

Policy Name:	Student Communication Policy
Originating/Responsible Department:	Vice-President (Students and Enrolment)
Approval Authority:	Senior Management Committee
Date of Original Policy:	March 25, 2015
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Mandatory Revision Date:	October 2030
Contact:	Director, Strategic Initiatives (Students and Enrolment)

Policy Statement:

To support student success, Carleton University departments, faculty and staff communicate regularly with undergraduate and graduate students about their academic and extra-curricular activities, supports and resources, as well as important dates, deadlines and university rules and regulations.

To do this, Carleton has a variety of communication tools including email, websites, portals, the learning management system, event calendars, a mobile application and new and emerging forms of digital and social communication.

As a result of the number of tools available, the number of departments, units, faculty and staff wishing to communicate with students, and the selection of email as the communication channel of choice, undergraduate and graduate students receive a high volume of messages from the university.

Purpose:

The purpose of the Student Communication Policy is to promote best practices in selecting communication tools for communicating to students and increase the awareness and proper use of the different communication tools available for staff. To achieve this objective, the Student Communication Policy has identified three principles to guide student communications:

1. Consistency: use communication channels consistently based on the type of message;
2. Consolidation: aggregate messages using communication channels such as websites, portals and newsletters; and
3. Simplification: make it easy for students to find what they need.

Scope:

The Student Communication Policy applies to communication to undergraduate, special and graduate students (hereafter referred to as students) using Carleton University's communication tools and systems. Messages to all students or targeted groups of students across any communication tool must conform to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation.

Procedure:

Communicating to students is important for all departments at Carleton – whether you are trying to reach all students or targeted audiences.

This policy outlines appropriate content to communicate to students and the most appropriate tool for the message. All student communication should be planned while considering the impact on students receiving a high volume of email from the university.

Appropriate content

Messages to all students or targeted groups of students across any communication tool must be in regard to university business. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Official messages about the normal operations of the university: This might include information about academics; the academic year; changes to governance, policy or practice; student support services; information about academic programs; academic program requirements; official undergraduate and graduate newsletters; and significant news that impacts the student body.

- Messages from senior leadership: In some cases, it may be necessary to send out official messages from senior leadership. This might include: a welcome message in the fall or significant occasions at the university. Every effort will be made to accommodate these messages using the most appropriate communication channel.

Emergency messages:

- In urgent or extraordinary circumstances, it may be necessary to send messages to all students or to targeted groups of students. This may be as an emergency message via the Emergency Notification System as outlined in the Emergency Notification System Policy or to communicate essential information, directives or decisions that require broad and immediate awareness, as outlined in the Crisis Communications Plan and with the approval of the Crisis Management Team.

Student email

Email to student email accounts (cMail) is the university's official form of communication to our students. Through the above objectives, this policy and its resources encourage departments, units, faculty and staff not to rely solely on email and instead incorporate a variety of useful tools to effectively communicate important content to our students. Email communication with students should be distributed with consideration to the timing and content of other university messaging based on the guidelines outlined here within.

It is a natural inclination for departments, units, faculty and staff to see the need to communicate to students as an opportunity to send email. However reasonable this may appear, the result is a perception by students that Carleton is spamming them, leading not only to frustration but also the obscuring of high priority messages vital to students' academic success.

Communication tools

The university's approach to student communication is by audience type:

- all students;
- targeted groups of students; and
- targeted individual students.

The audience the communicator is trying to reach determines the appropriate communication tool:

- Public Information (for all students or targeted groups) – relevant to the broader student population should be communicated using public tools such as websites and digital signage.
- Private Information (for individual students or specific populations) – relevant only to the recipient(s) should be communicated using private tools accessible only to the student (e.g. student email, Carleton's learning management system).

Messages to students across any communication tool must not be:

- outside the university's core business including external events and third-party programming unless approved by the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment);
- in contradiction with Canada's Anti-spam Legislation;
- without a direct connection to Carleton University; and/or
- requesting students to provide their password.

