




## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Dr. Sharon L. Gaber, Chancellor  
Ms. Shari Dunn, Senior Executive Assistant to the Chancellor  
Dr. Joan Lorden, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
Mr. Lawrence Kelley, Interim Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs  
Mr. Niles Sorensen, Vice Chancellor for University Advancement  
Mr. Michael Carlin, Vice Chancellor for OneIT and CIO  
Dr. Richard A. Tankersley, Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development  
Dr. Kevin Bailey, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs  
Mr. Mike Hill, Director of Athletics  
Ms. Betty Doster, Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Constituent Relations  
Dr. Cheryl Waites Spellman, Interim Special Assistant to the Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion  
Dr. Jennifer Ames Stuart, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor for University Communications  
Ms. Kim Bradley, Chief of Staff  
Mr. Jesh Humphrey, Vice Chancellor for Institutional Integrity and General Counsel

**FROM:** Amy S. Kelso  
Senior Associate General Counsel 

**DATE:** October 7, 2021

**RE:** University Policy 304, Electronic Communication Systems

Attached are proposed revisions to University Policy 304, Electronic Communication Systems (both redlined and clean), along with new supplemental Text Messaging Procedures.

Academic Affairs, in consultation with Legal Affairs, developed these Policy revisions and new Supplemental Text Messaging Procedures based on the work of the [Texting Committee](#), which was formed in the fall of 2020 to explore and implement the ability to text students and parents/authorized users. The Committee advised that selectively using text messages to communicate with students could help with student success efforts by bringing urgent information to students via a different, widely used communication mode. The Committee recommended establishing a standard communication protocol for sending text messages to students and parents/authorized users so that the communication mode does not become oversaturated. That protocol is reflected in the new Supplemental Text Messaging Procedures.

The revisions to University Policy 304 itself are more for clarity than substantive.

I have attached both redlined and clean versions of the Policy, as well as the new Text Messaging Procedures for your review. These revisions will be presented to the Cabinet in the next month, so I request that you contact me **no later than this Friday, October 15**, to request changes or to discuss any questions that you may have.

Thank you.

ASK:mw

Attachments



## **Text Messaging Procedures Supplemental to University Policy 304, Electronic Communication Systems**

### **I. Background**

Text messaging is an additional method of communication that UNC Charlotte may use to reach out to the University community. Mass texting is used by authorized University officials to relay important transactional and time sensitive information such as emergency notifications, campus closures, academic deadlines, and notices critical to student academic success.

### **II. Definitions**

For the purposes of these Procedures, mass text messages are defined as texts sent to a predetermined group of persons with whom the sender is not in direct, personal contact.

### **III. Guiding Principles**

1. **Preserve texting as an additional channel for critical communications** as outlined in the Categories of Messages section of the procedure;
2. **Keep texts to a minimum** to ensure that students remain in the texting program and do not opt-out because of overuse;
3. **Messages must be directly related to student safety or student success;**
4. **Text messaging must not be used as the sole means of communicating to a student.** The text message must be supplemented by some other means of communication (e.g., electronic, paper notice) to ensure all students receive the information. An exception would be for messages required to be sent for security reasons.

### **IV. Scope**

All mass texts originating from any University office, or from any authorized University employee acting in their professional capacity, are covered under these Procedures.

### **V. Categories of Messages**

Texting is reserved for information which is considered critical and/or time sensitive. The following are the categories of mass text messages permitted under these Procedures:

1. Crisis and/or emergency, or significant disruptions to University operations, including activities which pose a threat to public safety, as determined by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Safety and Security or their designee;

2. Information critical to student success; currently limited to: critical academic calendar dates, financial aid notifications, payroll timesheet deadlines;
3. Other mission-critical messages as determined by the Chancellor, Provost, or their designee.

Text messages should not be used for:

1. General information to large populations (e.g., "Fall classes start Monday!");
2. Repeat reminders of messages already circulated;
3. Personal matters (e.g., items for sale, farewell messages);
4. Commercial solicitation.

#### **VI. Student Opt-In/Opt-Out Feature**

1. Students are prompted to enter/verify their contact information within My UNC Charlotte every six months. By providing their mobile numbers, students authorize the University to send them informational text messages. Note: Mobile numbers are not shared with any external entity other than those carrying out University business.
2. Students are able to opt-in or opt-out at any time for all texts except those related to crises/emergencies.

