



# University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”

SENATE

*No. of prot. 722*

*Shkodër, 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017*

## DECISION

No.71/I date 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2017

“For Approval Sectorial Strategies of Shkodra University

In support of law number 80/2015 “For the higher education and scientific research in higher educations in the Republic of Albania”, article 38, University’s statute, Academic Senate in its meeting of date 24/02/2017:

decided:

1. Approval of sectorial strategies of Shkodra University according to attached materials.
2. This decision enters into force immediately.

Rector

Prof. Adem BEKTESHI

UNIVERSITY OF SHKODËR "LUIGJ GURAKUQI"



# Strategy of Communication and Public Information

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December 2016

# STRATEGY OF COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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***LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS***

- U-SHL- University of Shkodër Library
- OHR – Office of Human Resources
- OF – Office of Finance
- I.S.O – Legal Services Office
- OSRS- Office of Scientific Research Services
- OIRD – Office of International Relations and Development
- IHE – Institute of Higher Education
- CU (PIC)- Central Unit (for Public Information and Communication)
- SA - Administrative Staff
- USH- University of Shkodër
- SU - Students' Union



### Vision and aim

The strategy of Communication Public Information and is an important part of the General Strategy of University of Shkodër "Luigj Gurakuqi" development. It aims at regulating and improving public relations, through the diversification of communication opportunities, the use of information technologies and mass communications based not only on the demand for information, but also on the need to create a competitive and modern level of the University in the field of higher education and scientific research. As in any field, the effective communication is at the centre of almost every aspect of the university activity, since it links the university with all stakeholders with whom it interacts, such as academic and administrative staff, students, local and foreign partners, local and national institutions, media, community, etc.

Communication and Public Information policies support the vision of the University General Strategy and Sector Strategies, by facilitating their recognition and implementation not only by the beneficiaries but also by our partners in order to meet strategic objectives. The strategy is an attempt to encourage communication between the University and the audience, among the community within and outside the academic area, at national and international level, between students and citizens, which also constitutes the core of its development plan. This strategy will contribute to the University performance improvement by increasing transparency through effective delivery of information, through improvement of means of communication in order to absorb opinion within and outside the institution on issues affecting the growth of the academic and intellectual quality.

Our vision is: University of Shkodër, institution of knowledge, science and intellectual and community values, promoted by transparent information and communication.

## 1 PRINCIPLES OF REALIZATION ON COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC INFORMATION STRATEGY

The implementation of the strategic aim of public information and communication relies on some theoretical principles and practical aspects, such as:

- The principle of balancing a relation for information and continuous interaction of utilitarian character, which harmonizes the USH demand for consolidating its introduction as a scientific and educational institution (USH in focus) and demands of beneficiaries and stakeholders of higher education (the audience in focus); Combined communication, one-way communication and two-way symmetrical communication. The transmission of the sender-linker-receiver communication.
- The principle of network communication and information among all stakeholders within and outside USH, information transmission: top-down, from the governing authorities and bodies of USH to base units; bottom-up, from the base units to the governing bodies and authorities of USH; horizontally, among departments, between departments and administrative units; within-outside, from the structures and bodies of the university to development stakeholders, local and foreign IHE, and also clients; outside-inside, by meeting trends, interests and requirements for partnerships and services.
- The principle of commitment to social responsibility by the University, which uses a general framework of values, standards, tools, from a social point of view to transform the development of intellectual human resources into sustainable benefits for the whole community.



## 2 PRESENTATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

To evaluate the current situation of information and communication, we have referred to quantitative and qualitative data collected through questionnaires and secondary sources of university structures assuming specific functions on public relations.

### 2.1 EVALUATION OF THE APPLIED PRINCIPLES IMPLEMENTATION

The university's Public Communication has been evaluated according to these assessments levels: poor, sufficient, good and very good. Based on the perceptions of USH component units and individuals, there is room for significant improvements in regards with public information and communication. The management of public relations can be performed at Rectory, Faculty or Department level. According to the general opinion, to the extent it exists, communication has been achieved at Rectory level, and slightly at Faculty or Department level.

As for the possible responsible structure for public communication, there is not a unified perception. Opinions are related to academic or non-academic staff. It is assumed that the structure responsible for communication is the IT structure at USH, Rectory (without specifying who), leaders of the main or base units (Dean, Head of Department), academic (members), or none.

### 2.2 EVALUATION OF AUDIENCES.

With regard to the typology of contacted audiences, there have been different opinions based even on the functions of structures which took part in the process of evaluation (faculty, department, individuals). The most quoted prove to be the academic staff and facilitating staff, the current and potential students, senior high school students, other IHE within the country and abroad, institutions of central and local government, local and foreign NGO-s, diplomatic representatives and their structures in our country, the business community, the civic community of Shkodër region, private and state employers at job fairs, tourist agencies in the Region.

