Safety & Risk Services Communications Survey

Prepared for Safety & Risk Services

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

Background

In November, 2019, the VPFO Communications team prepared a survey for Safety & Risk Services to take a snapshot of the employee experience of communications within that unit. Two versions of the survey were created, one for Legacy Risk Management Services (RMS), and one for Campus Security. Both versions contained the same core set of questions, with additional questions to investigate the specific communication needs of Campus Security.

The RMS survey was deployed through Qualtrics on December 2nd 2019 to 42 members of staff, as identified through the Safety & Risk Services Distribution List, and was available until December 18th.

The Campus Security survey was deployed through Qualtrics on December 17th to 84 members of staff, as identified through the Campus Security Distribution List, and was available until January 8th.

There were 93 overall responses from anonymous users, representing an impressive overall response rate of 74%, although not all questions were answered in full by each respondent. In comparison, similar surveys of the External Relations portfolio and VPFO portfolio as a whole had response rates of 55% and 30% respectively.

Survey	Number of potential respondents	Number of recorded responses	Response rate
Combined surveys	126	93	74%
RMS survey	42	34	81%
Campus Security survey	84	59	70%

Summary of findings

Managers have a critical role to play in communications within SRS. They are seen by employees as the most valuable information source, and frequent, direct communications with them, preferably face-to-face, are very important.

> 76% of SRS employees rate their manager as a "very valuable" source of information

In general SRS employees feel under-informed about their department, portfolio and UBC as a whole. The VPFO particularly is an area that SRS employees do not feel informed about, which aligns with previous research and anecdotal feedback.

> When asked how informed they felt about SRS, the VPFO and UBC, in total 43% of responses chosen were "a little informed"

The most valued and used communication channels within SRS rely on face-to-face interaction, both with senior employees and peers.

> 5/6 of the most used channels and 6/7 of the most valued channels in SRS involve face-to-face communication

With differences in how informed they feel, and the channels used and valued by the two areas, RMS and Campus Security have distinct communication needs. This should be considered when circulating communications.

The overarching strategic plans for the department and portfolio, and transition of Campus Security into SRS are key area of interest for the vast majority of SRS employees.

> "Big picture goals, plans and updates in SRS" was ranked 1st among all communication topics

The Executive Director, Safety & Risk Services is also seen as a key source of information, and employees would like to hear more information from them, more frequently, either via direct email, a newsletter or in person.

> 28% if SRS employees would like to hear from the Executive Director, Safety & Risk Services more frequently

Findings

How informed are SRS employees?

Questions asked:

- *On a scale of 1 to 5, how informed do you feel about key projects, initiatives, and activities relating to **Risk Management Services**? (e.g. Occupational First Aid, Safety Day, ShakeOut etc.)*

- *On a scale of 1 to 5, how informed do you feel about key projects, initiatives, and activities relating to **Campus Security**? (e.g. Policy/procedure changes, new uniforms etc.)*

- *On a scale of 1 to 5, how informed do you feel about key projects, initiatives, and activities relating to the portfolio within which SRS sits, the **VP Finance & Operations (VPFO)**? (e.g. VPFO Strategic Plan, senior VPFO appointments etc.)*

- *On a scale of 1 to 5, how informed do you feel about the key projects, initiatives, and activities relating to **UBC**? (e.g. IRP - Integrated Renewal Program, transit strikes, Thrive Week etc.)*
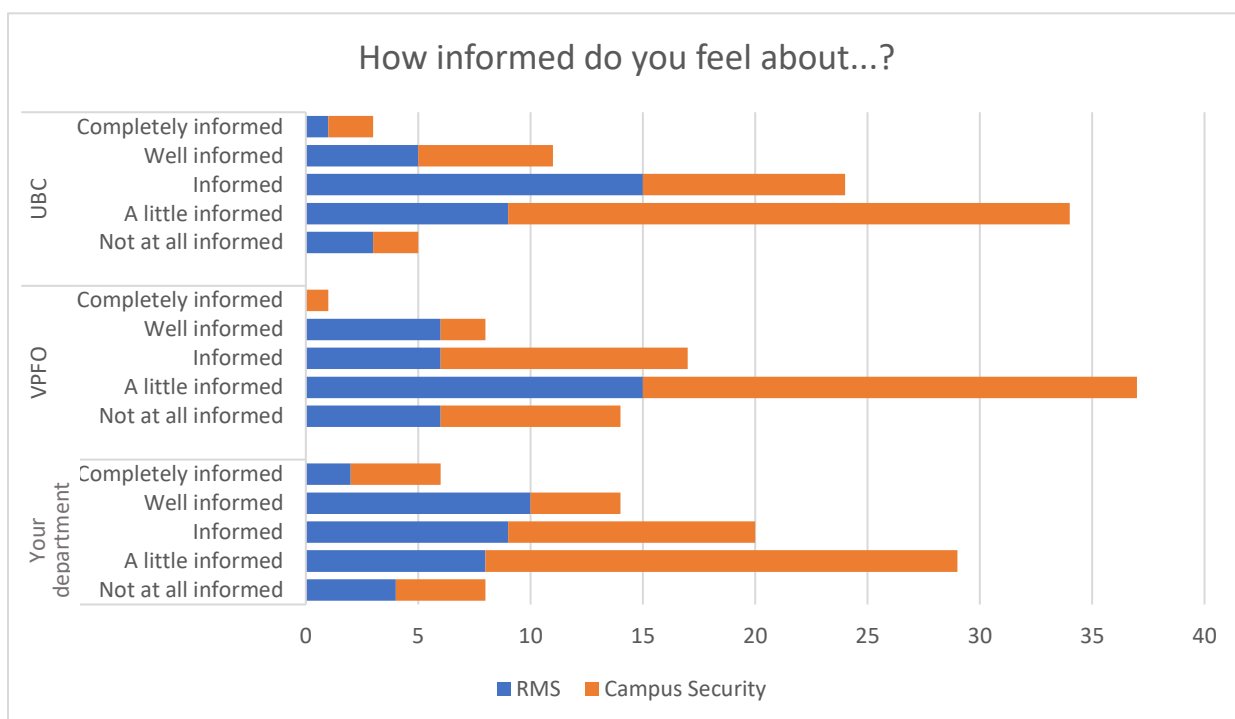
In general SRS employees do not feel well informed about UBC, the VPFO or their department, with the **most selected response for all these levels of the organization "A little informed"**. In fact of the 231 combined responses for the questions above, **43% of them selected "A little informed"** as the answer.

As you may expect, **SRS employees felt more informed about their own departments than the VPFO or UBC**, with 52% of respondents selecting "informed", "well informed" or "completely informed", compared to 34% for the VPFO and 49% for UBC.

When comparing how informed employees from Risk Management Services and Campus Security feel, there is a clear difference. **RMS employees feel considerably more informed about their department and UBC than Campus Security**, with 64% of respondents selecting "informed", "well informed" or "completely informed" for each compared to Campus Security selecting 43% and 39% respectively. Surprisingly, considering Campus Security has only just become part of the VPFO, there was **not a significant amount of difference between how informed the two groups felt about the VPFO**, with 36% of RMS and 32% of Campus Security selecting the same options.

