



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

POLICY TITLE	Student Communications	Policy Number	116
Section	Governance, Organization, and General Information	Approval Date	March 20, 2025
Subsection	Governance and Organization	Effective Date	March 20, 2025
Responsible Office	Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs	Last Review	March 20, 2025

1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This policy establishes best practices for electronic mass communications to UVU students to ensure compliance with FERPA regulations and UVU policies and to preserve the value and integrity of student communications.

2.0 REFERENCES

- 2.1** *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g
- 2.2** *Telephone Consumer Protection Act*, 47 U.S.C. § 227
- 2.3** *Government Records Access and Management Act*, Utah Code Ann. § 63G-2
- 2.4** Utah Board of Higher Education R840 *Institutional Business Communications*
- 2.5** UVU Policy 112 *Use of University Social Media*
- 2.6** UVU Policy 138 *Institutional Review Board*
- 2.7** UVU Policy 445 *Institutional Data Management and Access*
- 2.8** UVU Policy 542 *FERPA (Students Records Privacy)*

3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 Directory information: Student education record information identified by UVU Policy 542 that can be released without the student's written consent.

3.2 Electronic messaging systems: Messaging technology or methods for personal communications. These may include but are not limited to instant, email, web, mobile, or app messaging technology.



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

3.3 Enterprise email: The email system the University uses to engage in official business. This includes but is not limited to addresses using the @uvu.edu domain. Enterprise email service does not include any separate, affiliated email services that the University offers to alumni or other groups.

3.4 Mass communication: A message sent to multiple students at the same time that has identical, or nearly identical, messaging. For the purposes of this policy, these communications may be distributed via email or text messaging.

3.5 Opt-in messaging: Messages where recipients have indicated an interest in and willingness to receive communications.

3.6 Opt-out messaging: Messages sent by university offices or departments where it is presumed that students have agreed to receive the messages when they are admitted and enrolled.

3.7 Registered student: A student registered for at least one class in the current or upcoming term.

3.8 Required messaging: Communications that must be sent to students for compliance with federal, state, or local regulations or campus policies. Students cannot opt out of these communications.

3.9 Sender: For the purposes of this policy, a university entity, department, or employee authorized to send mass communications to students.

3.10 Student Communication Governance Council (SCGC): Advisory committee composed of representatives from divisions involved in student communications. This group guides and assesses communication needs and efforts from the University to students.

3.11 University electronic communications: Any electronic communication that an employee, trustee, volunteer, or other designated individual sends or receives as part of their responsibilities at the University.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 Scope of Policy

4.1.1 This policy applies only to university mass communications sent to registered students via email and text messaging. It is not intended to direct or restrict classroom communications between faculty and their students. Other forms of mass communication, including emergency communications or those required by state or federal law, are not addressed in this policy.



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

4.2 Policy Statement

4.2.1 Senders must follow the best practices and standards for emailing and texting at UVU, including those documented in the *Student Communication Guidelines*, which can be found on the employee intranet.

4.2.2 Senders shall adhere to FERPA regulations and institutional policies to protect the privacy of students' personally identifiable information and education records.

4.2.3 Senders are responsible for obtaining the required approvals or consent through the procedures established in this policy before distributing any non-required email or text messages.

4.2.4 Senders who fail to comply with these standards may have their access to certain tools and/or information revoked or be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. The Student Communication Governance Council will review and approve or disapprove requests to reinstate access to tools. The sender's first-level supervisor may appeal the SCGC's decision to disapprove reinstatement.

4.3 Student Communication Governance Council

4.3.1 The Student Communication Governance Council (SCGC) is responsible for creating and maintaining rules and guidelines for communicating with students. The council assesses and gives feedback on the current state of student communication to improve systems and processes.

4.3.2 The SCGC is chaired by a representative from Student Affairs and is comprised of representatives from areas across campus, including Athletics, Digital Transformation, Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Marketing and Communications.

4.4 Responsibilities of Senders

4.4.1 Senders are responsible for obtaining all required approvals from their corresponding first-level executives, such as assistant vice presidents or deans, before sending any mass communications. First-level executives should review these requests to ensure they address a need, are consistent with university messaging, and clearly identify which university entity owns the content.

4.4.2 Senders are responsible for obtaining students' consent to receive communications and maintaining records of the opt-in and opt-out responses for text messages and non-required emails.

4.4.3 Senders shall maintain and secure all student information they obtain for communications (see section 5.3). The sender shall use the student information only for the purpose for which it was obtained.



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

4.4.4 Senders are responsible for obtaining all other approvals necessary for their intended communications; for example, senders seeking to conduct research or survey students should ensure their project has received IRB approval per Policy 138 *Institutional Review Board*. Areas including students in research are responsible for requesting a contact list from BIRS.

4.5 Exemptions for Gaining Approval

4.5.1 The offices and organizations listed in the *Student Communication Guidelines* do not need approval for their communications when the messages are required under their stewardship or specific job functions. Other offices and organizations listed in the guidelines that are responsible for contacting individual students about their academic, mental, or physical well-being are also exempt.

4.5.2 Division representatives must ask the Student Governance Council for any additional exceptions.

4.6 Impermissible Mass Communications

4.6.1 The following communications are not permitted as unsolicited, mass communications via texting or email:

- 1) Promotions for individual events or activities that do not have approval of a first-level executive. Senders should use the campus events promotion systems and other best practices including social media and digital signage to promote events.
- 2) Research requests with student participants or respondents that have not received IRB approval.
- 3) Surveys with more than 500 student participants or respondents that are determined to not need IRB approval. These surveys shall be coordinated with UVU's Office of Institutional Engagement and Effectiveness.
- 4) Solicitations or campaigns for personal, business, or political purposes.

