Policy type: Administrative
Applies to: Faculty, staff, students, and volunteers

POLICY DATES

Issued: 10/13/2023
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Edited by: Melissa Gardner
Reviewed: 10/13/2023

The purpose of this policy is to provide rules and guidelines for the dissemination of mass email messages within or outside the University of Mount Union. The University of Mount Union expects all individuals who send email to comply with this policy. This policy applies to all mass email messages sent from a University-owned domain (e.g., mountunion.edu) and mass email messages sent through third-party services on behalf of specific departments or offices of the University.

This policy is intended to ensure that campus community members make the best use of our email resources and keep the University in compliance with regulations such as the CAN-SPAM Act, Telephone Consumer and Protection Act, and related institutional policies without unduly limiting the effectiveness of those on campus who need to use mass email to meet their marketing and communication objectives.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Mass Email	Identical or substantially similar messages sent to 50 or more addresses
Unsolicited Email	Any message that the recipient did not specifically request and would not reasonably expect to receive because of either an active, opt-in subscription to a mailing list or a current or past relationship with any part of the University (e.g., students, prospective students, alumni, employees, customers, etc.)
Mailing List	An electronic list or email list that allows for widespread distribution; often distributed by a system that allows an email message to be sent to multiple addresses in a manner that only allows the recipients to see their own address
Distribution List	A group of email recipients that is addressed as a single recipient
CAN-SPAM Act	A law that sets the rules for commercial email, establishes requirements for commercial messages, gives recipients the right to have you stop emailing them, and spells out tough penalties for violations
Commercial Content	Any electronic mail message the primary purpose of which is the commercial advertisement or promotion of a commercial product or service
Transactional or Relationship Content	Content that facilitates an already agreed-upon transaction or updates a customer about an ongoing transaction
Other Content	Content that is neither commercial nor transactional or relationship-based

Applies to: Faculty, staff, student employees, students, and volunteers

Policy Details

Email is an important tool for academic, research, and administrative communications; however, it is not the only tool, nor is it always the best tool. The cumulative amount of time spent by students, faculty, and staff on processing unwanted email represents an enormous loss of personal and institutional productivity. Furthermore, improper use of mass email potentially exposes the University to blacklisting by various email providers and to liability under the federal CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. Thus, the standards and restrictions enacted by this policy are necessary to:

- Provide for mass emailing at the University of Mount Union that is accessible, concise, consistent, and coordinated.
- Establish guidelines for the appropriate use of mass email versus other communication tools.
- Reduce the number of email messages sent to students, faculty, and staff.
- Ensure compliance with federal law and the "best practice" expectations of recipients' email providers.
- Preserve the effectiveness of email as a communication tool without unduly restricting the free flow of information within the University community.

Guidelines for Mass Email Communications

- All mass email messages will comply with the CAN-SPAM-Act, FERPA, and other appropriate University policies. This includes internal mass email messages, external mass email messages, and those being distributed through the University of Mount Union systems.
    - Don't use false or misleading header information. Your "From:," "To:," "Reply To:" and routing information – including the originating domain name and email address – must be accurate and identify the person or business who initiated the message.
    - Don't use a deceptive subject line. The subject line must accurately reflect the content of the message.
    - Tell recipients where you are located. Your message must include the business physical postal address.
    - Tell recipients how to opt out of receiving future email. Your message must include a clear explanation of how the recipient can opt out of getting email from you in the future.
    - Honor opt-out requests promptly. Any opt-out mechanism you offer must be able to process opt-out requests within 10 business days.
- All mass communications assembled electronically must use the University's official email enterprise systems listed below.
- Accounts and network access may be administratively suspended, with or without notice, when continued use of the University's resources interfere with the work of others, place the University or others at risk, or violate University policy.
- Sending unsolicited mass email – commonly known as **spam –** is prohibited. This means that all email lists must come from one of the University's official databases (Slate, Colleague, or Raiser's Edge) or recipients must have opted into receiving communication.
- The From: address must be a valid email address at mountunion.edu or another domain owned by the University. If the From: address is that of an individual, the permission of that individual must be secured before the email is sent. If the From: address is a general office or department email, the permission of the account administrator must first be secured. Use of an address at a domain not owned by the University (such as gmail.com) to distribute mass email is prohibited.
- The body text of the message should include contact information for the person, office, or group that sent it, especially if this contact information differs from the email address to which Reply To: emails will go. Minimally, the contact information should include a valid email address at a domain owned by the University.
- All recipient addresses must be concealed through the use of a mailing list. If a software limitation precludes the use of a mailing list, the BCC: field may be used to conceal the recipients' addresses instead; otherwise, use of the BCC: field to address mass email is prohibited.
- The message must include body text that is clear and concise. Additional information, if needed, should be provided via a web link in the text.
- Accompanying files, if any, must be provided via a web link in the body text of the message, not attached to the message itself.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, student employees, students, and volunteers