Communication tools used by Carleton University include, but are not limited to:

Email (Official Carleton Email i.e. cmail)

- Sent using official university lists based on current enrolment.
- Bulk emails are sent via Campaign Monitor, Banner or StarRez in collaboration with the Registrar's Office, Graduate Students and/or the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment) or their delegate(s).
- Requirements for use of email include:
 - o The student's chosen name must be used (as listed in Banner);
 - o The student's email address or personal information must not be visible to other recipients;
 - o Must include the sender office name and a reply address or email signature (which is actively monitored); and
 - o Messages to:
 - All undergraduate or special students must be sent by the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment) or their delegate(s).
 - All graduate students must be sent by the Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies) or delegate(s).

Email newsletters

- **State of the Raven:** sent to Undergraduate and special students (cannot be unsubscribe from as it is an official university communication);
- **TheGraduate@Carleton:** send to graduate students (cannot be unsubscribe from as it is an official university communication);
- Faculty or department newsletters
 - o Students should be able to subscribe/unsubscribe;
 - o Sent via Campaign Monitor (Carleton's official newsletter tool);
 - o Student lists for Campaign Monitor is executed by Information Technology Services; and
 - o Permission to contact:
 - All undergraduate or special students must be sent by the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment) or their delegate(s).
 - All graduate students must be sent by the Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies) or delegate(s).

Student Information Systems

- Carleton360 (student portal) - sent via intray message to undergraduate and special students by the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment) or their delegate(s), and to graduate students by the Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies), or their delegate(s)
- Carleton Central
- Carleton's learning management system

Digital Signage

- TV screens across campus used for general announcements.

Carleton University Websites – including, but not limited to:

- o Carleton homepage;
- o Undergraduate student site - current students;
- o Graduate student site;
- o Faculty; and/or
- o Department and units.

Emergency Notification System (ENS)

- Used in crisis situations where safety is deemed to be at risk as outlined in the Emergency Notification System Policy.
- Notifications are sent to:
 - o Carleton computer screens;
 - o Carleton email addresses (e.g. @cmail.carleton.ca, @cunet.carleton.ca, @carleton.ca); and
 - o Push notifications via the Carleton Mobile app.

Carleton Mobile App

- official mobile application for current students;
- provides news posts, student events, student services and resources
- User-specific information when logged in using MC1 (e.g. student account details, schedules, grades).

Mobile App push notifications

- Students must be able to customize push notification settings;
- Categories outline on the Carleton Mobile website;
- General announcements must be:
 - o significant to the wider student community; and
 - o Timely or be deemed business-critical by the Vice-President (Students and Enrolment), or their delegate(s)

Other Tools

- Event calendar(s)
- Residence management system (StarRez)
- Social media platforms

Student communication resources

To support a clear and more coordinated approach to student communications on campus, the Strategic Initiatives (Students and Enrolment) office has developed guidelines and resources to improve the sharing of information:

1. Communication tool chart;
2. Approval processes for communication tools; and
3. Guidelines for staff communicating with students.

All resources are found on the [Students and Enrolment Student Communication webpage](#). The office will also lead a Student Communications network to connect Carleton staff with student communications. This network facilitates sharing resources, best practices and peer support.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Vice-President (Students and Enrolment) and University Registrar

Responsible for the Student Communication Policy and delegates implementation of the policy to Strategic Initiatives (Students and Enrolment). Responsible for communicating to undergraduate and special students at Carleton University. This position is also responsible for student data including student contact information.

Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies)

The Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies) and their delegate(s) are responsible for communicating to graduate students at Carleton University. They manage and grant access to graduate student contact lists.

Strategic Initiatives (Students and Enrolment)

Is the delegated authority of this policy and is responsible for its implementation. Communicates to undergraduate and special students at Carleton University. Manages and grants access to undergraduate and special student contact lists.

Department of University Communications

Responsible for the implementation of the Crisis Communications Plan.

Department of Risk Management

Provides support and advice during crisis and emergency situations to ensure the safety of the campus community.

Information Technology Services

Executes access to student lists in Campaign Monitor.

Student Communications Network

The Student Communications Network shares best practices, resources and reminders with staff at Carleton who communicate with students.

Contacts:

Director, Strategic Initiatives (Students and Enrolment)

Links to related Policies:

- Acceptable Use Policy for Information Technology and Email
- Access to Information and Privacy
- Advertising Policy
- Anti-Spam Compliance
- Brand Identity Policy
- Change of Name
- Emergency Notification System
- Posting Policy
- Survey Policy
- Web & Digital Content
- Web Events Calendar Submission