

Internal Mass Communications Policy

Purpose:

The purpose of the UC Mass Communications Policy is to ensure the university's ability to communicate and deliver university messages consistently, in both emergency and non-emergency situations, in a manner that is both appropriate and effective and that best serves the institution's strategic missions, goals, reputation and image. This policy will replace the Internal Mass Communications Policy of 1994.

Scope:

This policy covers all UC internal mass communications to all UC faculty, staff and students, via hard copy and across all media, required to operate the University of Cincinnati.

Five categories of messages are covered under this policy.

Categories of Messages:

- 1) Crisis and/or Emergency, including unscheduled university closings
- 2) Changes to Policies and/or Changes or Interruptions to Standard Operating Procedures
- 3) Official UC Communications
- 4) Official Solicitations
- 5) General Information

General Policy

- a. In most cases, electronic communication is preferable to paper communications.
- b. Mass communications are those print or electronic messages which are directed to audiences that exceed a dean's or vice president's area of responsibility and are sent without self-subscription or opt-out capabilities (e.g. dean of X college desires to send an electronic message to all faculty).
- c. Communications not covered by this policy would include: 1) central service providers communicating with constituents about a service they provide (e.g. UCit notifies all UC e-mail users that the system will be down for maintenance); or 2) when dean of X college desires to send an electronic message to all staff, faculty and students in his/her college. Mailing lists that are typically considered "opt-in," such as discussion groups, committees and project teams, are exempt.
- d. All internal mass communications will refer only to official business or official activities of the university.
- e. UC employee e-mail addresses, including Bearcat Online for students, will be used as the primary channel of communication for messages in Categories 1 through 4. In those areas where employees do not have access to electronic means of communication, it is the responsibility of the unit to work out a system for communicating all messages to these employees.
- f. UCit-assigned student e-mail addresses will be used as the official channel of communication to students for messages in Categories 1 through 4 (Refer to "Official Student e-mail Policy").
- g. Employees are encouraged to use their UCit-assigned e-mail accounts/addresses.
- h. A Web-based bulletin board will be established as the primary channel of communication for messages in Category 5 as well as a repository for all messages. Employees and students are responsible for routinely checking this bulletin board for general information.
- i. Official distribution lists will be used to ensure accuracy and completeness of the lists. These lists include:
 - i. UC-Staff (full- and part-time);

- ii. UC-Faculty (full-time, part-time, volunteer, emeriti and affiliated);
 - iii. UC-Students (all students who have taken a course within the previous four academic quarters or previous three semesters); and
 - iv. Triple-D (all deans, directors and department heads).
- j. All internal mass communications will follow this policy's guidelines and procedures regardless of any individual or unit capability to send such communications on their own. See definition and example of "mass communication" in "Scope" above.
- k. The responsibility for archiving mass communications messages rests with the sender.
- l. The "Triple-D" mailing list will continue to be used in cases where a communiqué is appropriate only for deans, directors and department heads. Requests must originate from a Dean or Vice President and be approved by the Associate VP of Public Relations, Division of Governmental Relations & University Communications or his/her designee.
- m. The Vice President, Division of Governmental Relations & University Communications, or his/her designee, will make any final judgment calls in cases where this policy does not clearly apply.
- n. Any individual who is deemed in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with university rules.

Procedures

1) Crisis and/or Emergency

Examples: unscheduled university closings; weather warnings; safety alerts.

Required Media:

- i. All UCit-assigned e-mail accounts. Where technology permits, the message will be marked as “urgent.”
- ii. Web. Emergency announcements will temporarily replace all existing announcements on UC’s main Web page at www.uc.edu.
- iii. Voice Mail. Employees using UC voice mail will receive a recorded message regarding the emergency notice.

Optional Media:

- i. UC Cable TV;
- ii. UC emergency broadcast system;
- iii. UC electronic message boards;
- iv. Blackboard.