#### **VII. Mass Text Approvers**

A. Prior to being sent, mass text messages must be approved by the respective Divisional Director of Communications responsible for the communication, as follows:

1. Academic Affairs: Director of Enrollment Communications and/or Director of Communications for the Graduate School;
2. Business Affairs (and faculty/staff-directed messages): Senior Director, Reputation Management and Communications or designee;
3. Student Affairs: Director of Communications for Students Affairs.

B. University officials must ensure:

1. The text message is valid and in compliance with this Text Messaging Procedure;
2. The wording is accurate, concise, and aligns with brand standards;
3. The circulation list is correct;
4. Messages are coordinated with other communications to avoid oversaturation on any day/time and to maintain messaging effectiveness.

C. Procedure for non-emergency texts:

1. To obtain approval, contact the applicable Divisional Director of Communication listed above at least one week in advance with text wording, date to be distributed, and plans regarding providing the distribution list.

D. Best practices for transactional messages:

1. Messages should be no longer than 160 characters;
2. Avoid use of colloquial abbreviations and slang;
3. Address the student directly, i.e., as “you”;
4. Include essential points plus the instruction (e.g., “check your email for full details”);
5. Clearly identify the originator of the message (e.g., college, administrative office);
6. Messages must be accessible for all intended recipients (e.g., recipients with disabilities, non-English speakers);
7. Ensure that embedded links are short and clearly identified as connected with UNC Charlotte or other valid partners;
8. Provide link and/or alternative way for students to learn more information if text replies are not accepted. Be ready to respond - ensure you have appropriate staff to respond after messaging sent if applicable;
9. Consider a unique, brand-friendly shortcode, which is a 5 or 6-digit phone number specifically made for commercial use and mass mobile communications;
10. Analyze effectiveness of the text message to determine if text for that purpose should be used for future communications.

## **University Policy 304, Electronic Communication Systems**

### **Executive Summary:**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of the University's email system by its students, faculty, and staff. It addresses personal use of email, limitations on the use of email, archiving email, official University email communications, and user responsibilities.

University electronic communication accounts are provided and supported by the State of North Carolina to support the missions of the University.

### **I. Policy Statement and Purpose**

Electronic Communication Systems (ECS) are systems using University resources that transmit data electronically with or without human interaction (i.e., email, web, instant messaging, etc.). (See [OneIT Information Security Glossary](#).) The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the appropriate use of the University's electronic communication systems (ECS) by its students, faculty, and staff. ECS are tools provided by the University to complement traditional methods of communication and to improve education and administrative efficiency. Users have the responsibility to use these resources in an efficient, effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Use of the University's electronic communication systems ECS evidences the user's agreement to be bound by this Policy. Violations of this Policy may result in restriction of access to University ECS or other appropriate disciplinary action.

For procedures regarding transmission of information via text message to faculty, staff, and/or students, see the Text Messaging Procedures, supplemental to this Policy.

### **II. Definitions**

**Broadcast Communication:** A broadcast communication is any communication that is sent on behalf of the University to faculty, staff, students, or any subgroup therewith based on established population selection criteria.

**Essential Announcement:** An essential announcement is any communication that is sent on behalf of the University to announce either:

1. An emergency or any significant or consequential campus-wide event (e.g., closure of the University due to inclement weather or emergency), or
2. Important campus deadlines (e.g., last day of add/drop for students).

**Transactional Message:** A transactional message is one sent to a targeted selection of students related to a transaction specific to that student.

**Electronic Communication Systems (ECS)** include University electronic mail (email) systems and other methods of communication using University resources, such as text messages.

### **III. Applicability**

This Policy is applicable to all University employees, students, and any other member of the University community who has been granted access to ECS.

### **III. Procedures**

## A. Personal Use of ECS

While personal use of University ECS accounts is not prohibited by law, and while the University does not routinely monitor any user's ECS content, privacy of personal ECS content residing on or transmitted through University equipment is not assured. Because the University is a State entity, all data transmitted or stored using ECS capabilities are subject to the requirements of North Carolina's Public Records law, which generally requires that any person may have access to State records. Courts may order the production of University records, including ECS records, in connection with litigation. Appropriate law enforcement and other officials may, consistent with law, have access to documents for purposes of investigating allegations of violations of law or of University policy. Given such considerations, but subject to the requirements of the North Carolina Public Records Act, no University faculty member, staff member, or student should use a University ECS account with the expectation that any particular ECS content, whether personal or business-related, will be private.