- All messages going out in mass email form, unless classified as essential, should have the approval of the area vice president.
- Unless it has been classified as **essential** (see Essential Communications), the email must include a valid option to unsubscribe from future mailings. This option must be clearly visible in the body text of the message, and requests to unsubscribe must be processed and honored within 10 business days. Please see the approved opt-out messaging provided below, as the appropriate message must be used for the appropriate system. This is necessary so that unsubscribers are fully aware of the type of institutional email from which they are un-subscribing as different systems are utilized across campus and unsubscribing from one system does not result in the unsubscription from communications sent through other systems.
- Mass email communications are expected to be targeted as much as possible to constituents who need to receive or who are most likely to respond to the intended message.

Essential Communications

Any message that meets at least **one** of the following criteria may be classified as an **essential communication** and exempted from offering an unsubscribe option:
   a. The message is essential to the mission or operations of the University.
   b. The message is essential for student academic performance.
   c. The message pertains to an urgent health or safety situation.
   d. The message is required by law.

The chief communications officer is charged with determining whether a given message qualifies under these criteria. In addition, certain messages shall automatically qualify as essential communications, as described in the subsections below, and do not require approval from the chief communications officer before being sent.

- **Messages from senior officers -** Any message approved by the president, vice presidents, deans, chief information officer, or director of security for information technology is an essential communication.
- **Messages from deans -** Any message to the faculty, staff, or students of a college from the dean's office for that college is an essential communication.
- **Messages from department chairs -** Any message to the faculty, staff, or students of an academic department from the chair of that department is an essential communication.
- **Messages from supervisors -** Any message to the staff of an administrative unit from the supervisor of that unit is an essential communication.
- **Messages from faculty and instructors -** Any message to the students enrolled in a course from the faculty member or instructor teaching that course is an essential communication.
- **Messages from the Office of the University Registrar -** Any message to instructors-of-record or students from the Office of the University Registrar is an essential communication.
- **Messages from the Office of Information Technology -** Any message to the campus community from the Office of Information Technology regarding systems outages, downtimes, etc.

Style Guidelines

A general Guide to Visual Standards can be found in the University's [Identity Program](). A future iteration of the Identity Program, slated for release in 2023-2024, will include specific style guidelines for mass email.

Accessibility Guidelines

- Make your subject line is brief but descriptive.
- Format your email from a visual perspective using accessibility best practices.
    – Use white space to create breathing room around the 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 14px 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.
    – Use effective color contrast between your background colors and foreground colors; WCAG's standards require a minimum contrast ratio of 4.5:1 for standard-sized text. For text larger than 23px or bold text larger than 18px, the ratio should be 3:1.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, student employees, students, and volunteers

- Format your links appropriately.
  - Make links accessible by bolding, underlining, and/or adding a symbol so that 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 out aloud. Instead, use text like, "read our full guide to coffee roasts" or "learn more about how solar power works."
- All information conveyed by the message must be in the text, not embedded in images or other elements that are inaccessible by text-to-speech software.
- ALT tags must be included for photos.
  - Use different alt text for each image, even if the images are similar. Imagine how confusing it would be to someone using a screen reader if all the pictures sounded exactly the same.
  - While you do want to be concise, your alt text should also be as descriptive as possible. Remember, you want to help those with vision disabilities "see" your image as clearly as possible.
  - Don't add title text in addition to alt text. Most screen readers will read *both* the title text and alt text, which doesn't provide an ideal listening experience.
  - Use empty alt text when appropriate. If your image strictly serves a design purpose (like a swirl, pattern, or shadow) then alt text may not be necessary. However, make sure to add an empty alt="" to the image so screen readers know to skip over it.