Method/process/distribution:

1. Situation identification and analysis.
 - Contact: Division of Public Safety
2. Action
 - Division of Public Safety representative notifies provost and/or appropriate VP or dean, and president as needed.
3. Response
 - The appropriate VP, provost or president notifies Division of Public Safety of decision/action needed.
4. Execution
 - Director of Public Safety notifies Associate VP of Public Relations (secondary contact: Vice President, Governmental Relations & University Communications). Public Safety to publish on emergency broadcast system, if appropriate.

Associate VP of Public Relations or Vice President of Governmental Relations & University Communications:

- Notifies Medical Center
 - Primary: Associate Senior Vice President, Medical Center Planning & Communications
 - Secondary: Director of Public Relations & Communications, Medical Center
- Requests publishing on Web
 - Primary: Assistant Vice President, Web Communications
 - Secondary: Assistant Director, Web Communications

- Notifies UC Recovery Team, if appropriate
 - Primary Contact: Chair of Recovery Team
 - Secondary Contact: Any Recovery Team member
- Contacts media, if appropriate
 - Primary: Public Information Officer, Governmental Relations & University Communications
 - Secondary: Same
- Sends e-mail distribution
 - Primary: Associate VP of Public Relations
 - Secondary: Assistant Vice President, Web Communications
 - Technical Support
 - Primary: UCit Help Desk
 - Secondary: Asst. VP, UCit Systems and Operations
- Requests voice-mail message
 - Primary: UCit Help Desk
 - Secondary: Executive Director, UCit Network and Telecommunication Services
- Notifies Campus Operators
 - Primary: UCit Help Desk
 - Secondary: Operations Manager, UCit Directory Service and Campus Operators
- Requests publishing on electronic message boards
 - a. Gateway marquees.
 - Vice President, Governmental Relations & University Communications
 - b. Medical Sciences Building COM News Network TV Screens.
 - Primary: Director, Medical Center Public Relations and Communications
 - Secondary: Customer Service Management Specialist, AIT&L IT.
 - c. Tangeman University Center.
 - Primary: Program Director, Campus Services
 - Secondary: Sales Manager, Campus Services
 - d. Sanders and Langsam.
 - Primary: Program Director, Campus Services
 - Secondary: Sales Manager, Campus Services
 - e. Steger Student Life Center & Campus Recreation Center.
 - Primary: Program Director, Campus Services
 - Secondary: Sales Manager, Campus Services

- f. College-Conservatory of Music.
 - Primary: CCM Scheduling Manager
 - Assistant Dean for Performance Management
- g. Clermont College TV Monitors.
 - Primary: Director of Marketing, Clermont Public Information Office
 - Secondary: Clermont Public Information Office
- h. Scoreboards
 - Primary: Director of Video Operations, Athletics
 - Secondary: Director of Operations, Athletics
- i. Design, Architecture, Art and Planning.
 - Primary: Associate Dean for Technology and Facilities, DAAP
 - Secondary: Dan Dugan

Timeframe for Distribution: As soon as possible. Immediate.

Audiences: All UC employees and students.

2) Changes to Policies and/or Changes or Interruptions to Standard Operating Procedures

Examples: Notification that UC IDs must be re-issued; notification that student bills will be issued electronically; changes to administrative systems; interruption of campus-wide services.

Required Medium: E-mail

Optional Media: Web bulletin board; other appropriate Web locations; E-Currents.

Method/process/distribution:

1. Get approval for distribution.
 - Contact: Appropriate VP, from area in which message originates.
2. Execution
 - VP or VP designee
 - Notifies president's office
 - Primary: Special Assistant for Communications, Office of the President
 - Secondary: Executive Director, Office of the President
 - Notifies Associate VP of Public Relations (secondary contact: Vice President, Governmental Relations & University Communications)
 - Requests e-mail distribution
 - Primary: Associate VP of Public Relations
 - Secondary: Assistant Vice President, Web Communications
 - Technical Support
 - Primary: UCit Help Desk

- Secondary: Asst. VP, UCit Systems and Operations
- Notifies Associate Senior Vice President, Medical Center Planning & Communications
 - Secondary: Director, Medical Center Public Relations
- Notifies UC Recovery Team, if appropriate
 - Primary Contact: Chair of Recovery Team
 - Secondary Contact: Any Recovery Team member
- Posts to Web bulletin board (VP designee will post to bulletin board)
 - Primary (for technical support): UCit Help Desk

Timeframe for Distribution: 12-24 hours, depending upon effective date of change in policy/procedure.

