DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Mass Email Communications

Category: Operations
Responsible Department: University Communications
Responsible Officer: President
Effective Date: 6/26/2025

Policy Summary

This policy establishes a university-wide framework to define roles and responsibilities for how mass email will be created, approved and distributed to the university community to ensure that the email channel is clear.

Scope

This policy affects the following groups of the University:

- Entire University Community

Policy

Members of the university community have a responsibility to stay reasonably informed about university news and events according to their roles and responsibilities at DePaul. DePaul recognizes that email is an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally friendly way to communicate with large groups of people at the university, and that there is a need to send such messages to these groups. In addition, the university has a responsibility to communicate consistently, openly, and effectively with its constituencies regarding official university business.

The university provides tools and/or methods of constituent communication for both official and non-essential university business. These communications are subject to review and limitation based on purpose, frequency, audience and other factors. The university employs a mass email system to meet this need.

Everyone who uses the university mass email system to send messages to large groups has a responsibility to keep the channel clear to ensure that it remains a viable means of communication for all. Too many messages may cause community members to miss important emails related to their continued studies or employment.

This policy establishes a university-wide framework to define roles and responsibilities for how mass email will be created, approved and distributed to the university community to ensure that the email channel is clear.

A university group may assemble an email list comprised of its members for the purpose of sharing relevant unit news and information. However, university groups may not assemble marketing or mass communication email lists of university members outside the group except when recipients explicitly opt into the list.

Definitions

Mass email. Any email message campaign sent to a large group at one time. Large groups include the entire university, an entire campus or large subset of the campus community, such as all faculty, all staff or all students, among others.

Mass email system. Software that allows community members to send emails to a large group at one time. The university mass email system might change and there might be several systems in use for different purposes.

Essential university business. Essential university business messages alert the university community to:
- Announcements regarding the state of the institution (i.e., budget, external/internal issues impacting the university, school closing or emergency information)
- Substantial changes in governance, policy or practice
- Immediate threats to health, safety, property, or research
- Computer or telecommunications issues and notices of changes, upgrades, repairs, scheduled or unscheduled system downtimes, or other systems issues that impact the university.
- Broadly shared interests, such as street closures around campus. Shared interest messages do not include messages of commercial interest (see Commercial Messages for further explanation).
- Official messages may include an official survey.
- For students: registration, financial aid, financial accounts
- Any messages from the president or provost are considered essential university business.

Essential university business messages relate to an employment or transactional relationship and are non-commercial in nature, so they are exempt from the decline (opt-out) provision in the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. Members of the university community are not permitted to opt out of these messages.

University groups. University groups include, but are not restricted to: colleges, divisions, departments, centers, and employee resource groups.

>> **Solicited and Unsolicited messages**. Solicited messages are those that an individual opts to receive. Unsolicited messages are those that an individual does not request to receive.

Appropriate Use of Mass Email

Appropriate use keeps the channel clear enough so that important or critical emails regarding academic progress, accounts, etc. do not get lost in inboxes.

A mass email system should be used when:

- The sender needs or desires metrics/analytics for the email.
- Sending to a large internal audience or a large segment of the university community
- The email recipient is on a path (e.g. registration, which requires several steps to complete) and the sender would like to build a complex email campaign to coincide with that path.
- Use depaul.edu email addresses for active students, faculty and staff
- A message suitable to send via the university's mass email system is one that regards essential university business and material in the email must conform to acceptable use.
- The message should contain information about a topic that affects a strong majority of the targeted audience.
- The information conveyed should contain significant news value: News that pertains to a strong majority of people and will have a significant impact on the university community or their ability to conduct their business or education at the university or is otherwise deemed critical enough to distribute to the entire audience.
- The message must be targeted: Avoid automatically sending to everyone at the university or a large subgroup at the university if it does not affect a majority of that group.
- The message must adhere to the university's brand standards. See the email style guide, email signature guidelines and brand standards for more information.
- University groups are authorized to send messages to their own students, faculty or staff, in accordance with department or school guidelines and procedures, without prior approval. For example:
  - The College of Communication can send a message to all College of Communications students, faculty, and/or staff.
  - Study Abroad can message all students eligible to participate in their Study Abroad programs.
  - Announcements regarding deadlines and processes about registration, student accounts and financial aid sent from the respective central office.

Should a unit want to message an audience that is not a part of their unit, for example, if the College of Communication wants to send a message to all students, they will have to get approval from the designated approver.

