Smith picks advisory group to study campus problems

By JULIA OSBORNE
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Robert G. Smith, vice president for University development, now has an advisory committee to work with him on internal communication problems exclusively, he said Wednesday.

The Advisory Committee on Internal Communications, composed of 12 "faculty members and two graduate students, is a "special purpose committee," according to Smith, which will work on analyzing existing internal communication and setting guidelines and developing implementation for the most effective internal communication in the future.

Smith said he advised his committee, which met for the second time Wednesday, "poor communication can contribute to a feeling of frustration." He added, "Continued neglect of internal communication can only lead to misunderstanding between students, faculty, and administration."

Effective communication, he said, "can help members of the University feel involved."

Members of the committee interviewed said they are hopeful they can be of assistance in helping solve communication problems.

Broad base

Ivan Rutledge, professor of law, said although he is not a "communication specialist," he hopes he can help. He and others from varied areas make the committee "broadly based," he said, so it will be able to give Smith a number of varied views. Such a committee is at least a good device for sampling feelings around campus, he said.

Robert Turnbull, professor of philosophy, also expressed hope, but said the proof of the committee will be whether or not it can come up with any solutions. This is a group which might come up with good ideas, however, he added.

Even though the committee can make recommendations for the improvement of the system, it isn't given any power to act upon the recommendations it makes, George St. Pierre, professor of metallurgical engineering, said.

He is hopeful action will be taken on their suggestions, however, since pressures exist in this area.

Problems

Smith feels problems with current communication generally fall into the categories of: individual attitudes and lack of mutual trust and respect; barriers to communication such as overprotective secretaries; inaccurate or unclear messages; lack of common information and rumors.

Adding to the problems are the size and complexity of the University, the constant turnover of population, and the dealing with categories of people rather than individuals, he added.

To solve such problems, Smith said he feels people must be "less defensive, more willing to share information and "to explain policies and positions publicly."

The central purpose of an organized internal communication system would be to supplement University relations and make giving and getting of information easier for all members of the University community, he explained.

Members

Members of the committee are: Beatrice Cleveland, professor in the cooperative extension service; Leon Boucher, professor of agriculture education; H.R. Bobbitt, Jr., professor of administrative science; Russell Dynes, professor of sociology; Robert Howe, professor of education science; Bernard Lachner, administrator of University Hospital; Rutledge; St. Pierre; Turnbull; Paul Underwood, professor of journalism; Lonnie Wagstaff, of the College of Education; and Daniel Burdekin and Patricia Wulchet, graduate students.