**Internal Mass Email Definition, Usage, and Best Practices**

The Marketing and Communications team strives to be intentional, strategic, and authentic in our efforts to engage with the UB Community. This policy provides guidelines on sending mass emails to the University community, including who has access and rights to do so. Mass email is a strategic, cost-effective, and environmentally conscious communication method. ***However, non-strategic use of mass email can reduce reader engagement, increase email unsubscribes, and ultimately hinder the University’s ability to deliver critical messages.***

We aim to strike a balance between the speed and ease of use (for the sender) of mass email, the desire to reduce reliance on paper mail, and the impact on the University community receiving too many emails on a regular basis. The following guidelines ensure that mass email remains a reliable means to disseminate official communications for the University.

This policy establishes guidelines to:

* Define the appropriate use of mass email versus other communications tools
* Reduce the number of email messages sent to students, faculty, and staff
* Ensure that the email system and network can be used effectively and efficiently
* Preserve the effectiveness of email as a communication tool without unduly restricting the free flow of information within the University community

**Definition**

These guidelines apply to all mass email messages sent from a University-owned domain (e.g. bridgeport.edu) and mass email messages sent through third-party services (e.g. Constant Contact) on behalf of specific departments or offices of the University.

Mass email is any message sent to an entire campus or large subset (e.g. all students, all faculty, or all staff). Mass email is an essential communication tool for academic, research, and administrative communications.

**Alternative Communication Choices**

Mass email is not the ***only*** communications tool, nor is it always the ***best*** communications tool to reach your audience. Before deciding on mass email as your choice for any communication, departments should prioritize alternative communication channels.

The Marketing and Communications team’s efforts focus on streamlining mass email communication to limit the quantity of mass emails being sent to any given audience at any given time. As a result, requests for stand-alone emails may be declined, and/or the Office of Marketing and Communications may recommend alternative channels through which the content can be delivered.

**Communication channels can take many forms, including:**

* Announcements (Community Day, Town Halls, other events)
* Digital signage
* Emails
* Events calendars
* Flyers
* Knightlife
* Newsletters
* Purple Knight Weekly
* Social media
* University blog
* Web content

To reduce the number of program and event flyers sent to the University community in separate mass emails, The Center for Student Involvement regularly sends out the Purple Knight Weekly email. To submit your flyer to the Center for Student Involvement to be included in Purple Knight Weekly, please use this form: <https://knightlife.bridgeport.edu/submitter/form/start/492855>.

Aligning the communication channel, audience, topic, and timing enables us to foster transparency and authentic communication.

**Request for Mass Email Communication**

Requests for approval of mass email communications should be directed to the Office of Marketing and Communications at <https://www.goodwin.edu/forms/mc-request/>.

**Bulk Email Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines**

**Essential Communications:**

Unless classified as essential, all messages going out in mass email form should have the approval of the area department head.

Any message that meets at least one of the following criteria may be classified as an essential communication:

* A message essential to the mission or operations of the University
* A message essential for student academic performance
* A message that pertains to an urgent health or safety situation
* A message that is required by law

The Office of Marketing and Communications determines whether a message qualifies under these criteria. In addition, certain messages automatically qualify as essential communications, as described below, and do not require approval from Marketing and Communications before being sent.

* Messages from senior leadership – Any message approved by the president, vice presidents, deans, chief information officer, director of Campus Security, or director of Academic and Campus Technology Services
* Messages from deans – Any message to the faculty, staff, or students of a college from their respective dean’s office
* Messages from department chairs – Any message from the chair of an academic department to the faculty, staff, or students of their academic department
* Messages from faculty and instructors – Any message sent to students enrolled in a course from the faculty member or instructor teaching that course
* Messages from the Office of the Registrar – Any message to instructors or students from the Office of the Registrar
* Messages from the Office of Academic and Campus Technology Services (ACTS) – Any message from ACTS to the campus community regarding system outages, downtimes, etc.
* Official messages to alert the university community to substantial changes in governance, policy, or practice, immediate threats to health, safety, and property, computer or telecommunications issues, shared interests, etc.