Official Mass Email Enterprise Systems with Opt-Out Options
The following systems have the capability to send mass email communication and provide receivers with an opt-out option.

System	Owner/Point Person	Recipients	Mass Email Capabilities	Usage	Opt Out Capabilities
Anthology	Alumni Advancement *Logan Aguiniga*	Alumni Friends	Yes	Mass email related to giving or engagement opportunities ONLY	Yes
Barnes and Noble	University Store *Aimee Schuller*	Faculty Staff Current Students Current Parents Alumni Friends Prospective Students Prospective Parents	Yes	Mass email related to the University Store ONLY	Yes
Blackboard Connect	President *Melissa Gardner*	Faculty Staff Students	Yes	Mass email in times of emergency, inclement weather, and outages ONLY	Yes
Constant Contact	President *Melissa Gardner*	Faculty Staff Students Current Parents Alumni Friends Trustees	Yes	Mass email related to institutional announcements, policy updates, events, and news ONLY	Yes
Front Rush	Athletics *Mike Parnell*	Prospective Athletes	Yes	Mass email related to student-athlete	Yes

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				recruitment ONLY	
GradAdvance	Advancement *Caitie Scott*	Students Faculty Staff Alumni Friends Parents	Yes	Mass email related to crowd funding campaigns ONLY	Yes
Hometown Tickets	President Athletics *Lynn Riggle* *Pamela Miller*	Athletic Fans	Yes	Mass email related to athletic tickets ONLY	Yes
Jump Forward	Athletics (Football) *Mike Parnell*	Prospective Athletes	Yes	Mass email related to student-athlete recruitment for football ONLY	Yes
Merit	Marketing *Ryan Smith*	Current Students	Yes	Mass email related to student achievements ONLY	Yes
Sidearm Sports	Sports Information *Nate LaRiccia*	Athletic Fans	Yes	Mass email related to athletic news ONLY	Yes
Slate	Admission *Kaetlynn Wise*	Prospective Students New Students Prospective Parents	Yes	Mass email related to the enrollment ONLY	Yes
Survey Monkey	Institutional Effectiveness *Jennifer Hollinger*	Faculty Staff Students Current Parents Prospective Students Alumni Donors Trustees Employers	Yes	Mass email related to campus surveys ONLY	Yes
Vanilla Soft	Mount Union Fund *Caitie Scott*	Donors	Yes	Student Call Center automated communication; **this system is not approved for mass email usage**	Yes

Opt-Out Messaging Scripts

The following opt-out messaging scripts are provided to ensure that the University remains in compliance with the requirements of the CAN-SPAM act. The appropriate message must be included at the end of each email sent through the official email enterprise systems that require an opt-out option.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, student employees, students, and volunteers

Anthology
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all alumni engagement and fundraising communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the Anthology system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Barnes and Noble
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all University Store communication sent from Barnes and Noble College on behalf of Mount Union's University Store. You may continue to receive communication from the University of Mount Union for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Blackboard Connect
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all emergency communication, including details regarding cancellations and outages, sent from the University of Mount Union via the Blackboard Connect system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Constant Contact
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all communication regarding institutional announcements, policy updates, alerts, events, and news sent from the University of Mount Union via the Constant Contact system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Front Rush
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all student-athlete recruitment communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the Front Rush system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

GradAdvance
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all crowdfunding communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the GradAdvance system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Hometown Tickets
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all athletic ticketing communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the Hometown Ticketing system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Jump Forward
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all football recruitment communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the Jump Forward system. You may continue to

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receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Merit
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all communication regarding your student achievements sent from the University of Mount Union via the Merit system. Additionally, your student achievements will not be sent to your hometown newspaper, high school, or government representatives. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Sidearm Sports
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all communication regarding athletic news sent from the University of Mount Union via the Sidearm Sports system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Slate
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all enrollment and financial aid communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the Slate system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Survey Monkey
In accordance with government and system regulations, you may choose to unsubscribe from this and similar emails by clicking the provided unsubscribe link. Should you choose to unsubscribe, you will be unsubscribing from all survey-related communication sent from the University of Mount Union via the Survey Monkey system. You may continue to receive communication from the institution for other purposes sent via other email systems unless you have also unsubscribed from those systems.

