

# Mass E-mail Distribution Policy

## Section 1. Purpose

This policy provides guidance for the issuance of mass E-mail communication to various University populations (constituents) including current students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors and friends, auxiliary enterprises and prospective students. The purpose of the policy is to define the populations, appropriate types of communication for mass E-mail distribution and to outline the procedures for submitting messages. **The intent is that all campus units, as well as individuals who need to communicate to large sections of the campus community, adhere to this policy. This policy shall be followed in tandem with the University's Internal Communications Plan.**

## Section 2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

- a. All University mass E-mail distributions to on-campus and off-campus populations in their entirety
- b. Issues related to population criteria, message criteria, format and distribution intervals
- c. Required and preferred E-mail addresses
- d. Message and distribution approval process
- e. Appeals process

## Section 3. Populations (see definitions in Section 11, Glossary)

- a. Campus-wide
- b. Faculty
- c. Staff
- d. Current Students
- e. Alumni/Former Students
- f. Prospective/Admitted Students
- g. Donors/Friends

## Section 4. Policy

The mass E-mail distribution system consists of multiple **populations**, grouped into major administrative groups. The following is a breakdown of each population and the items considered appropriate for mass E-mail distribution:

- (a) Campus-wide:
  1. Ad Hoc Communication:

- a. Crisis/urgent announcements (**compelling circumstances**): including, but not limited to, bomb or terrorist threat; natural disaster alert; mechanical failures; weather closures or delays; crime alerts; and computer virus alerts.
  - b. Logistics announcements (**emergency circumstances**): construction closures; traffic routing; Information Technology Systems (ITS) outages; and ozone or environmental alert notices.
  - c. Major announcements (**time dependent and critical operational**) circumstances: major events such as unexpected VIP visits; naming of a new president, vice president, provost or dean; and major sports announcements
2. Formal Communication:
- a. Weekly Campus Connections newsletter
- (b) Faculty
- 1. Time sensitive administrative and human resources information
  - 2. Faculty only announcements that must be communicated quickly
  - 3. Major policy and procedural changes that are time sensitive
  - 4. Weekly Campus Connections newsletter
  - 5. Institutional surveys\*
- (c) Staff
- 1. Time sensitive administrative and human resources information
  - 2. Staff only announcements that must be communicated quickly
  - 3. Major policy and procedural updates that are time sensitive
  - 4. Weekly Campus Connections newsletter
  - 5. Institutional surveys\*
- (d) Current Students
- 1. Registration, curriculum and graduation information;
  - 2. Financial Services information
  - 3. Newsletter from Student Affairs
  - 4. Institutional Surveys\*
- (e) Alumni/Former Students
- 1. General newsletter
  - 2. College newsletters
  - 3. Major announcements: major events such as unexpected VIP visits; naming of a new president, vice president, provost or dean; and major sports announcements
  - 4. Crisis announcements for incidents that could garner local, state and or national media attention
  - 5. Post-graduate surveys\*
- (f) Prospective/Admitted Students
- 1. E-mail communication through University-approved vendor.

(g) Donors/Friends

1. General newsletter
2. Major announcements; major events such as unexpected VIP visits; naming of a new president, vice president, provost or dean; and major sports announcements.
3. Crisis announcements for incidents that could garner local, state and or national media attention.

## **Section 5. Procedure**

(a) Mass E-mail distributions to these populations will be monitored and maintained by a Population Administrator. Anyone wishing to distribute a message to one or all the groups listed above shall contact the following departments and population administrators or their designees:

Population	Department	Population Administrator
Campus-Wide	Marketing (ITS shall serve as secondary contact) (Provost approval also needed for non-emergency messages)	Director, Marketing and Communications
Faculty	Academic Affairs	VP/Provost
Staff	Marketing	Assistant Director, Marketing and Communications
Current Students	Student Affairs	Dean of Students
Alumni/Former Students	Marketing	Director, Alumni Relations
Prospective/Admitted Students	Enrollment Management	Director, Undergraduate Admissions
Donors/Friends	Development	Stewardship Coordinator

(b) The Population Administrator will determine if the message is appropriate for the population and when the message will be distributed.

### **6A. Required Student E-mail Address**

Every student is required to have an official HBU E-mail address to which official University communications can be sent. In the best interest of effective communications management, this address must reside on the University-maintained E-mail system.

Students may elect to forward their E-mail to an address different from their official HBU account. Any student who elects to forward HBU mail to a different E-mail address assumes full responsibility for reading E-mail at the forwarded location. Students are expected to check their University E-mail account, or the account to which their University E-mail is forwarded, at least once a week.