### 2.3 EVALUATION OF COMMUNICATION CHANNELS.

The channels of wide use in USH public communication at a descending scale have been evaluated to be the official Website, the social networks, the information campaigns (at Faculty level), information offices for the internal communication, media.

### 2.4. EVALUATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.

University of Shkodër currently does not have a centralized unit for public communication. There are several structures or individuals that perform this important process, as follows:

The Expert of Communication to the Rector office, spreads various information related to events, meetings and activities of governing structures of the university. He gives information through different reports on these meetings content.

The Office of Culture and Editing informs the public audience about the university achievements via scientific editions, brochures, university web page, local and national media. By means of all these tools, it provides the publication of scientific activities, conferences, workshops, seminars, open lectures, promotions, exhibitions, cultural and sport activities, commemorative activities, fairs, conventions, projects, twinning projects, mobility, etc.

The Office of Human Resources informs the public audience about all stages of recruitment of the Academic and facilitating staff at University. Specifically it informs through announcements of job vacancies, relevant criteria, complaints and announcements on line and in the media. Besides the traditional application, the online application for participation in admission competitions for the position of full-time and part-time lecturers marks a positive novelty.

The Office of Information and Technology provides different information exchange dealing with teaching and students' assessment, via lecturers and students' portal on the official website of the University. This office also provides the exchange of electronic information with other institutions of Higher Education and ministries. This office surveys the electronic network and system.



The office of International Relations and Development offers detailed information to the public about international projects of USJI. It publishes agreements, memoranda, different conventions with counterpart institutions, students' knowledge assessments in foreign languages, students' and academic or facilitating staff mobility.

Deans' Secretaries and Faculties Secretaries provide different information to students and audiences on matters related to rules, procedures, teaching process and different activities assisting students and lecturers, mostly in individual confrontations.

Public Information and Communication of USH in the next four years.

Based on current data for public information and communication on the different opinions about this process in the next four years, the strategy of public information and communication in accordance with the aim and vision identified through a participatory process, has the following objectives:

### 1.1. Improvement of the level of communication and information.

Typologies of activities which would improve the level of public information and communication are the following:

- Intensification of communication within the university;
- Establishment of informing structures in each faculty for public communication;
- Transparency in meetings organized by Faculties and Departments, in order to transmit information to all staff of USH;
- Extended opportunities for online communication via a link on the USH official site, for direct public communication in each faculty;
- Use of the USH official site to share achievements, scientific and academic activities, job applications, scholarships, etc. ;
- Creation of a website for each department;
- Campaigns of information in the pre-university institutions combined with the organization of "Open days" in USH.
- Enhancement of communication with social and visual media;
- Inclusion of students' representatives in the process of information and communication.

### 2. Expansion of audience groups with whom USH liaises

Audience includes various target groups. In addition to expanding and strengthening contacts with current audience, it aims at expanding communication with the audiences beyond current attention, such as: former students (alumni) and lecturers.

- Non-profit Organizations focused on projects of Regional Development;
- Research Centres within the country and abroad, other universities;

- Civil Society;
- Advocacy and lobbying Networks

### **3. Functioning of communication and information in the organizational structure of the University**

Enabling an effective communication means deploying it at all levels of the organizational structure of USH. Therefore, it is aimed to create a culture of public information and communication at rectory, faculty and department level, vertically and horizontally, in a two-way direction, between the academic staff and the non-academic staff, between USH and audiences abroad.

### **4. Delegation of responsibilities for public communication.**

The sharing of responsibility for the level and the forms of public information and communication in the USH necessitates the delegation of responsibilities to a structure, authentically focused on this problem. The surveyed individuals are in favour of establishing a structure responsible for public information and communication in USH. This structure will consist of representatives from each faculty. This structure could be the Public Relations Department, which would coordinate the sector communications conducted by the Office of International Relations, as well as all structures of USH, from the Rectory to the Department.

### **5. Alternation and priority to the most efficient communication channels through continuous monitoring.**

To provide a fast and an extensive communication we should alternate the traditional product of Public Relations (media, newsletters, press conferences, leaflets, etc.) and we should give priority to more efficient channels of communication with the audience, those that are easily and massively accessible (website, social networks, information and awareness campaigns, etc.). Communication and information is a dynamic process



which is sensitive to social change, thus the continuous monitoring of communicative ambiance from the Department of PR will enable compliance of University policies with contemporary trends.