Official Mass Email Enterprise Systems without Opt-Out Options
The following systems have the capability of sending mass email communication but do not provide receivers with an opt-out option as the communications sent through them are intended for internal business purposes only.

System	Owner/Point Person	Recipients	Mass Email Capabilities	Usage	Opt Out Capabilities
Adirondack	Security Student Affairs Housing *Sara Sherer* *Bill Ketjen*	Residential Students	Yes	Mass email related to housing ONLY	No
Colleague	Information Technology Student Accounts Student Financial Aid *John Burkey and Mark Kolenz* *Renee Young* *Kathleen Thomas*	Current Students	Yes	Mass email related to proxy access, billing information, and financial aid awards.	No

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Commercial Card Service	Business Affairs *Shawn Bagley*	Faculty Staff	Yes	Mass email to those on campus with a purchasing card ONLY	No
CourseEval	Institutional Effectiveness *Jennifer Hollinger*	Current Students Faculty	Yes	Mass email related to course evaluations ONLY	No
Ellucian CRM Advise	Center for Student Success Information Technology *Marci Muckleroy* *John Burkey*	Current Students	Yes	Mass email related to current student retention efforts – financial aid, billing, and the registrar – ONLY	No
NEOGOV	Human Resources *Laura Good*	Staff	Yes	Mass email related to performance reviews ONLY	No
Safe Colleges	Human Resources *Laura Good*	Faculty Staff	Yes	Mass email related to compliance training ONLY	No
Touchnet	Business Affairs *Michelle Sams*	Current Students	Yes	Mass email to students for billing purposes ONLY	No

Guidelines for Using Outlook for Mass Emailing

Outlook is not intended to serve as a mass email system. Group emails can be sent via Outlook, but the total number of recipients should not exceed the total included in the definition of mass email provided above. An exception exists for those who have prior approval to send mass email via Outlook using an approved distribution group (studentdg, facultydg, staffdg). Only the offices of the president, vice presidents, deans, athletics, human resources, University registrar, and information technology can send using these distribution groups. Individuals who believe they need access to such groups must go through their appropriate vice president for approval.

Use of the Faculty DG List and Student DG List by the Offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs

The chief communication officer and offices of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs utilize the previously-approved Internal Email Communication Process when making decisions regarding the use of Constant Contact and/or Outlook for specific communications. This process permits the following.

- The Office of Academic Affairs may send mass communication utilizing the facultydg list when the communication is going to faculty only.
- The Office of Student Affairs may send mass communication utilizing the studentdg list when the communication is going to students only.
- If a mass email is going to any combination of faculty, staff, and/or students, it must be sent via the chief communication officer. The chief communication officer will determine if the information should be incorporated into UMU Today or sent as a separate email based on several criteria.

Please see the flowchart detailing this Internal Email Communication Process included at the end of this policy.

Applies to: Faculty, staff, student employees, students, and volunteers

Institutional E-Newsletters as Alternatives to Mass Email

- To reduce the number of separate mass email messages sent to faculty and staff, the chief communication officer, Office of Enrollment Services, and/or Office of Alumni Engagement will regularly distribute the following mass email newsletters.
  - UMU Today for faculty, staff, and current students
  - Mount Union Matters for alumni
  - U-Connect for current parents
  - New Raider News for admitted prospective students
  - Trustee Insider for trustees
- Senders will likely be directed to utilize one of these channels in lieu of sending a separate mass email at the discretion of the chief communication officer, Office of Enrollment Services, or Office of Alumni Engagement.

Access to Distribution Lists

Mass email distribution lists for faculty, staff, and current students must be pulled from the Colleague system and requested of the Office of Institutional Effectiveness by completing the Request for Institutional Data form. Mass email distribution lists for faculty, staff, and current students are not permitted to be independently maintained outside of the Colleague system.