Audiences: All UC employees and students if applicable.

3) Official UC Communications

Examples: Vacation/holiday schedule; notification of employee benefit period; appointments; non-crisis safety alerts.

Required Medium: E-mail.

Optional Medium: Web bulletin board; other appropriate Web locations; E-Currents.

Method/process/distribution:

1. Get approval for distribution.
2. Contact: Appropriate VP, from area in which message originates.
3. Execution
 - VP or VP designee
 - Notifies president's office
 - Primary: Special Assistant for Communications, Office of the President
 - Secondary: Executive Director, Office of the President
 - Notifies Associate VP of Public Relations (secondary contact: Vice President, Governmental Relations & University Communications)
 - Notifies Associate Senior Vice President, Medical Center Planning & Communications
 - Secondary: Director, Medical Center Public Relations
 - Requests e-mail distribution.
 - Primary: Associate VP of Public Relations
 - Secondary: Assistant Vice President, Web Communications
 - Technical Support
 - Primary: UCit Help Desk
 - Secondary: Asst. VP, UCit Systems and Operations
 - Posts to Web bulletin board (VP designee will post to bulletin board)
 - Primary (for technical support): UCit Help Desk

Timeframe for Distribution: As appropriate.

Audiences: All UC employees and students if applicable.

4) Official Solicitations

Examples: Nominations for official UC awards (like QSI), grants (such as SEM), etc.; United Way appeal; UC Foundation employee campaign.

Solicitation for monetary contributions for university-sponsored initiatives may be sent on behalf of the university only when approved by the Office of the President. No other solicitations for monetary contributions will be permitted.

Optional Medium: E-mail (used only for solicitations on behalf of the university when approved by the Office of the President) or Web bulletin board; E-Currents

Method/process/distribution for solicitation of monetary contributions:

1. Get approval for distribution from the Office of the President.

Method/process/distribution for all other official solicitations:

1. Get approval for distribution:
 1. Contact: Appropriate VP, from area in which message originates.
2. Execution
 - VP or VP designee
 - Notifies president's office
 - Primary: Special Assistant for Communications, Office of the President
 - Secondary: Executive Director, Office of the President
 - Notifies Associate VP of Public Relations
 - Notifies Public Information Officer, Governmental Relations & University Communications for inclusion in E-Currents
 - Notifies Associate Senior Vice President, Medical Center Planning & Communications
 - Secondary: Director, Medical Center Public Relations
 - Requests e-mail distribution. E-mail will be used on behalf of the university only when approved by the Office of the President.
 - Primary: Special Assistant for Communications, Office of the President
 - Secondary: Executive Director, Office of the President
 - Posts to Web bulletin board (VP designee will post to bulletin board)
 - Primary (for technical support): UCit Help Desk

Timeframe for Distribution: 24-48 hours

Audiences: All UC employees and students if applicable.

5) General Information

Examples: Invitations to university events; speakers; awards.

Optional Medium: Web bulletin board; print or fax (for those without electronic capability); E-Currents; University Calendar (events only).

Method/process/distribution:

1. Execution (initiating unit must prepare information for Web)
 - Post to Web bulletin board (initiating unit designee will post to bulletin board)
 - Primary (for technical support): UCit Help Desk
 - Print announcement and either post in public space for employees without electronic access, or put in employees' mailboxes
 - Primary: Director of Unit
 - Secondary: Designee
 - Advise Public Relations of link for inclusion in E-Currents
 - Primary Contact: Associate Vice President for University Relations

Timeframe for Distribution: Depends upon announcement.

Audiences: All UC employees and students if applicable.

Note: Units must have approval from appropriate VP for general information mailings in excess of 200 pieces, and they will be charged by Mail Services at current rates for this service.

Prepared by the Electronic Communications Planning Committee, a subcommittee of the Executive Technology Strategy Committee.

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