Percentage of respondents selecting "Informed", "Well informed" or "Completely informed"			
	RMS	Campus Security	Total
Your department	64%	43%	52%
VPFO	36%	32%	34%
UBC	64%	39%	49%

Although RMS employees generally feel more informed than Campus Security, there is clearly still work to do in raising the overall awareness of key issues affecting SRS, UBC and particularly the VPFO amongst SRS employees.

From previous surveys and anecdotal feedback we know that the concept of the VPFO is a trickier one to grasp than that of one's department (micro level) and UBC (macro level). Employees typically see themselves as a member of their immediate team, and of UBC as a whole, but struggle to understand where they fit in at a portfolio level, especially in a large and diverse portfolio like the VPFO. Work is ongoing to cultivate a portfolio-wide understanding and shared culture and should help to increase the overall awareness of issues affecting the VPFO amongst employees.

What do SRS employees think about these information sources?

Survey participants were asked a series of questions about particular information sources, (mainly senior staff members within their reporting line) including how valuable they are as information sources, how frequently they would like to hear from them, which channels they would like to hear from them through, and the topics they would like to hear from them about.

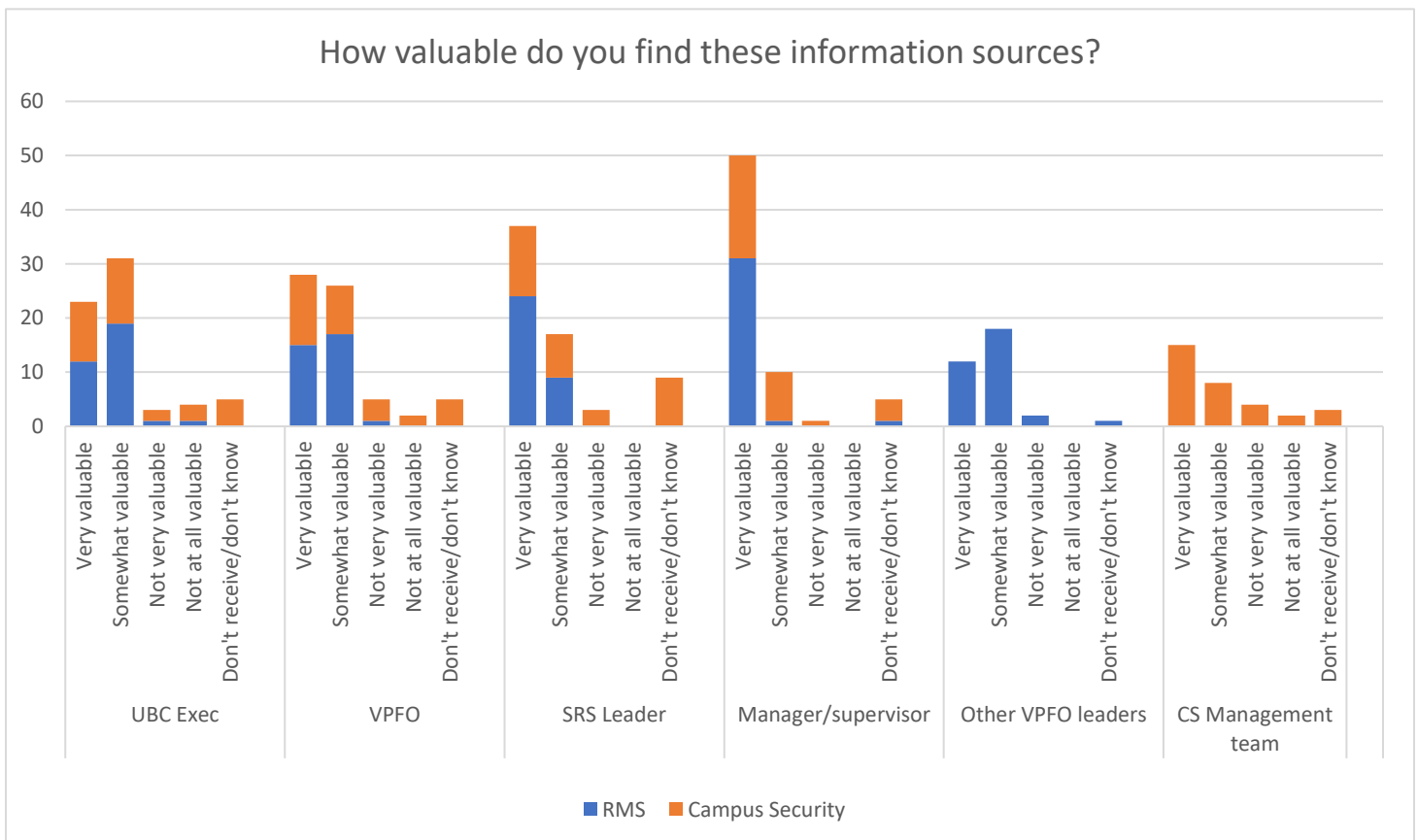The information sources asked about were as follows:

- UBC Executives/Senior leaders
- Vice President, Finance & Operations
- Leader of Safety & Risk Services
- Manager/Shift supervisor
- Other VPFO leaders*
- Campus Security Management Team**

*RMS only
**Campus Security only

Questions asked:

- *First, how valuable is each of the following to you?*
- *Thinking about the frequency of communications you currently receive from each of the following, would you say it is…*
- *Which channels would you like to receive this information through, check all that apply*