4.7 Permitted Email Communication

4.7.1 All university email communications must be sent through the official UVU enterprise, not personal, email accounts for both senders and registered students, unless otherwise approved by the appropriate first-level executive.



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

4.7.2 Any outreach that may require the use of personal or preferred email addresses must be approved by the first-level executive and must contain only directory or general institutional information.

4.7.3 Email communications are categorized as either required, opt-out, or opt-in messaging:

4.7.3.1 Required messaging may include, but is not limited to, student account reminders, registration dates, advising outreaches, and academic deadlines. Students cannot opt out of required messaging.

4.7.3.2 Opt-out messaging, as defined in section 3.7, may include but is not limited to campus or department newsletters, student research and surveys, and messaging from other campus resources.

4.7.3.3 Opt-in messaging, as defined in section 3.6, may include messages from The Den, The Noorda Center for the Performing Arts, and other student clubs and organizations. Offices and organizations are responsible for maintaining a record of students who have opted in.

4.7.4 University areas that distribute opt-out or opt-in messaging must honor requests to unsubscribe from communications.

4.8 Permitted Text Messaging

4.8.1 Each sender or university area must receive express student consent before text messaging students. Students should be notified of the types of texts to which they are consenting and must be able to unsubscribe or opt out of receiving text messages at any time. Consent to receive messages from one area on campus does not grant consent to all other areas.

4.8.2 Each sender or university area is responsible for maintaining a record of express consent received from students.

4.8.3 The text messages sent to a student must include the University and university area's name (e.g. "UVU Admissions" or "UVU Athletics") communicate that standard data and text messaging rates may apply and tell the recipient how to opt-out or unsubscribe from future messages.

4.8.4 Senders can use text messaging to relay critical information about cancellations, closures, admissions, academic requirements, deadlines, registration information, financial aid, and other matters that are time-sensitive and necessary for student progress. Text messages should not be the primary means of communication with students but used as a supplemental communication



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

tool. Text messages must align with the department or area communication plan or strategies approved by a first-level executive.

4.8.5 Because text messaging is not a FERPA-compliant channel, university officials must not use text messaging to communicate personal or confidential information, including social security numbers, passwords, financial information, or academic information, such as student grades or class schedules.

4.8.6 Students who have invoked their right to deny the release of their directory information should not be communicated with via text message unless they have provided express consent to receive messages from the sender.

5.0 PROCEDURES

5.1 Requests for Email Communications

5.1.1 Requests for email communications should state the purpose of the communication, include the email's content, and identify a specific, targeted audience. Campaigns and other email messages must have an intentional and clear purpose to notify, remind, or move a student to action. All messages should be timely, clear, and effective.

5.1.2 Requests for email communications must identify the category in which the email falls: required, opt-out, or opt-in messaging.

5.1.3 In accordance with section 4.4.2, senders must submit these requests to and obtain all required approval from their first-level executive.

5.1.4 The distribution of any mass email communication determined to be a non-required message that students have not opted into must be approved in advance by the appropriate first-level executive. Approvals may be made for stand-alone messages or for specific communication plans such as newsletters or drip campaigns.

5.2 Requests for Text Communications

5.2.1 Areas seeking approval to use UVU messaging systems to text students can complete the request form through the Student Communication Governance Council (SCGC). This request must include the specific audience, the content of messages to be sent to students, and the ways student information and express consent will be collected.



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

5.3 Request for Access to University Messaging Systems

5.3.1 The SCGC will review each request and ask follow-up questions as needed. This review is to ensure compliance with university policy while verifying that the area requesting access has demonstrated a need for the communication channel.

5.3.2 Once the SCGC approves the request, it will connect the area representative with the vendor to establish an account and receive training on the system. Area representatives are responsible for ensuring all current and new senders receive the appropriate training.

5.3.3 The SCGC may deny a request if the area fails to demonstrate a clear need for the channel or fails to identify how the area will comply with the procedures within this policy and other applicable university policies, such as Policy 138 *Institutional Review Board* and Policy 542 *FERPA (Students Records Privacy)*. The SCGC may also deny requests if the University's contract with a communication platform vendor does not give the University the ability to register additional users. Areas may resubmit requests with any necessary clarifications.

5.4 Maintenance and Security of Student Information

5.4.1 Senders maintain responsibility for the proper use, care, and security of student information and contact lists.

5.4.2 Student lists may not be used for any purposes other than the approved use. These lists must not be retained or repurposed outside of the parameters defined in the request. Senders with access to systems providing regularly updated lists of student information may only use the lists for their intended purposes. Lists pulled from approved systems or Business Intelligence and Research Services (BIRS) requests should not be shared with offices or individuals not involved in related communications.

5.4.3 Senders who do not maintain membership lists or have access to systems with regularly updated student information can submit a request for student contact information to BIRS. Requests will only be approved for a specific communication or campaign with a defined target audience.

5.4.4 Only the offices and departments that can provide a record of students opting to receive text messages can obtain student contact information. Requests for student information for text messaging must be accompanied by evidence of express consent. Offices and departments are permitted to collect student phone numbers obtained by consent.



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Policies and Procedures

POLICY HISTORY		
Date of Last Formal Review: March 20, 2025		
Due Date of Next Review: March 20, 2030		
Date of Last Action	Action Taken	Authorizing Entity
March 20, 2025	New policy approved via regular policy process.	UVU Board of Trustees