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Revision Responsibility: Vice President of Finance and Administration  
Responsible Executive Officer: President

Source/Reference: [TBR Policy: 09.01.06.00](#) Mass Communications  
[TBR Policy: 01.03.02.60](#) Freedom of Speech and Expression  
T.C.A. 2-19.201 Political Activity by State Employees

## **PURPOSE**

Digital communications are the institution's primary means of communicating information to the campus community. The objective of this policy is to establish and maintain standards for sending mass email and other mass internal communications to students, faculty, staff, and other constituencies utilizing institutional email, software, systems, media, and other resources. This policy is meant to aid in preservation of the effectiveness of mass communication and to avoid its improper use.

## **INTRODUCTION**

- I. A "mass internal communication" is any communication sent on, over, or using college computing, email, social media, and/or other college-owned or operated communications systems to an entire college, to a large subset of a college, or to another large group of individuals, particularly those whose contact information is in possession of the college. Examples of such groups include, but are not limited to, all students, all faculty, all staff, all adjunct instructors, all employees on a specific campus, all alumni, and all prospective students. Mass internal communications include not only email and text messages, but also other forms of communication utilizing institutional resources.
  - A. "Mass internal communication" does not include a communication: to a unit within the college (e.g., a single department or business unit), to a list of subscribers who have elected to receive information, or to periodic announcements or other communications whose content has been reviewed and approved by the college regarding non-urgent matters of general interest to large segments of the college, such as periodic campus announcements.
  - B. Columbia State has processes in place to ensure that only college-approved information is disseminated through institutional websites, social media, advertising, and marketing platforms, information on those platforms does not fall within the definition of mass internal communications under this policy.
- II. Mass internal communications may be sent only by individuals authorized to communicate on behalf of Columbia State and only for information that furthers the College's mission, applies to a majority of the recipients, and is either very important or time sensitive. Appropriate subjects for mass communication include, but are not limited to:
  - A. Safety and security notices and alerts;

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- B. Information essential to college operations;
  - C. Notification of changes to policies and procedures; and
  - D. Information considered sufficiently important by the president, chief academic officer, police chief, chief marketing/communications officer, human resources, information technology, or other senior administrators.
  - E. Information that provides employees of opportunity to participate in community events, activities, and non-profit programs that contribute to the development of the community and or service organizations.
- III. Inappropriate uses for mass internal communication, include, but are not limited to:
- A. Messages that are personal in nature, including those that express personal opinions;
  - B. Messages sent by an individual that are not directly related to that individual's job duties;
  - C. Messages that are commercial in nature, with the exception of those messages in support of Columbia State operations or business;
  - D. Messages that are political in nature, including those in support of or against any candidate, party, or position or that otherwise violate state law regarding political activity (T.C.A. § 2-19-201 *et seq.*);
  - E. Solicitations for contributions or participation in activities not sponsored by Columbia State or Columbia State Foundation; and
  - F. Messages that are discriminatory or in violation of any Columbia State policy, including, but not limited to information technology and human resources policies.
  - G. Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted as contrary to the policy on Freedom of Speech and Expression: 1:08:00.

## CONSENT

Any individual using text messaging to send a mass internal communication is responsible for ensuring that consent has been obtained as required by the Telephone Consumer Protection Act.

## APPROVAL PROCESS

- I. The president, members of the president's cabinet, chief marketing/communications officer and/or their designees have authority to send out mass internal communications.
- II. The chief information officer is responsible for implementing processes that permit only authorized administrators to use mass email and other mass communication distribution lists, and for disabling the "reply to all" function for mass email.



- III. During an emergency or time of crisis, the President or designee may temporarily suspend applicable requirements of this policy.

*May 16, 2023 (new policy); reviewed/accepted by Cabinet, approved signed by the President July, 2023.*