How valuable do you find these information sources? (RMS / Campus Security)
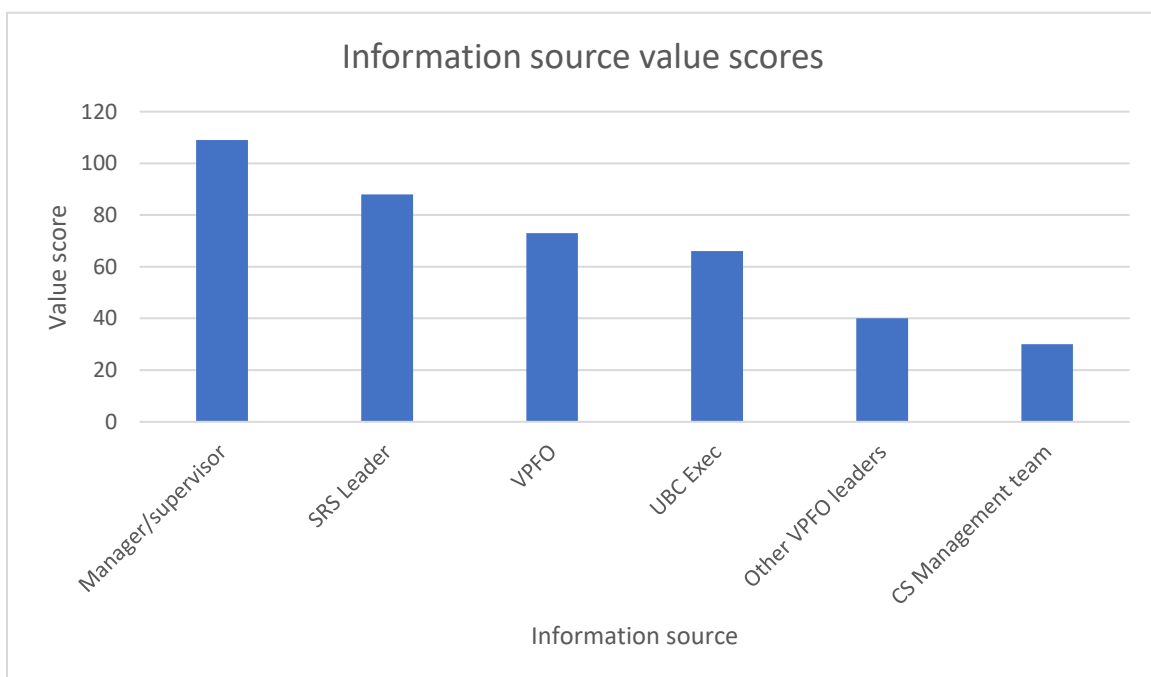
Clearly all the information sources asked about in the survey were valued by SRS employees. Of the 329 selections made by SRS employees, only 17% were "not at all valuable" (2%), "not very valuable" (6%) or "don't receive/don't know" (9%).
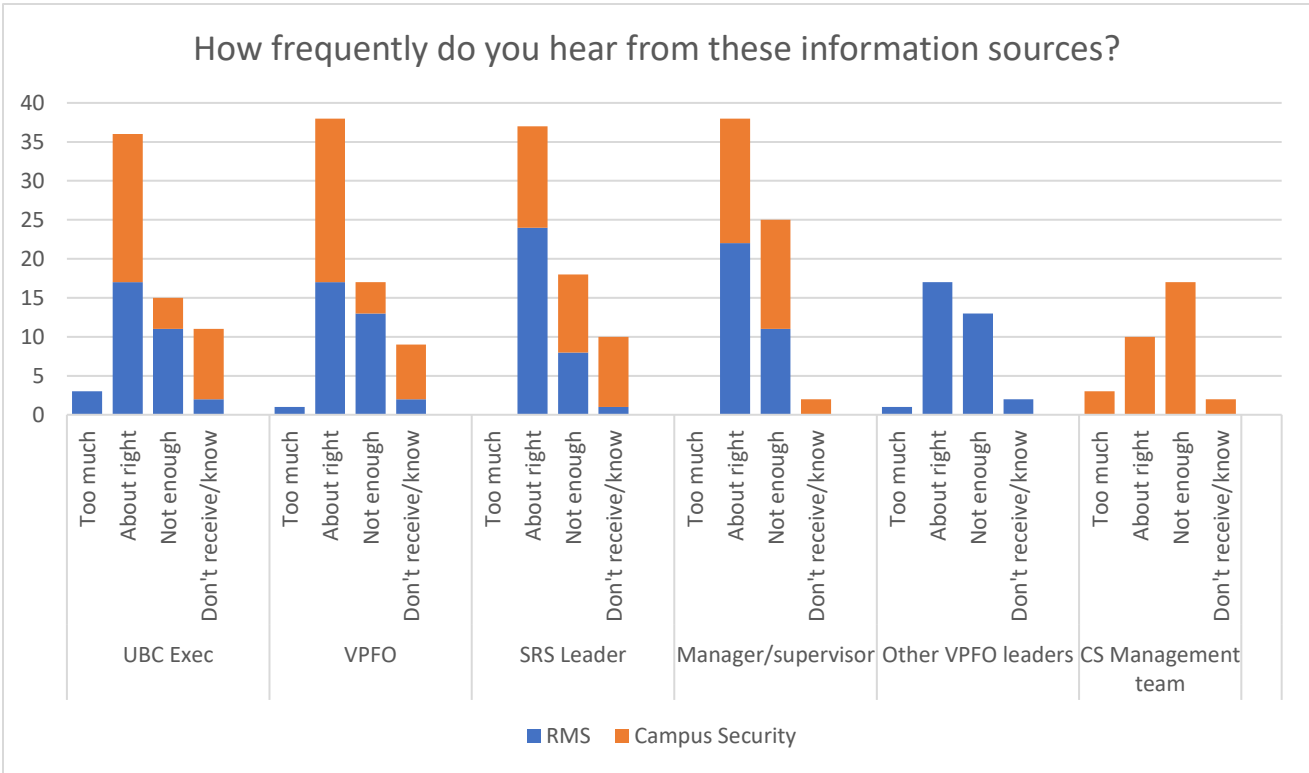
As common sense would dictate, **SRS employees value the information provided by the line manager or direct supervisor most of all**, with 76% of respondents rating their manager/supervisor as a "very valuable" source of information. This sentiment was highest within RMS; 94% of respondents selected this option compared to 58% in Campus Security. Perhaps this can be attributed to supervisors within Campus Security fulfilling a slightly different role to a line manager, in that their responsibility is to focus on operational updates, rather than other types of news.

Additionally, the leader of SRS, the VP, Finance & Operations and the UBC Executive are all seen as valuable sources. Interestingly, the total percentage of respondents to select "very valuable" or "somewhat valuable" for all three groups was 82%. Though as level of seniority increased the percentage selecting "very valuable" deceased, with 56%, 42% and 35% respectively.

This suggests that SRS employees attribute value to the sources of information (i.e. their superiors) based, at least in part, on their proximity to that information source. **The closer they are in terms of reporting line to the source of information, the more they value that source**. This is illustrated below by attributing a value score to each information source. Responses of "very valuable" and "somewhat valuable" are given a score of +2 and +1, and responses of "not very valuable" and "Not at all valuable" receive -1 and -2 respectively. "don't receive/don't know" responses receive a score of zero.

Information source value scores — bar chart showing Value score by Information source: Manager/supervisor ~109, SRS Leader ~88, VPFO ~73, UBC Exec ~66, Other VPFO leaders ~40, CS Management team ~30.

How frequently do you hear from these information sources?

When asked about the frequency of information received, it is clear to see that **none of the sources communicate too frequently**; only 2% of responses across all information sources selected this option.

While most SRS employees feel they hear from the sources listed above frequently enough, a significant amount of them do not. **38% responded that they do not hear from their manager or supervisor on a regular enough basis**. This was consistent across RMS and Campus Security. This was true of the leader of SRS (28%), the Vice President, Finance & Operations (26%), and the UBC Executive (23%). 41% of RMS employees would like to hear from other VPFO leaders more frequently.

The only information source to not receive the most votes for "about right" was the Campus Security Management team, with 53% of respondents indicating they would like to hear from them more frequently.