## B. ECS Signature Standards

All persons sending electronic mail communications using ECS are ~~referred~~ expected to comply with the ~~electronic mail signature standards~~ established by University Advancement, which are set forth on the ~~University Communications website~~.

## C. Limitations on the Use of ECS

The legal and regulatory environment surrounding University ECS creates a number of other limitations on the use of University ECS accounts. Most apply uniformly to the use of all State-provided resources. ~~Such limitations include, but are not limited to~~ They may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. ECS accounts are for the exclusive use of the individual to whom they are assigned.
2. No use is permitted that conflicts with the requirements of civil or criminal law, including but not limited to laws relating to pornography, defamation, intellectual property infringement, and illegal discrimination; or that conflicts with any applicable policy of the Board of Governors or of UNC Charlotte, such as ~~use in support of partisan~~ use of ECS to engage in political activities.
3. No use is permitted that constitutes the unauthorized exchange of proprietary information or any other privileged, confidential, or sensitive information.
4. The knowing transmission of a message containing a computer virus, constitutes phishing, or that misrepresents the identity of the sender is prohibited.
5. The use of or attempt to use the ECS accounts of others without their permission is prohibited.
6. Personal use cannot interfere with a University employee's obligation to carry out University duties in a timely and effective manner.
7. ~~The P~~ personal use cannot involve sending or soliciting chain letters or sending unsolicited bulk mail or commercial messages (e.g., "junk mail," or "spam," or "MLM"), or otherwise overloading the University's electronic mail system or negatively interfering with system performance.
8. Uses that result in commercial gain or personal profit are not permitted, except as allowed under University intellectual property policies and Policy 102.1, External Professional Activities of Faculty and Other Professional Staff ~~the external activities for pay policy~~; however, in no case may University ECS be used for solicitation of an external activity for pay.
9. No personal use may state or imply University sponsorship or endorsement of its message.

## **D. Archiving ECS messages**

Individuals are responsible for saving or archiving ECS messages that constitute University records in accordance with University Policy 605.3, Retention, Disposition, and Security of University Records. ECS messages that are of a temporary ephemeral, or transient nature and have only reference or administrative value may be deleted when the user has determined that their reference value has ended. Due to limited resources, the Office of ~~OneIT~~ Information and Technology Services (ITS) department has the right to restrict the amount of user space on the message server as necessary and to purge and remove ECS accounts of students who have not registered for a semester.

## **DE. Official University Electronic Communications**

When using ECS as an official means of communication, students, faculty, and staff should apply the same professionalism, discretion, and standards that they would use in written business communication. Furthermore, students, faculty, and staff should not communicate anything via ECS that they would not be prepared to say publicly.

Students, faculty, and staff may not disclose University information in ECS messages that they are privileged to access because of their position at the University.

Those wishing to transmit broadcast electronic messages containing essential University announcements to students, faculty, and/or staff must obtain approval from the appropriate administrative authority. Within the scope of their authority, only the Offices of a Department Chairperson, Director, Dean, Executive Director, Vice Chancellor, or Chancellor may authorize the transmission of broadcast messages to a wide audience of students, faculty, and staff.

Appropriate **transmission of** broadcast ~~of~~ electronic messages may include, but is not limited to, the following types of announcements:

1. Emergency or unforeseen campus-wide events notification (e.g., cancellation of classes or closing of the University due to inclement weather or emergency);
2. Important campus deadline notification (e.g., last day of drop/add for students); or
3. Improved services to students, faculty, or staff that directly impact all members of the affected group.

By contrast, broadcast electronic messages should not be used for non-essential matters such as publicizing campus events. Broadcast ~~email~~ **electronic** messages should be sent only to the affected group (students, faculty, or staff, or a subgroup of one of those groups) and should be of critical importance to that group.

~~ECS also encompasses text messages. For procedures regarding transmission of information via text message to faculty, staff, and/or students, see University Texting Procedures.~~

## **EF. User Responsibilities**

~~OneIT~~ ~~The ITS~~ maintains the University's official ECS; faculty, staff, and students are expected to read their ECS messages on a regular basis. Faculty, staff, or students who choose to use another ~~email~~ **electronic mail** system are responsible for receiving University-wide broadcast messages, notices, and personal mail by checking the University's official electronic mail system, newsgroups, and the University's ~~website~~ **World**

~~Wide Web homepage.~~ An ECS message regarding University matters sent from an administrative office, faculty, or staff member is considered to be an official notice.

