Digital Sign System Guidelines

Purpose-

Primary Purpose- the digital sign system is to provide timely weekly relevant information to GCC Students about occurring events, deadlines, and activities happening on campus or about the Academic System. (NOTE: additional emergency broadcast capacity will be added once IT and public safety RSS interfacing has been developed and tested.)

Secondary Purpose- the digital sign system can be used to provide programming which could be commercial news and weather or pre-recorded GCC events, activities, or promotional spots.

Tertiary Purpose- when there is a lack of student information available to keep the weekly programming interesting filler material may be used to keep the signage visually stimulating. This may be shorts from the GCC archives, Manila Film Collection, thoughtful imagery and text, Link-TV, or other campus information.

Service-
The system is automated to run daily. During the week some monitors are programmed to run for six hour blocks of time other monitors run all the time but have sensors to shut down if there is no one walking in the area for 15 - 30 minutes. Winter Break and January Intersession the system will be shut down as well as during Spring Recess and the bulk of the summer season. This automation schedule will be able to be achieved with current ETC staffing and available technology.

Every Friday a schedule of received materials for playback will be scripted and will be developed and tested for playback the following week by ETC staff based on available materials, requests, and written information received by 5PM on the proceeding Thursday. The script of the playback of materials will be identical for each day during a week due to the complexity of scripting a schedule. The run for the week is usually completed and posted Friday at noon.

The service will primarily be a visual display system though at times low volume sound may play through the system when appropriate. This sound or sound files are not intended to be the focal point of the message and will not be audible from a distance of more than 8-10 feet. If the audio is to be truly heard an individual will have to “step up” to the screen to focus on the sound. Closed text captions will be displayed for all commercial broadcast audio. The system is not intended to be disruptive to the daily routine of the campus but should be viewed as an additional resource for informing the campus visually.

Posting a Sign-
Users wishing to post a sign or message to the programming schedule must e-mail all relevant information to the digital-sign@gcc.mass.edu by Thursday 4PM for the material to run the following
most materials will only run or be highlighted for two weeks or until the relevant date has passed in order to keep information current and interesting. Submitting multiple events as lists weeks or months in advance is not recommended as ETC staff will need to make editorial decisions on which event actually should be highlighted each week. Materials submitted are referenced and coordinated the GCC web calendar. Emails to “All Users” or “Bulletin” or other campus lists are not to be considered as a submittal to the digital sign system as the digital-sign account address will block these messages as SPAM. If a request is not specifically submitted to the Digital-Sign account directly chances are it will not appear on the signs so please only use this account for submittals. To easily make publicity requests to all avenues of campus marketing with one quick swift entry visit the event page of the GCC Publicity page at http://web.gcc.mass.edu/marketing/publicity/.

If you do not feel comfortable with designing a sign by yourself a simple information email with details of your message will suffice and we will cut and paste your information into an available, appropriate template for display. The earlier you send us the information the better the chance that you may review your sign. If we receive information at 4PM on Thursday you are not likely to see your sign until it is actually in the schedule and running on Monday morning.

If you do feel comfortable with design all data submitted must be in a Windows compatible MS word document, single Power Point slide, or photographic BMP or JPEG Format. Self designers should note that the digital signage system display is primarily in a landscape 600 X 800 horizontal format so any materials submitted should take this into consideration. Appropriate “taste” for public display should be regarded in all signs submitted and if any questionable materials appear in signs submitted they will be forwarded to responsible area deans for scheduling approval.

If you wish to learn how to produce your own signs or need help in developing original materials we will be providing this training by appointment so call extension 1843. The ETC has a wide range of clip art resources with graphic, photographic, animations, and video clips that will help add emphasis to your messages.

ETC staff will not be responsible for erroneous information that is submitted and once a sign is in the schedule it will be run for the following week as is. This will be primarily a cut and paste operation so be sure to proof all information that you intend to post. Although there will be some production design involved in material posting and we will be working with your information closely please do not consider ETC staff as a proof reading service.

With every sign we will do our best to add motion and animation to the imagery and text to help make it more visually appealing time permitting. Video clips may also be added to sign imagery but must be submitted as early as possible in order for us to render them into compliant formats for use with the system. Sound clips will only be accepted when absolutely necessary to the success of the message, ie an upcoming concert or performance.
Helpful Hints-

1) These signs should be approached as billboards for brief messages.
2) Use the catch the message in a glance or blink approach.
3) If you have an abundance of important information more than one sign may be more appropriate.
4) A journalistic who, what, when, where, and why questioning will help you develop your most important text.
5) Avoid pure white as your background or dominate image color. Remember this is not a print medium.
6) Darker backgrounds with lighter lettering tend to help messages stand out better.
7) De-saturated or muted colors tend to look more pleasing and interesting to the viewers. They will also lengthen the life of this equipment.
8) Avoid using red as a color unless it is extremely de-saturated. We have found red will bleed on this system making images or text very fuzzy.
9) “A picture is worth a thousand words.” Adding appropriate images may help pronounce your message more clearly.
10) Avoid highly detailed repetitive patterns in your images as these will tend to vibrate on the screen or moiré.
11) If you have seen a sign design you liked used in the past refer to that as a template for your message and we’ll do our best to fit your message to this format.
12) All copyright rules will be in effect for any materials displayed on the digital sign system.

If you have any questions on system requirements or on using this system please feel free to contact Garry Longe in the ETC at extension 1843.