Which channels would you like to receive this information through?
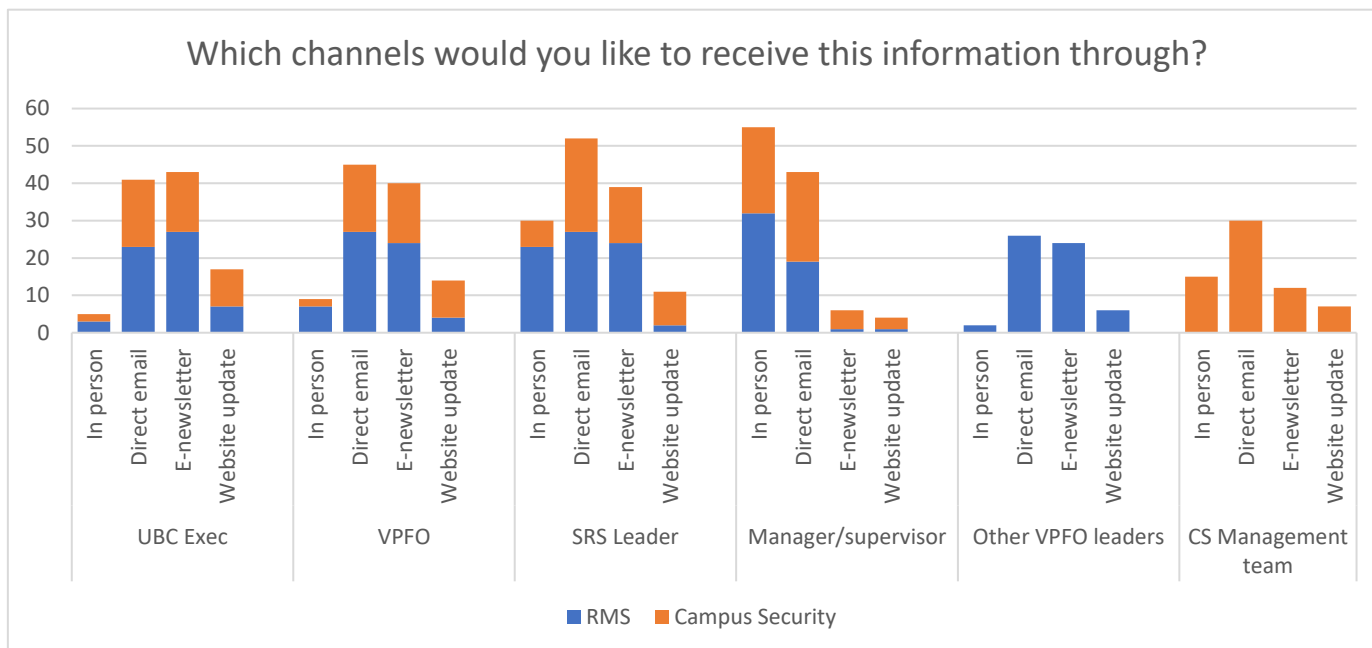
SRS employees have clear preferences when it comes to *how* they would like to hear from these information sources. Unsurprisingly, **they would like to hear from their managers/supervisors directly and preferably in person** (51%). Email (40%) was another popular option.

When voting for the leader of SRS, employees suggested that hearing from them in person is less important, though this still received 23% of the vote. Instead, they would prefer to hear via email (39%) or through an e-newsletter (30%).
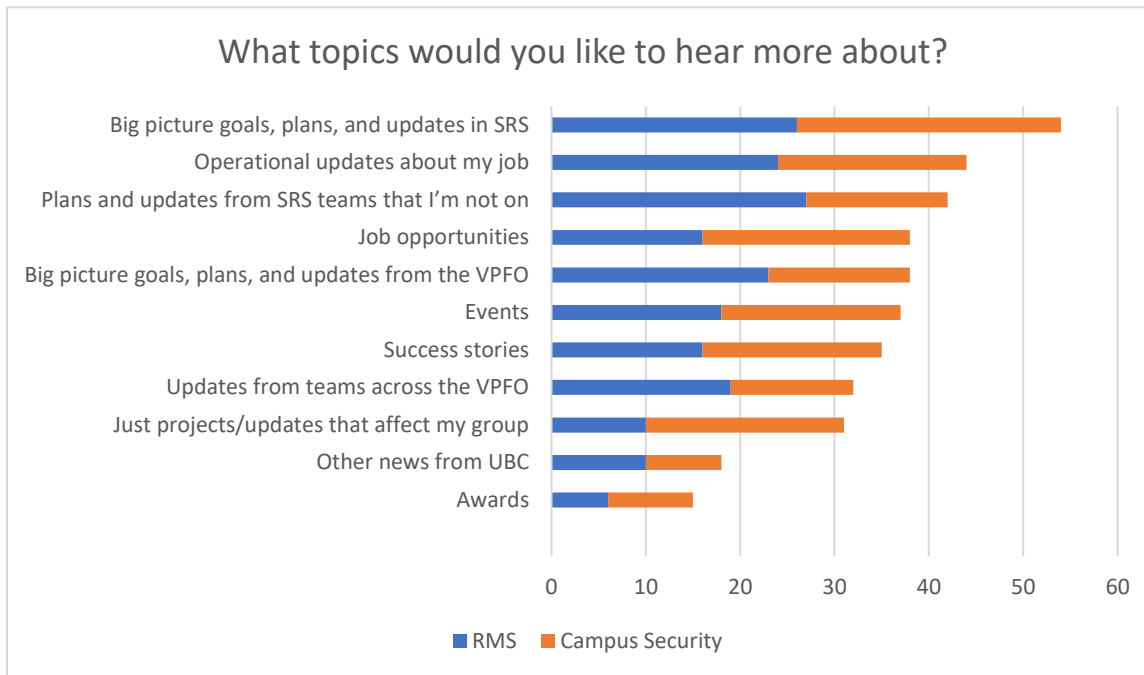
The VP, Finance & Operations and UBC Executive received a similar proportion of votes, with the preferred channels being direct email and e-newsletters, both receiving around 40% of the votes in each category. This split was true of other VPFO Leaders too.

The Campus Security Management team had the most even split of desired channels. Direct email was clearly the preferred channel, with almost 50% of the vote but hearing from them in person and through newsletters were also popular, with 23% and 19% respectively.

SRS employees were also asked which topics they would like to hear from these information sources about. The below table shows the key topics that were mentioned, and the percentage of the verbatim responses that mentioned them for each information source. For example, of the comments received about UBC Executives or Senior Leadership, 24% were about Vision, long term goals and strategies.

Information Source	Topics	Percentage of comments
UBC Executives or Senior Leadership	Vision, long term goals and strategies	24%
	Major UBC News	16%
Vice President Finance & Operations	Financial and budgetary information	18%
	Strategic plans and long term goals	15%
	Major projects/changes	12%
Chief Risk Officer/Executive Director, Safety & Risk Services	Departmental and portfolio strategy/direction	23%
	Key project/initiative updates	15%
	Officer/patrolperson safety (Campus Security)	13%
Other VPFO leaders	Local projects/initiatives	45%
Line Manager	Operational updates	58%
	Departmental/team priorities	37%
Campus Security Management Team (Campus Security only)	Operational briefings	21%
	Recognition of good work	17%
	Direction/Remit of Campus Security	17%
Shift Supervisor (Campus Security only)	Shift duties/updates	50%

What topics are SRS employees interested in?

What topics would you like to hear more about?

Topic	
Big picture goals, plans, and updates in SRS	
Operational updates about my job	
Plans and updates from SRS teams that I'm not on	
Job opportunities	
Big picture goals, plans, and updates from the VPFO	
Events	
Success stories	
Updates from teams across the VPFO	
Just projects/updates that affect my group	
Other news from UBC	
Awards	

Legend: ■ RMS   ■ Campus Security

SRS employees are interested in a broad range of topics, with the majority of topics included in the survey receiving a significant number of votes. Only "other news from UBC" and "awards" were not well represented. Clearly, **hearing about the strategic direction of the department and the portfolio as a whole, is important to the majority of employees**. Of the 384 selections in this question, 54 of them were for "big picture goals, plans and updates in SRS", accounting for 14% of the total. This option for the VPFO received 10%. As one would expect, operational updates about their jobs ranked highly as the second most popular topic.