## **6B. Faculty/Staff/Adjuncts Required E-mail Address**

Every faculty, staff and adjunct faculty member (employee) and employees of auxiliary enterprises are required to have an official HBU E-mail address. Employees may elect to forward their E-mail to an address different from their official HBU account.

## **6C. Alumni E-mail Addresses**

Alumni may choose to retain or acquire an HBU E-mail account or elect to forward their HBU E-mail to an address different from the HBU account. Alumni HBU E-mail accounts will remain active as long as the account is used within a consecutive six-month period.

## **Section 7. Format**

- (a) The format for the mass E-mail communications will be in E-newsletter format. The name of the E-newsletter will vary depending on the population i.e. Alumni Connections, Student Connections, Campus Connections, Friends Connections. Images cannot exceed 30 kilobytes. The total size of the E-newsletter may not exceed (TBD).
- (b) E-mail communication to prospective students is exempt from this format.
- (c) Campus-wide, ad-hoc communication and alumni/former students and donor/friends may be exempt from this format, as necessary.

## **Section 8. Opting-Out from Distribution Population**

Current students, faculty, staff and auxiliary enterprises may not opt-out of their mass E-mail distribution populations. Alumni, donors, friends, retirees and prospective students may opt-out of their mass E-mail distribution populations.

## **Section 9. Appeals Process**

For those message not deemed appropriate for mass distribution by the population administrator, the receiver will receive an E-mail back indicating so. Should the requestor feel that his or her message has been refused in error, the requestor may appeal to the Vice President for Marketing.

**Section 10.** A copy of this policy can be found in the Policy and Procedures link on my.hbu.edu.

## **Section 11. Glossary**

- (a) Admitted Students: individuals who have not yet enrolled for classes but have met all admissions criteria.

- (b) Alumni: individuals who have received an associates, baccalaureate or master's degree from Houston Baptist University or Houston Baptist College.
- (c) Auxiliary Enterprises: vendors serving in a subsidiary or branch capacity to Houston Baptist University i.e. maintenance services, food services, on-campus printing services.
- (d) Campus-wide: all University employees, students and auxiliary enterprises.
- (e) Compelling Circumstances: circumstances where failure to act may result in significant bodily harm, significant property loss or damage, loss of significant evidence of one or more violations of law or of University policies, or significant liability to the University or to members of the University community.
- (f) Current Students: individuals who are enrolled in a course at Houston Baptist University; active status. Once admitted and enrolled this individual becomes a continuing student. If not enrolled for two consecutive terms, this individual moves from the Current Students Population to Former Students Population.
- (g) Donors: individuals who have made a pledge or gift to the University.
- (h) Emergency Circumstances: circumstances where time is of the essence and where there is a high probability that delaying action would almost certainly result in compelling circumstances.
- (i) Faculty: full-time, part-time and adjunct faculty members.
- (j) Former Students: individuals who have attended classes at Houston Baptist University or Houston Baptist College but have not received an associate's, baccalaureate or master's degree.
- (k) Friends: individuals who have a connection to Houston Baptist University but have never attended classes at HBU.
- (l) Mass E-mail: communication sent to a population in its entirety.
- (m) Population: University constituents including campus-wide, faculty, staff, current students, alumni, donors, friends, prospective/admitted students.
- (n) Population Administrator: campus employee who is responsible for determining if information is appropriate for mass E-mail distribution for a particular population.
- (o) Preferred E-mail address: an E-mail address that does not reside on the University-maintained E-mail system; a different E-mail address to which faculty/staff members or current students may forward their HBU E-mail account.

- (p) Prospective Students: individuals who are prospects, have made inquiries or who have applied but have not been admitted to Houston Baptist University.
- (q) Required E-mail address: an E-mail address that resides on the University-maintained HBU E-mail system that is assigned to all faculty and staff and current students.
- (r) Staff: full-time and part-time employees (non-faculty).
- (s) Time-dependent and Critical Operational Circumstances: circumstances where failure to act could seriously hamper the ability of the University to function administratively, to meet its teaching obligations or to capitalize on promotional opportunities, but excluding circumstances pertaining to personal or professional activities.

\* All surveys will need to be approved by the Population Administrator before the survey begins. Additionally, to avoid 'survey fatigue' and ensure good response rates, most surveys will be sent to a subgroup of the relevant population. Please contact Institutional Research and Effectiveness at least one month in advance of your survey time for assistance in survey development and subgroup identification.

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