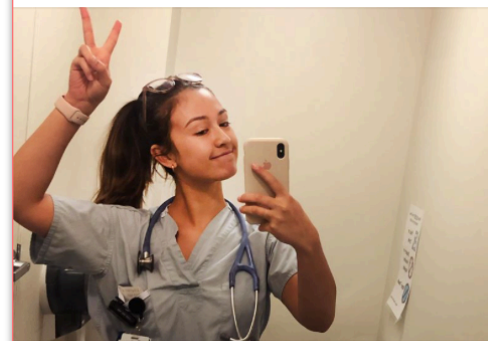


Western Sydney University 10 April · 🌐

Final year medicine student Celine was one of the first students to put her hand up to fast-track her studies so that she could be ready to help our hospital and healthcare system, even though it means cramming for exams that are now sooner than she expected and adding extra training meetings into her schedule.

"I recently came back from a surgical placement in the Canadian hospital system where the final year medical students essentially act as interns. I was really throw... [See more](#)

793 33 comments 20 shares



Western Sydney University 22 July · 🌐

Welcome back, we hope that you have had a great mid-year break! With a lot of you studying online this semester, it's time to dust off your laptop and get back into study.

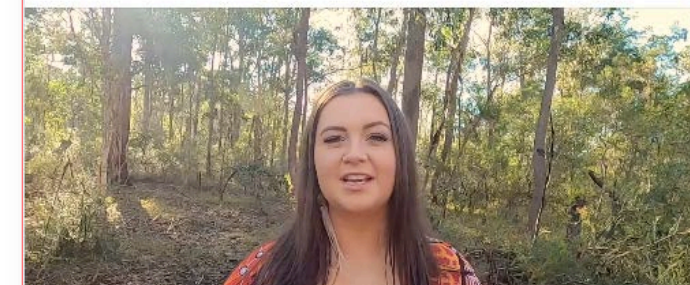
What are you looking forward to this semester?

[#GradGoals](#)



Western Sydney University 5 July · 🌐

Official NAIDOC Week celebrations may have been delayed, but now more than ever is an important time to connect and share. Wiradjuri woman Matilda Harry and Dunghutti man Luke Hodge bring us up to speed on some words close to them — deadly, tidda and shake-a-leg to name a few. Watch on to learn how to use these terms day-to-day and you'll be yarning like a pro in no time.



In today's edition of staff profiles during COVID-19, Associate Professor **Leanne Rylands** and the Mathematics Education Support Hub (MESH) discuss the challenges and benefits of moving their support services online. The team is proud to have helped students gain more access to valuable support.

60 SECONDS WITH..... MATHEMATICS EDUCATION SUPPORT HUB (MESH)

School/Institute/Unit/Division:
Learning Futures

Usual Campuses:
Kingswood, Campbelltown and Parramatta

How has ... [expand](#)

cc: Adelle Colbourn, Jim Pettigrew, Gizem Intepe, Donald Shearman, Lyn Armstrong, and Leanne Rylands



Sharing our stories and experiences

What have we learned so far?

Emails	Feb-20		Mar-20		Apr-20		May-20		Jun-20		Jul-20	
	Open Rate	CTR	Open Rate	CTR	Open Rate	CTR	Open Rate	CTR	Open Rate	CTR	Open Rate	CTR
Staff	38%	7%	56%	21%	39%	11%	43%	14%	40%	11%	41%	13%
Students	26%	2%	34%	3%	23%	6%	25%	5%	27%	6%	27%	3%

What do you think – what has worked, been useful, or could be done differently?



Thank you!