Generally topics were ranked consistently across SRS, but there were some exceptions to this rule; Risk Management Services employees are more interested in updates from across the VPFO, and from other teams within SRS. Campus Security employees indicated that they are more interested updates that affect them directly.

If you could make one improvement to communications in Safety & Risk Services, what would it be?

When employees were asked about improvements they would make to SRS communications, the responses were varied. Grouping the responses into general themes provides some insight into what the communication priorities are within SRS, the most popular themes are included below.

| Communication theme	Percentage of comments in theme
More consistent and direct communications throughout the department	18%
Communication between and integration of RMS and Campus Security	11%
More honesty and transparency in communications	9%
Development of SRS communication channels	9%

Which channels do SRS employees use, and value?

Respondents were asked about which channels they use to stay informed, and then asked to attribute a value to those channels, the values attributed were used to calculate a value score using the following metric: "very valuable" +2, "somewhat valuable" +1, "not very valuable" -1, "not at all valuable" -2 or "I don't use this channel/don't know" 0. This gives us the opportunity to cross reference the two responses, establishing if the channels that are heavily used within SRS are providing value to employees, or if there are underused channels that could benefit employees if used more.

The below chart and table show the results of each question, with a matrix comparing the responses following.

Which channels do you use to stay informed?
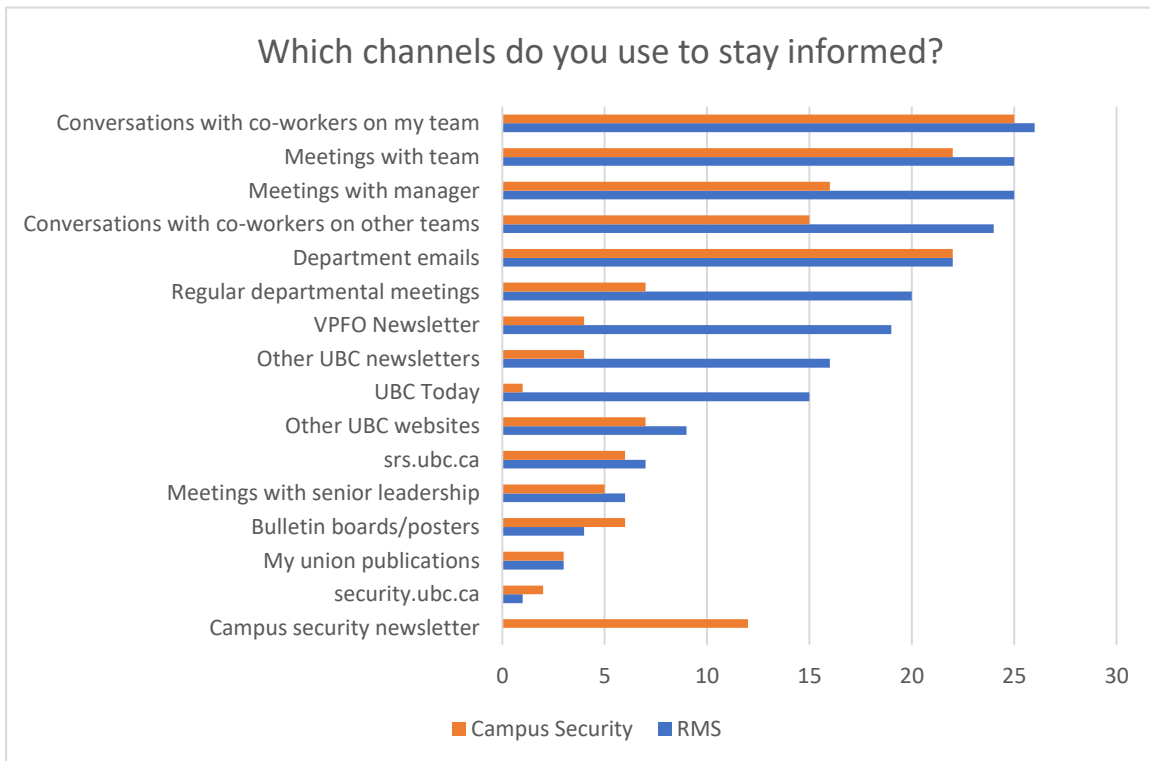
How valuable do you find the following channels when staying informed?							
Co-workers on my team		**Meetings with managers**		**Co-workers on other teams**		**Departmental emails**	
+43	+45	+48	+18	+31	+33	+30	+30
+88		+66		+64		+60	
Meetings with team		**Meetings with senior leadership**		**Regular departmental meetings**		**VPFO Newsletter**	
+49	+6	+25	+10	+22	+11	+13	+1
+55		+35		+33		+14	
Other UBC website		**Other UBC newsletters**		**UBC Today**		**My union publications**	
+4	+8	+8	+1	+7	-1	+4	-5
+12		+9		+6		-1	
Srs.ubc.ca		**Bulletin boards/posters**		**Security.ubc.ca**		**Campus security e-newsletter**	
-7	+2	-11	-4	-15	-2		+4
-5		-15		-17		+4	

Channel Use vs Channel Value
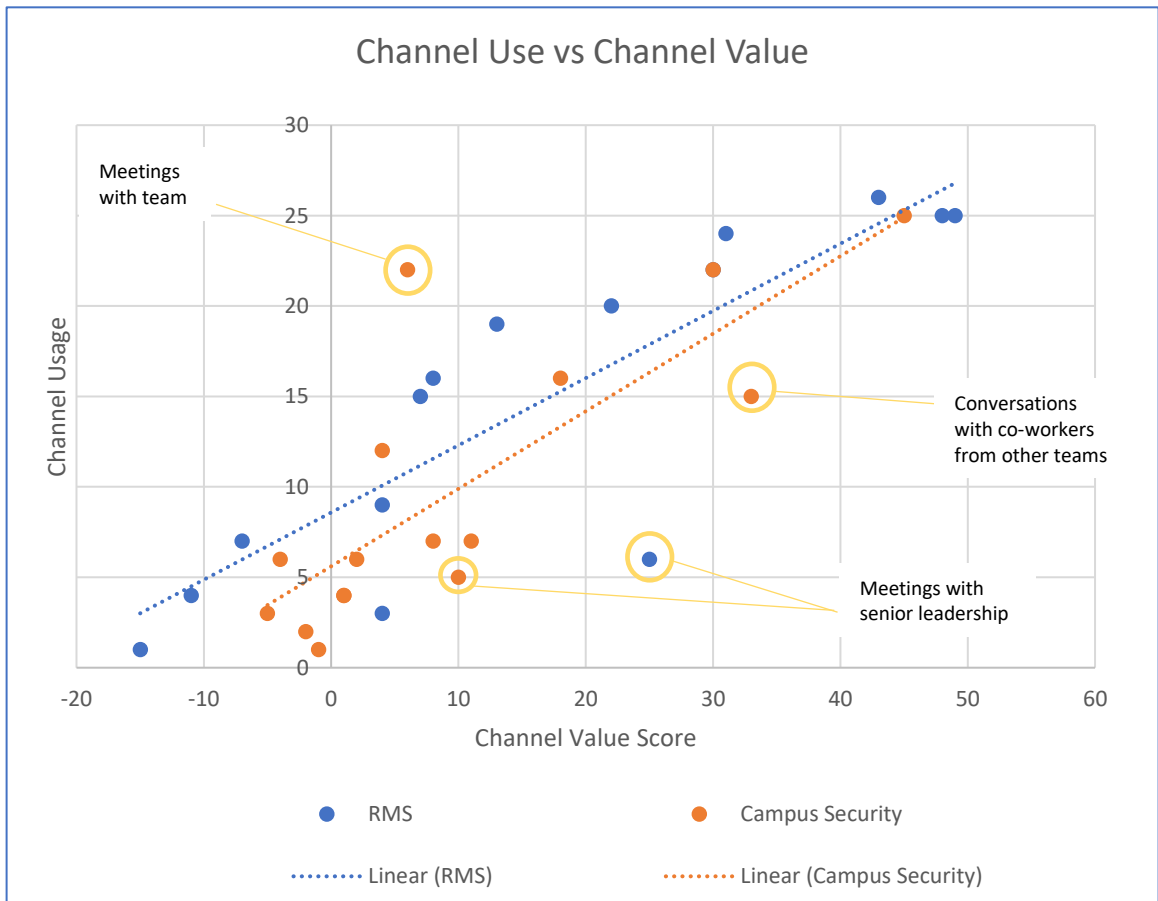
From comparing channel use and channel value it can be seen that, **in general, the channels that are most valuable are the ones that are most used currently**, though there are some outliers. Some trends can be mapped from charts and tables above, which are discussed below.