~~Online resources such as Newsgroups, comment boards and wikis are provided as a service to faculty, staff, and students for posting University-related information.~~ Any posted material deemed inappropriate by University administrators based upon the standards set forth above may be removed without prior notification.

The ~~ITS Standard for Responsible Use~~, applies to the use of ~~email~~ **electronic mail**, including any application or service that distributes messages to subscribers on an electronic mailing list.

#### **Revision History:**

- Initially approved by the Board of Trustees September 27, 2002
- Revised September 24, 2004
- Updated October 6, 2006
- Revised May 26, 2009
- Updated January 28, 2011
- Revised June 10, 2011
- **Revised \_\_\_\_\_**

**Authority:** Chancellor

**Responsible Office:** Academic Affairs

#### **Related Resources:**

- ~~ITS Standard for Responsible Use~~
- ~~University Policy 605.3, Retention, Disposition, and Security of University Records~~
- ~~UNC Charlotte Electronic Mail Signature Standard~~
- ~~Free Speech Website~~
- **Text Messaging Procedures [LINK TBA]**



## **University Policy 304, Electronic Communication Systems**

### **I. Policy Statement and Purpose**

Electronic Communication Systems (ECS) are systems using University resources that transmit data electronically with or without human interaction (i.e., email, web, instant messaging, etc.). (See [OneIT Information Security Glossary](#).) The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the appropriate use of the University's ECS by its students, faculty, and staff. ECS are tools provided by the University to complement traditional methods of communication and to improve education and administrative efficiency. Users have the responsibility to use these resources in an efficient, effective, ethical, and lawful manner. Use of the University's ECS evidences the user's agreement to be bound by this Policy. Violations of this Policy may result in restriction of access to University ECS or other appropriate disciplinary action.

For procedures regarding transmission of information via text message to faculty, staff, and/or students, see the Text Messaging Procedures, supplemental to this Policy.

### **II. Applicability**

This Policy is applicable to all University employees, students, and any other member of the University community who has been granted access to ECS.

### **III. Procedures**

#### **A. Personal Use of ECS**

While personal use of University ECS accounts is not prohibited by law, and while the University does not routinely monitor any user's ECS content, privacy of personal ECS content residing on or transmitted through University equipment is not assured. Because the University is a State entity, all data transmitted or stored using ECS capabilities are subject to the requirements of North Carolina's Public Records law, which generally requires that any person may have access to State records. Courts may order the production of University records, including ECS records, in connection with litigation. Appropriate law enforcement and other officials may, consistent with law, have access to documents for purposes of investigating allegations of violations of law or of University policy. Given such considerations, but subject to the requirements of the North Carolina Public Records Act, no University faculty member, staff member, or student should use a University ECS account with the expectation that any particular ECS content, whether personal or business-related, will be private.

#### **B. ECS Signature Standards**

All persons sending electronic mail communications using ECS are expected to comply with the [electronic mail signature standards](#) established by University Advancement

#### **C. Limitations on the Use of ECS**

The legal and regulatory environment surrounding University ECS creates a number of other limitations on the use of University ECS accounts. Most apply uniformly to the use of all State-provided resources. Such limitations include, but are not limited to:

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4. The knowing transmission of a message containing a computer virus, constitutes phishing, or that misrepresents the identity of the sender is prohibited.
5. The use of or attempt to use the ECS accounts of others without their permission is prohibited.
6. Personal use cannot interfere with a University employee's obligation to carry out University duties in a timely and effective manner.
7. Personal use cannot involve sending or soliciting chain letters or sending unsolicited bulk mail or commercial messages (e.g., "junk mail" or "spam"), or otherwise overloading the University's electronic mail system or negatively interfering with system performance.
8. Uses that result in commercial gain or personal profit are not permitted, except as allowed under University intellectual property policies and Policy 102.1, External Professional Activities of Faculty and Other Professional Staff; however, in no case may University ECS be used for solicitation of an external activity for pay.
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#### **D. Official University Electronic Communications**

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Any posted material deemed inappropriate by University administrators based upon the standards set forth above may be removed without prior notification.

The [Standard for Responsible Use](#) applies to the use of electronic mail, including any application or service that distributes messages to subscribers on an electronic mailing list.

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