Mass email distribution lists for prospective students and prospective parents must be pulled from the Slate system and requested of the Office of Enrollment Services by contacting the director of admission. Please note that such lists will likely only be provided to a predetermined list of individuals, including the chief communication officer as well as staff from the Office of Marketing, Office of Alumni Engagement, and Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Other offices and departments should submit their request to the Office of Admission in writing. Mass email distribution lists for prospective students and prospective parents are not permitted to be independently maintained outside of the Slate system.

Mass email distribution lists for alumni, friends, and current parents must be pulled from the Raiser's Edge system and requested of the Office of Alumni Engagement by contacting the director of alumni engagement. Please note that such lists will likely only be provided to a predetermined list of individuals, including the chief communication officer as well as staff from the Office of Marketing, Office of Enrollment Services, and Office of Institutional Effectiveness. Other offices and departments should submit their request to the Office of Alumni Engagement in writing. Mass email distribution lists for alumni, friends, and current parents are not permitted to be independently maintained outside of the Raiser's Edge system.

Please note that all efforts will be made to streamline mass email communication to cut back on 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 the content may instead be delivered through an institutional e-newsletter or alternative channel. Please see the Institutional E-Newsletters as Alternative to Mass Email section above.

Distribution groups (studentdg, facultydg, staffdg) within Active Directory are maintained by the Office of Information Technology.

Responsibilities for Data Protection

- No mailing lists should be given out to third parties without prior approval of President's Council or contractual obligations.
- Mass email distribution lists provided for approved purposes must only be used for those intended purposes and not shared with any other offices, departments, or individuals.
- Mass email distribution lists should only include the data necessary to complete the request. Additional Personally Identifiable Information should be removed from the file prior to sharing with the receiving office, department, or individual.
- Once a mass email distribution file is used for its intended purposes, it should be permanently deleted from the individual's email client and device.
- Under no circumstances should any personally identifiable information be included, shared, or stored in any of these files. See our Information Security Policy.

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Authorizations and Approvals

Any mass communications being sent outside of system processes must have the approval at the director level, dean level, or vice president level or higher. Authorization is given typically through email correspondence.

Email communication sent on behalf of a student organization must first be authorized by the director of student involvement and leadership. Email communication sent on behalf of an academic program must first be authorized by the appropriate college dean. Email communication sent on behalf of an administrative office must first be authorized by an office director or vice president.

Approved Third-Party Entities that Mount Union Assists with Campus Mass Communication

On occasion, because of organizational affiliation or contractual obligations, Mount Union will facilitate email communication on behalf of approved-third party entities. The University currently supports the following organizations in this manner:

- Athletic camps
- Aultman Alliance Community Hospital (Student Health Center)
- AVI Foodsystems
- Barnes and Noble College
- Document Concepts
- Mount Union's official sororities and fraternities
- Mount Union Women
- United Way of Greater Stark County

Mount Union will not facilitate email communication on behalf of any other third-party entities other than those listed above without President's Council authorization. Distribution lists for all or parts of the campus community will not be provided to any outside entities without prior authorization of President's Council or specific contractual obligations of a partnership agreement or contract. Before such contracts or partnership agreements are established, the Office of Information Technology must review the privacy policies of the organizations involved.

References

- CAN-SPAM ACT https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business.
- FERPA Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Mount Union Policies University Policies | University of Mount Union
- TCPA Compliance Checklist TCPA Compliance Checklist & Guide for Business Messaging (messagedesk.com)

Enforcement

- Persons found in violation of this policy will be reported to the appropriate dean or vice president for corrective action. Violations may also result in the removal of mailing list or email access privileges, in accordance with the Office of Information Technology's "Resources Acceptable Use Policy."

Position or Office	Responsibilities
Chief Communication Officer and Information Technology	Update of Policy
VPs, Deans, Directors, Department Heads, Supervisors	Implementation of this policy within their respective units.

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Contacts

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail/URL
	Office of Information Technology	330.823.2854	**IT@mountunion.edu**
	Chief Communication Officer	330.823.6063	**information@mountunion.edu**

History

This policy was established in 2023.

All changes must be listed sequentially, including edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes.

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