1. Policy Statement

1.1. Official communications from the university to its students via email, text messaging, instant messaging, and other similar technologies support student success, the safety of the university community, and effective operation of the institution. The university strives to ensure that these types of electronic communication are limited in number and are of interest and importance to students so that their effectiveness is not diminished. This policy establishes the purposes for which the university may send electronic communication to students and describes the ways in which these communications are managed.

1.2. Email is the official communication tool used by the university.

2. Reason for Policy

2.1. The university recognizes the importance of electronic communication as a means to quickly and efficiently communicate with students while protecting student records, respecting the privacy and stated preferences of the recipients, and adhering to applicable state and federal laws.

2.1.1. Official communications may be delivered to a personal device via text message or other similar technology, and students are asked to provide their cell phone numbers upon matriculation to the university. However, not all students have a personal device and not all students have provided a cell phone number to the university. All students do have access to a computer or other device capable of receiving email and all have a university email address. Therefore, email is the official communication tool used by the university.

3. Scope & Audience

3.1. This policy applies to electronic communications sent to students and applicants for any Official University Purpose. These forms of communication include but are not limited to:
3.1.1. Text messages, instant messages, or email sent from a university-owned device, account, or office;

3.1.2. Text messages, instant messages, or email sent through third-party services on behalf of any unit of the university; and

3.1.3. Other forms of electronic communication that use student data sent from a university-owned device, account, or office.

3.2. University employees, students, contractors, and volunteers must comply with this policy.

4. Definitions

4.1. Emergency purpose: Critical and time-sensitive communications made necessary in any situation affecting the health and safety of the university community.

4.2. Mass communication: Identical or substantially similar messages sent to a group of students in one or more batches. Mass Communication is restricted to information that

   4.2.1. Pertains to the majority of the recipients,
   4.2.2. Is critical or time sensitive, and
   4.2.3. Is for an Official University Purpose.

4.3. Official university purpose: The individual sending the communication is doing so for a purpose within the scope of their university employment.

4.4. Opt in: An action by which someone agrees to receive university communications to a personal device and consents by acknowledging a statement that provides a clear understanding of the nature of the messages that will be received.

4.5. Opt out: An action by which someone who receives university communications to a personal device indicates that they no longer want them from the university.

5. Responsibilities & Procedures

5.1. Management of Electronic Communications

   5.1.1. The Registrar or their designee may designate the university employee positions that may access student records when sending electronic
communications pursuant to this policy and University Standard 01-120
*Student Records*.

5.1.2. The Registrar or their designee must approve any unit that wishes to send Mass Communications or text messages to students pursuant to this policy. As part of the approval process, units, departments, and colleges that seek to send Mass Communications or text messages must have a written plan indicating the purpose, content, and frequency of Mass Communications or text messages that will be sent.

a. Approval by the Registrar or their designee is not required for

i. Returned correspondence via text message that was initiated by the student.

ii. Mass communications sent by academic department leaders to the student majors and minors in their department.

iii. Electronic communication that the student requested, such as list servers, electronic newsletters, or similar.

5.1.3. Senders of Mass Communications should carefully define the parameters for selecting student recipients so that only students who meet specified criteria will be contacted.

5.1.4. Misuse of a university electronic communication system may be grounds for disciplinary action under the applicable student or employee conduct code in accordance with university policies and procedures. Such violations may also result in revocation or restriction of access to university systems.

5.2. **University-Wide Communications**

5.2.1. Only the Registrar, President or Provost or their designee may authorize a Mass Communication to all students at the university, and only the Registrar may send a Mass Communication to all students at the university. For more information about university-wide communications, see Section 8.2 *Communicating with the Campus*.

5.3. **Text Messaging**

5.3.1. Text messaging, generally.

a. Text messaging may be used for an Official University Purpose and is limited to:

i. Alerts sent for an Emergency Purpose.
ii. Time sensitive alerts such as communications related to important deadlines, academic matters requiring urgent attention, or alerts from university offices on action needed by an individual student (e.g., missing paperwork).

b. Text messaging must not be used as the sole means of communicating an essential message or announcement. The text message must be supplemented by some other means of communication (e.g., an email or web-based notice) to ensure that all individuals receive the message.

c. Units, departments, and colleges that have been approved to communicate through text messaging must obtain Opt In from the student.

d. Text messages must meet the following criteria:

i. Comply with the consent agreement in the Opt In statement agreed to by the student as well as applicable laws, regulations, and university procedures;

ii. Be only sent to those individuals who have Opted In unless sent for an Emergency Purpose or otherwise required by state or federal law;

iii. Be clear from the content of the text message that the sender is the university so that the recipients can see immediately its origin (e.g., “OSU Alert” or “OSU Admissions”);

iv. Allow subscribers to Opt Out of receiving non-emergency messages at any time; and

v. Communicate that standard data and text messaging rates may apply.

5.3.2. Mobile telephone numbers:

a. May be requested, but not required, on university forms and applications.

b. Must be stored in official university systems or contractually approved tools.

c. Are protected student data and only available to those who have a legitimate need to access the data pursuant to University Standard 01-120 Student Records.

5.3.3. Opting In and Opting Out.
a. Except for communications with an Emergency Purpose, only those individuals who have Opted In will receive text messages from the university.

b. The university may send communications for an Emergency Purpose via automated text messages without Opt In or consent by the student.

c. The Department of Public Safety may enroll students in emergency notification services, which may include text messaging, without Opt In or consent.

d. All texting tools must include the ability for the student to Opt Out at any time. Instructions shall be provided in the text message on how to do so.

5.4. **Email Messaging**

5.4.1. The university may send communications to students by email to their university-provided email address with the expectation that such emails will be read by the student in a timely manner. Students are expected to check their university email regularly to support effective communication between the university and the student.

5.4.2. Other university unit rules and guidelines apply to email sent to students, including the Registrar’s guidelines for release of email addresses, the Provost’s policy on communicating with the campus community, the university’s policy on the acceptable use of computing resources, and the University Information Technology unit rule on email security. See Section 8.2 for additional information and links to these documents.

5.5. **Exceptions and Appeal**

5.5.1. Exceptions to this policy may be granted by the Registrar.

5.5.2. If a request to send a Mass Communication or text message is denied, the requestor will be given other options for communicating with students. The decision of the Registrar is final.

6. **Forms & Tools**

6.1. None.

7. **Frequently Asked Questions**

7.1. None.
8. Related Information


8.2. Office of the Provost, communicating with the campus community policy: https://leadership.oregonstate.edu/sites/leadership.oregonstate.edu/files/communicating_with_osu_4-28-2021_0.pdf

8.3. University policy on generation, maintenance, and release of student records: 01-120 Student Records.

8.4. University policy on acceptable use of the university’s computing resources: 08-005 Acceptable Use of Computing Resources.

8.5. UIT Email Security Rule (available only with university credentials): https://uit.oregonstate.edu/infosec/policies-rules.


9. History

9.1. Adopted: Oregon State University adopted University Policy 08-105 Electronic Communication with Students on June 30, 2023

9.2. Next scheduled review date: June 30, 2024.

10. Website


11. Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office of the Registrar</td>
<td>541-737-4331</td>
<td><a href="https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/">https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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