Face-to-face channels are the most used, and most valued within SRS

Five out of the six most used channels and six out of the seven most valued channels in SRS involve face-to-face communication, Departmental Emails being the exception in both cases. This suggests that SRS employees would appreciate face to face communication wherever possible, and value most the conversations they have with the co-workers and their manager. It illustrates the importance of providing consistent messaging across different levels of the organization, to ensure that when these conversations are happening, every team member receives the same information.

Campus Security employees are using fewer channels to stay informed, and generally attribute less value to them

Despite having a higher number of respondents to complete the survey, Campus Security selected fewer channels overall than their RMS counterparts; 157 vs 222. When comparing the trend lines and points on the channel value-use matrix the Campus Security points tend to fall lower in both value and use, with only four channels receiving a value score of over 11, compared to RMS employees' seven, and only three channels receiving a usage score of over 16, compared to RMS employees' six, the Campus Security trend line is also lower on the usage scale than RMS. There could be many reasons for this, but what is clear is that SRS, particularly employees within Campus Security, are not being provided with the information they desire through the existing channel mix.

Outliers

Channels that are far removed from the trend lines on the value-use matrix suggest overuse or underuse, depending on where they fall.

Probably the most underused channel overall is Meetings with Senior Leadership, with Campus Security, and to a greater extent RMS employees suggesting that they are valuable to them, but not well used.

Campus Security employees suggest that they do not have enough conversations with co-workers from other teams, as they are highly rated in terms of value, but not in terms of use.

The only real overused outlier is team meetings within Campus Security. This suggests that the meetings that happen on a daily basis within Campus Security could be more effective. How the meetings could be more effective was asked about in a separate question in the Campus Security survey.

What do you think about an SRS newsletter?

SRS employees clearly think that an SRS newsletter would be of at least some value, with only two people thinking it would not. Not all of them are completely sold on the idea, with 37% selecting "maybe".
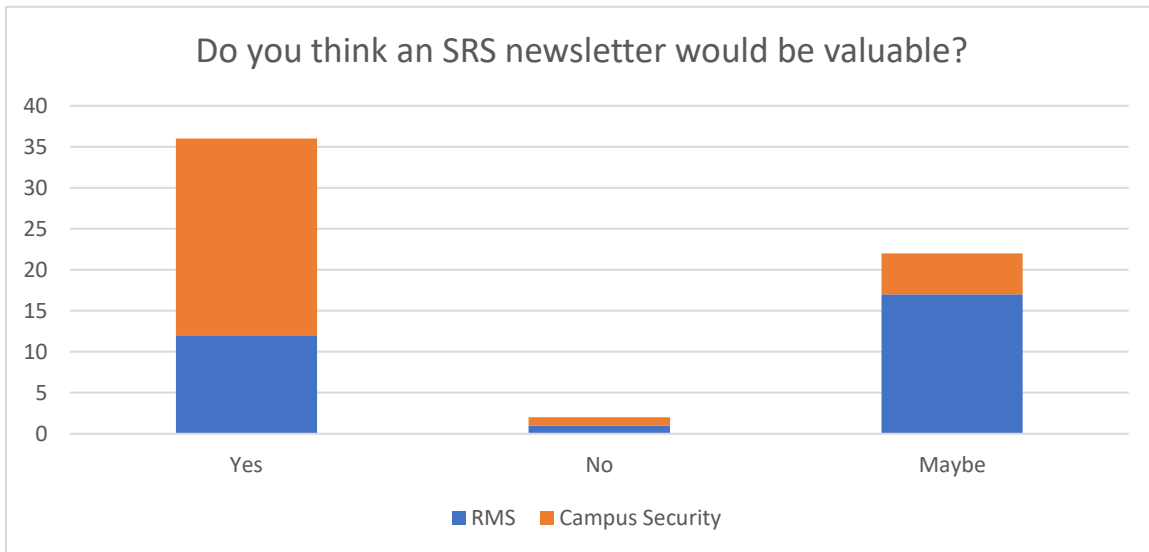

The topics SRS employees would like to see in a newsletter are varied, but align somewhat to the overall topics they are interested in. In general the topics voted for were consistent across RMS and Campus Security.
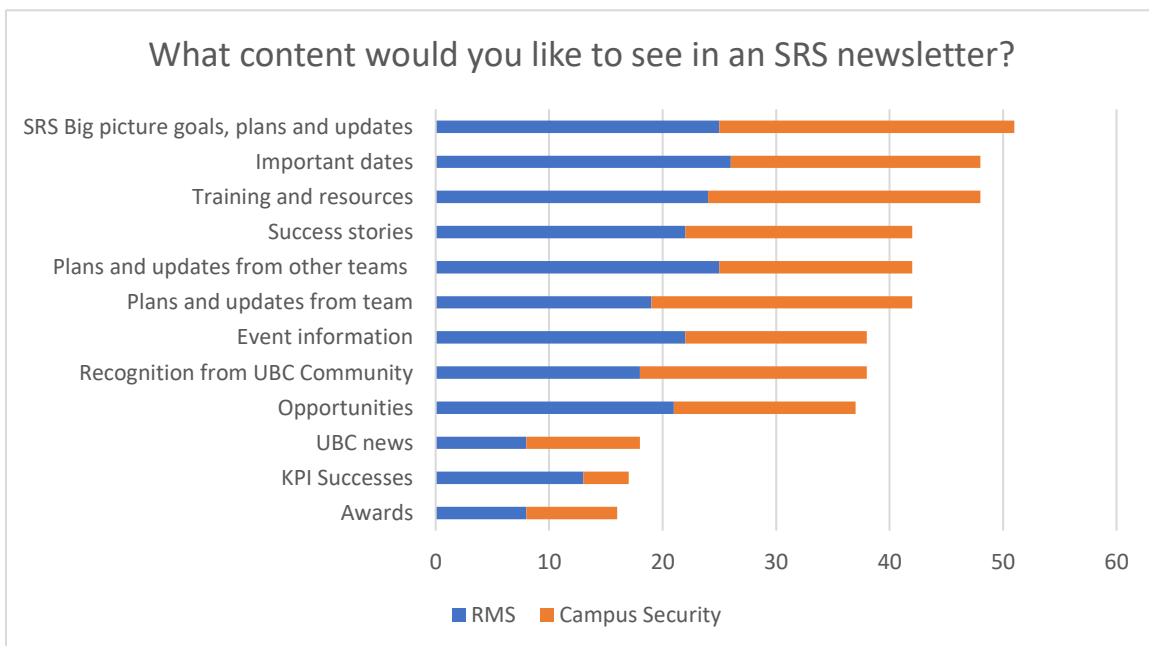
What do you think about digital signage?