To facilitate official communications, Marketing and Communications will maintain the following mass email address groups:

* All students
* All full-time faculty
* All part-time faculty
* All full-time staff
* All part-time staff
* All Goodwin University students taking classes on UB’s campus
* All undergraduate parents or guardians (for emergency communication use only at the discretion of Marketing and Communications)

Mass emails to these address groups are restricted to official communications. Individuals who need to send official mass emails to an address group must obtain approval from their department head, dean, or vice president. Except in emergencies, requests for mass email must be submitted at least 42 to 78 hours in advance for processing, approvals, and scheduling. In any case, several hours may be required to set up such a mailing.

**Appropriate Use of Mass Email:**

* News that impacts a large number of people and will have a significant impact on the University community
* Time-sensitive, critical items related to university academic or administrative policy, procedures, and activities
* Messages that assist in or support the recipients’ ability to conduct their business or education at the University

**Inappropriate Use of Mass Email:**

* Information of interest to only a small segment of the University Community
* Announcements of regularly scheduled meetings and activities
* Event promotion. All on-campus events should be placed on the University calendar. Notifications, reminders, and information regarding these events may be sent via employee or student newsletters. It is not an appropriate use of mass email to send information regarding events. Exceptions are made for campus-wide, University-sponsored events such as Knights Fest, UB Rise, and Commencement.
* Messages that are commercial in nature (University events where there is a charge for admittance)
* Any messages for the purpose of the marketing or advertising of programs, majors, classes, awards, research opportunities, job postings, calls for proposals, products, or events offered or sponsored by individual departments. Departments should use other methods of communication for these purposes, such as MyUB, the events calendar, or established newsletters like Purple Knight Weekly.
* Messages that are not in line with the mission of the University
* Messages that are personal in nature
* Solicitations for contributions to charities or participation in personal activities not related to University purposes or not sponsored by the University
* Solicitations for non-University businesses operated by University faculty or staff
* Messages that target audiences that might appear discriminatory or may appear to infringe on privacy
* Offensive material
* Attachments are discouraged; Use a link to a website or webpage whenever possible
* Repeated messages. Sending multiple versions of the same message, either as a reminder or a follow-up. Corrections are sent on a limited basis. Please review your messages very carefully before sending them. Messages may be repeated ONLY in the following manner:
  + One week or more before the event in question and the day before the event
  + Exceptions require the approval of Marketing and Communications

**Style Guidelines**

A general guide to UB’s visual and written standards can be found on the [Marketing and Communications](https://www.google.com/url?client=internal-element-cse&cx=015987796921351493961:2hn6dqj_6_g&q=https://www.bridgeport.edu/marcomm/&sa=U&ved=2ahUKEwi37beJ3-iJAxVKFlkFHVN0MCAQFnoECAsQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2zNfRX2v98SiiSX3tCM7-k) webpage.

**Accessibility Guidelines:**

* Make your subject line brief but descriptive
* Format your email from a visual perspective using accessibility best practices
  + Use white space to create breathing room around content
  + Use heading styles in a logical sequence to provide structure
  + Use a clear and balanced font at an appropriate size; fonts should be at least 14pt in size
  + Avoid center-aligned paragraphs, as they are difficult for those with visual impairments to read
  + Avoid using tables, as they are difficult for screen readers to read
* Format your links appropriately
  + Make links accessible by bolding and underlining them so they stand out more
  + Don’t use link text like “click here” and “learn more,” as these can be confusing when screen readers say them aloud. Instead, use text like, “Read our full style guide” or “learn more about the Heckman Center.”
* All information conveyed in the message should be in the text, not embedded in images or other elements that are inaccessible by text-to-speech software.

**Guidelines for Using Outlook for Mass Emailing**

Outlook is not intended for mass emailing, but an exception exists for those with prior approval to send mass email via Outlook using an approved distribution group. Only the following offices can send Outlook mass emails using these distribution groups:

* Office of the President
* Vice Presidents
* Deans
* Athletics
* Human Resources
* Office of the Registrar
* Academic and Campus Technology Services

Individuals or department heads who believe they need access to such groups must go through their appropriate vice president for approval.