In addition, units should be careful about messaging their audiences about business processes that are not their own. For example, if a college would like to send a message to their students about registration, they must coordinate the language and timing of that message with Enrollment Management at onedepaulsupport@depaul.edu. Other topics or audiences that would require coordination with another unit include but are not limited to:

- Alumni
- Retention
- Financial Aid/Accounts

Units are encouraged to use best practices for both mass and non-mass emails detailed in this knowledge document. Contact your supervisor or unit-specific communication staff member for direction. It is possible to subscribe people to a mailing list as part of a service. For example, if an employee becomes a member of the fitness facility, they can be automatically signed up to receive emails from Athletics. If this is being done, the person being subscribed should be notified either when they sign up for the service or when subscribed to the list.

Inappropriate Use of Mass Email

The following are examples of inappropriate use of mass email:

- Unsolicited commercial email
- Information of interest to only a small segment of the university community or a small segment of an audience (e.g. all faculty receiving a message about something of interest to only a small portion of the faculty audience)
- Announcements of regularly scheduled meetings and activities
- Emails to a student's home or personal email address
- Political, religious or inflammatory messages
- Personal messages
- Job postings
- Solicitations from colleges for specific courses, especially to students from a college that is different from that of the sender.

Commercial Messages

- Commercial messages that offer or promote products and services are specifically covered by the CAN- SPAM Act of 2003. The Act requires the sender to provide recipients with a clear and conspicuous opportunity to decline (opt-out) to receive further commercial messages.
- In general, the mass email system should only be used for legitimate DePaul educational and business purposes.
- DePaul's Acceptable Use Policy states that transmitting unsolicited emails is prohibited.

External email service

DePaul strongly discourages the use of an external mass email service. Any use of an external mass email service must fully comply with this policy and provide recipients with a legitimate option to unsubscribe from future mailings. If you are unsure or you need assistance migrating to the correct tool, please contact internalcomms@depaul.edu.

Units choosing to use such services should be aware that the university's anti-spam filters might prevent delivery of these messages to depaul.edu email addresses unless the Email Security Guidelines are followed.

Procedures

Each university executive or member of the senior leadership team, and faculty and staff council leaders will designate a member(s) of their staff as their authorized communication delegate(s) for sending mass email messages. The names of these individuals will be shared with Information Services and University Communications, Internal Communications. Authorization cannot be sub-delegated. Contact the IS helpdesk at helpdesk@depaul.edu to make a change in delegates.

It is recommended that all essential communication be sent from a departmental or organizational email resource account rather than from an individual employee, for example: helpdesk@depaul.edu rather than jsmith1@depaul.edu. Email resource accounts can be set up by using the online request form.

Exceptions

Individuals exempt from the requirement to obtain approval to use the mass email system to disseminate official communications include the officers of the university (president, provost, executive vice president, general counsel), vice president and director of internal communications in University Communications, the director of Public Safety, and the vice president of Facility Operations acting in their official capacities.

The Registrar, Student Accounts and the Office of Financial Aid do not require prior approval to send messages to any or all students related to official university business, including but not limited to FAFSA reminders, registration reminders, account statements and payment reminders, degree progress, etc.

Approvals: Audience, Approver

Individuals, groups or organizations who need to send official mass emails to an address group outside of their own university group (college, division, major, minor, etc.) must obtain the approval of the respective approval authority or their designated representative(s). Upon approval, the approval authority will send the message back to the designated sender for the unit.

Except in emergencies, three working days' notice is required for mass email processing. *Note, messages that are not properly submitted or formatted may take longer to send. Please ensure that the information provided to the designated sender is not contained in a pdf or jpg and has been reviewed and copy-edited as per the unit's stated review process.*

Approval Authorities:

- **All Students**: Student Affairs; studentaffairs@depaul.edu
- **All Faculty**: Academic Affairs; provost@depaul.edu
- **All Staff**: Human Resources; hr@depaul.edu

- **All Students, Faculty and Staff**: Internal Communications; internalcomms@depaul.edu

Final approval to launch the email must come from the requester/sender after a final review of a test message.

Enforcement/Abuse/Sanctions

University Communications will conduct periodic audits of mass emails sent through the mass email system. Approvers and users of the system can also report violations of the policy by emailing massemailabuse@depaul.edu.

- If a unit has been found to violate the policy:

  - Upon the first violation the unit head will receive an email communication that outlines the violation, explains why it is a violation and what will happen should there be a second violation.
  - Upon the second violation the director of internal communication will schedule a meeting with the unit head. During the meeting, the director will describe the first and second violations, explain why they are violations and what will happen should there be a third violation.
  - Upon a third violation within one year, an email will be sent to the unit head describing all three violations of this policy and their access to the mass email system will be removed.

- How to report abuse:

  - Email massemailabuse@depaul.edu
  - Call the misconduct report hotline at 877-236-8390 or navigate here and select 'Report Misconduct' and then 'Make a Report.'

Divisional Collaborations
Information Services
Academic Affairs
Student Affairs
Human Resources

Contact Information
University Communications, Internal Communications
internalcomms@depaul.edu

Appendices
None.

History/Revisions

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