#### 2.4 CONCEPT FOR THE FUTURE .

To achieve a more successful communication there is a need to establish a centralized unit responsible for public information and communication. Through channels of one-way and two-way information, it fulfills its function on the stakeholders within and outside the USH system. For its well-functioning, the central unit delegates its responsibilities for public communication and information, in a vertical direction, to faculties, the latter one to departments, and to supporting institutions of USH structures, such as IT, International Relations, Human Resources, Culture's structures, etc. The unit also provides a two-way pressure exercise, top-down and bottom-up , for transparency and accountability, entrepreneurship and social responsibility by the USH. Unit external communication exercises through its impact on potential allies of USH, academic, and social policy-making-impact on potential competitors of USH, and multiplies the impact of university community life.

#### Performance of the centralized unit can be measured through the following indicators :

<b>External communication:</b>	<b>Internal Communication:</b>
(i) No. of reached stakeholders	(i) No. of measures demonstrating social responsibility
(ii) No. of competitors transformed in allies	(ii) No. of reports demonstrating transparency and accountability
(iii) No. of stakeholders having a multiplying effect on communication	(iii) Staff satisfaction
(iv) Beneficiaries' satisfaction	(iv) Others
(v) Others	

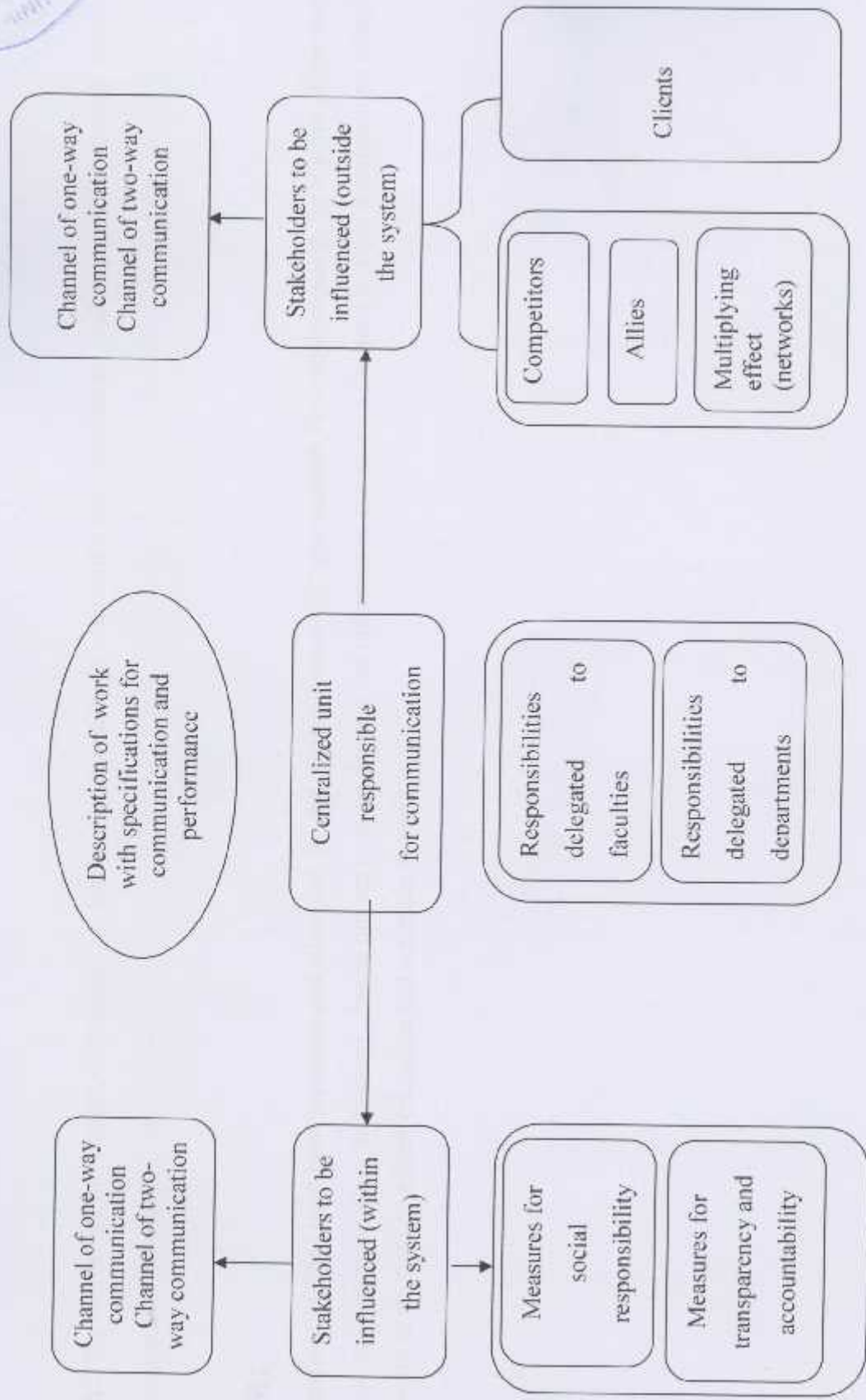


Fig. 1 Organizational Diagram of communication and information policies of the University

**Vision:** The University of Shkodër, institution of knowledge, science and community and intellectual values promoted through transparent communication and information.