The perceived benefits of digital signage are less clear cut than an SRS newsletter. Generally SRS employees are aware of digital signage, but one third of them do not think having it in place would benefit them. Having said that, almost 50% of SRS employees do see the value in having digital signage in place, with the remaining employees unsure.

SRS Digital Signage

What content would you like to see on digital signage?
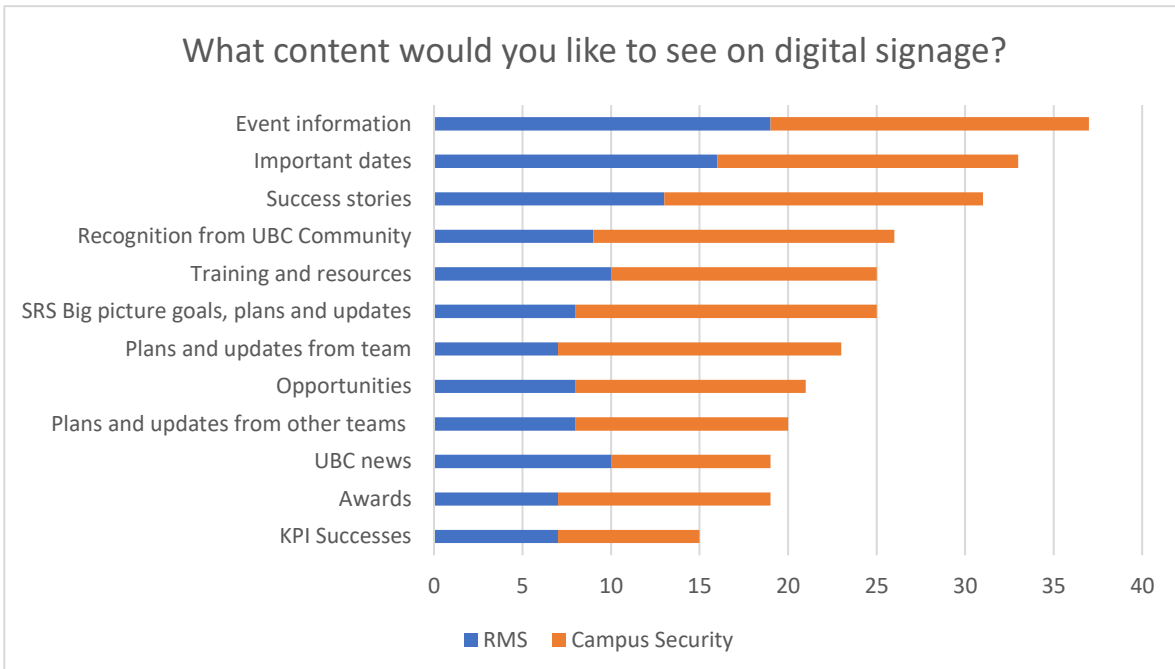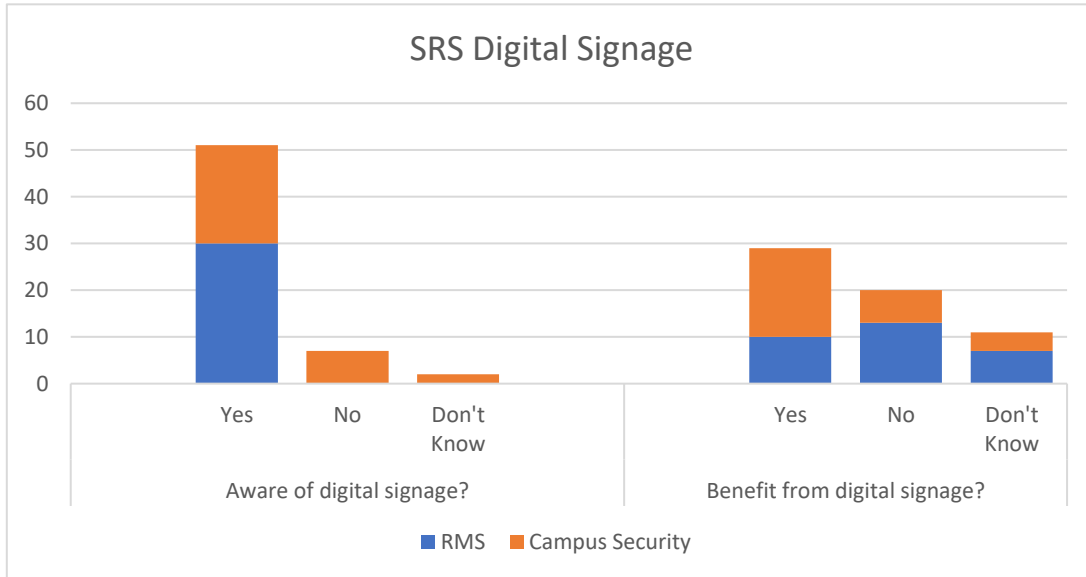
Content preferences for digital signage shift more towards operational updates and good news stories when compared to newsletter content, with big picture updates dropping down the rankings, in keeping with how digital signage is currently used around UBC and in general.
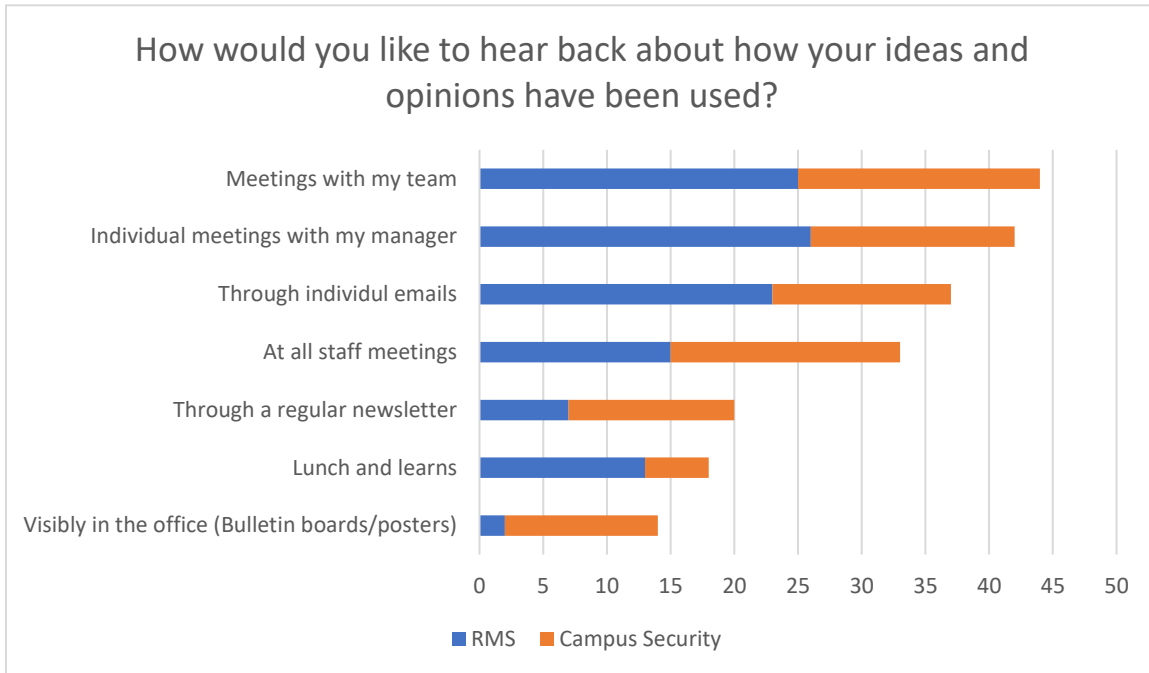
How would you like to provide feedback?