### 3 AIM;

Public Relations in USH have been regulated and advanced by the diversification of opportunities for communication, by the use of the massive information and communication technology, based not only on the demand for information, but also on the need to form a competitive identity of the University in the field of higher education and scientific research.



<i>Objective 1</i>	<i>Improvement of information and communication level</i>	
<i>Description of activities</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Explanations or Costs<sup>1</sup></i>
Study on the existing level of communication and surveys on the ways of its improvement	The centralized unit responsible for public information and communication (CU) with its subsidiary structures.	
Improvement of the University official website	CU with its subsidiary structures and IT.	The University official website will be dynamic so that it allows the Public's feedback
Periodic informing campaign in institutions of pre-university Education, combined with the organization of "Open days" in University.	CU in cooperation with faculties and facilitating structures, USH..	
Increase of visibility of USH via the use of social networks (twitter, instagram, fb etc).	CU with its subsidiary structures	Communication with media will be increased via access to the official website of USH through the link of each Faculty.
Creation of dedicated centres of students' information and supporting materials (e.g. leaflets, brochures, etc.)	CU, students Union(SU), Faculties, etc...	This level of communication will be reached through study days, workshops, round tables, participation in different activities organized by local or external actors.
Others to be identified by the Centralized Unit.		

<sup>1</sup>The plan of activities is only orienting/typological. The centralized unit in cooperation with the administration determines the strategic costs.



<b>Objective 2</b>		<i>Expansion of audience groups with which USH should communicate</i>	
<i>Description of activities</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Explanations or Costs</i>	
Membership in university networks, research centres and institutes, Albanian and foreign ones and their promotion through information days.	CU in cooperation with OIRD & SKSHP and SCVS & USHL.	This type of communication enables joint projects, as well as the mobility of students within Albanian and foreign universities	
Involvement of local and business actors in University boards	CU		
Promotion of local businesses and University students employed in those businesses.	CU		
Organization of days / weeks of different countries cultures, the celebration of national holidays in close partnership countries.	CU in cooperation with OSR & OIRD	Communication with this kind of audience enriches information on international partners and it facilitates cooperation with them.	
Others to be identified by the centralized unit.			
<b>Objective 3</b>		<i>Functionality of communication and information across organizational structure of the University.</i>	
<i>Description of activities</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Explanations or Costs</i>	
Improvement of internal institutional communication elements, through ensuring of information transmission and TOP-DOWN & BOTTOM-UP opinions as well, Periodic meetings (once a week) and ensuring of university regulations implementation.	Rectory Faculty Department	It consists in the timely transmission of information, the highest decision-making structures for the institution to the base ones and vice versa. It is important to receive a feed-back through two-way communication.	
Increase of communication efficiency by maximizing the use of available technological	AS Administrative staff (OHR, ODF, LSO, OIR,	Engagement of the IT structure for granting necessary assistance to Academic staff and	



tools (Office 365 with all its components) Creation of a network of communication between Academic staff and Administrative staff:	SU or alternative students' organisations IT, OSRS )	Administrative staff in use of technological resources.
Others to be identified by the centralized unit.		
<b>Objective 4</b>		
<i>Description of activities</i>		
Creation of centralized units for public information and communication	<i>Responsible</i> Rectorry	<i>Explanations or Costs</i> According to competences, a unit is established and a functioning regulation is set up
Creation of subsidiary structures of the Centralized Unit for public information in each faculty.	CU	The Central Unit nominates / determines the subsidiary structures.
Election of a contact person for public information and communication in each department, administration and students' union.	Department Administrate SU	Faculties appoint a contact person in each faculty.
Others to be identified by the centralized unit.		
<b>Objective 5</b>		
<i>Description of activities</i>		
Improvement and increase in the efficiency of current channels of communication	<i>Responsible</i> CU IT	<i>Explanations or Costs</i> <i>Diversification and priority of PR and most efficient communication channels through continuous monitoring.</i>



Identification of alternative channels of communication;	Department and Faculty	
Academic and social activities at department and faculty level		This is made possible by the activation of departments and faculties webpage that is currently functional.
Others to be identified by the centralized unit..		

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