SRS employees clearly have a desire to share their feedback, with 238 selections made for this question. It seems that the preferred medium for this would be directly through the team member's manager, either in team meetings, 1-2-1s or via email. This suggests that a method is needed for managers to escalate relevant feedback, or submit it on behalf of their team members, if the feedback is relevant to the whole department.

Anonymity is also somewhat important to SRS employees when submitting feedback. With around 10% of the selections being made for that option.

How would you like to share your ideas and opinions?

Legend: ■ RMS ■ Campus Security
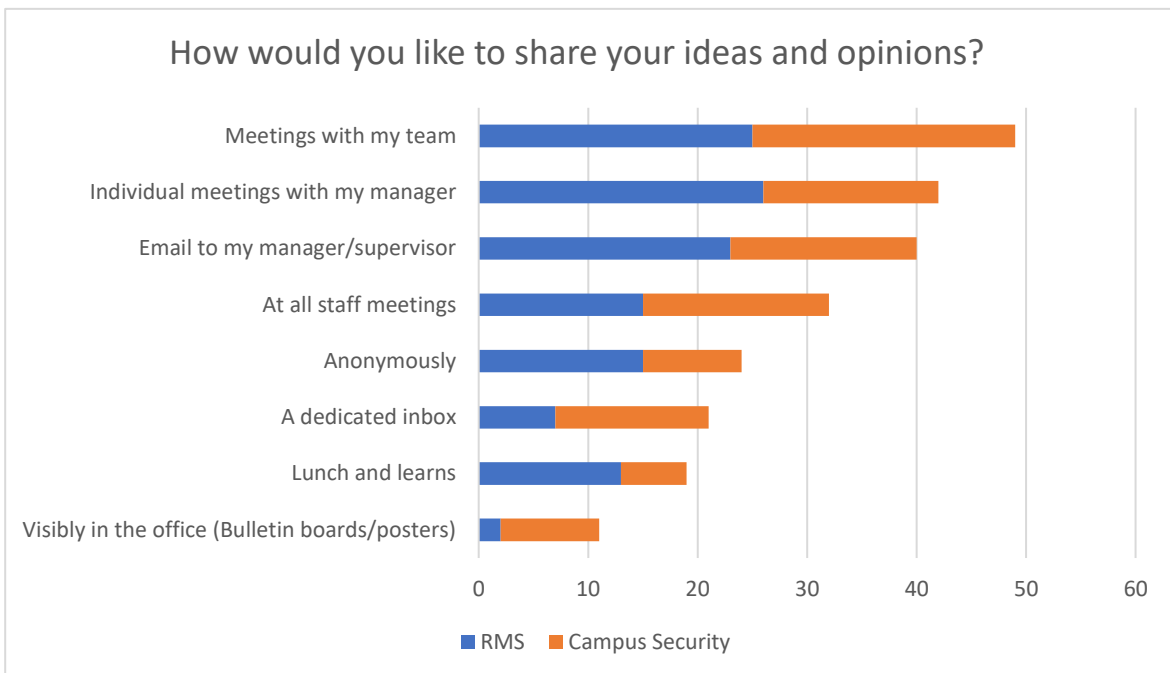
When asked how they would like to hear back about their feedback, the responses closely followed their preferences for submitting it, with the options all receiving the same rankings (with newsletter content replacing anonymously and a dedicated inbox). This further illustrates the importance of manager communications within SRS.

How would you like to hear back about how your ideas and opinions have been used?

Chart categories (top to bottom): Meetings with my team; Individual meetings with my manager; Through individul emails; At all staff meetings; Through a regular newsletter; Lunch and learns; Visibly in the office (Bulletin boards/posters)

Legend: ■ RMS ■ Campus Security

Conclusions

- Managers have a critical role to play in communications within SRS. They are seen by employees as the most valuable information source, and frequent, direct communications with them, preferably face-to-face, are very important. Some team members currently feel like they are not receiving this. They also have a role to play in facilitating and sharing two-way feedback with their team members.

- In general SRS employees feel under-informed about their department, portfolio and UBC as a whole. The VPFO particularly is an area that SRS employees do not feel informed about, which aligns with previous research and anecdotal feedback. The portfolio is a more difficult concept to understand than an individual's department and the institution in which they work, so it is unsurprising that this is a blind spot for SRS employees, and is something being addressed at a portfolio level.

- The most valued and used communication channels within SRS rely on face-to-face interaction, both with senior employees and peers. Currently employees are not well informed, so the information shared during these conversations is likely to be inconsistent. Clear and consistent communication from the leaders of the department is required to ensure uniformity in the messaging employees are receiving.

- While SRS is one department, RMS and Campus Security have some distinct communication needs. There is a clear difference in how informed the two groups feel, particularly about SRS and UBC, and the channels used to consume information vary in both usage and value, likely due to the difference in duties, working patterns and culture. With this in mind, considerations must be given to the way communications are shared within the two branches of the department.

- The overarching strategic plans for the department and portfolio, and transition of Campus Security into SRS are key area of interest for the vast majority of SRS employees. They would like to hear this information from either the Executive Director, Safety & Risk Services or the Vice President, Finance & Operations. They also identified a need for more consistent, direct and transparent communication across the department.

- The Executive Director, Safety & Risk Services is also seen as a key source of information, and employees would like to hear more information from them more frequently, either via direct email, a newsletter or in person. The key areas they would like to hear about include strategic direction, key project updates and, in the case of Campus Security, Patrolperson safety.