Title of the Policy: Communicating to Students Via Text Message

Functional Area: Academic Affairs, Business and Finance, Student Affairs

Applies To: Academic Advising, Bursar, Registrar, Financial Aid

Policy Reference(s):

Number: optional
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Page(s): 1

Responsible Person
The Provost and VP for Academic Affairs are responsible for maintenance of this policy and for responding to questions posed regarding this policy.

Purpose / Rationale
Today's students rarely read email, yet they are always on their phone. Social media is an effective communication tool, but students ignore the commonplace social media (Facebook) for newer, “instant gratification” methods, such as Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram and Snapchat. The most common thing that students do on their phone is text. In addition, iPads and other devices also receive texts. Few students still have pay-per-text plans since those are no longer marketed by phone companies. We have significant amounts of cell numbers collected, but do not utilize them for communication. We need to have the ability to reach our students effectively, but we must use this technology judiciously. Communication via text must be limited to very specific individuals and for very specific purposes.

Definitions
N/A

Policy
Texting is not be open to general announcements, general communication or other low-level communication.

The following are approved to text students for the following objectives:

1. Armstrong Police Department: Emergency notifications
2. Bursar’s Office: 1-2 times in a semester, specifically to warn students that if they do not pay their balance they may be dropped for non-payment.
3. Registrar’s Office: to tell a student that they have been dropped for non-payment.
4. Financial Aid: Free application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) due dates and urgent financial aid
5. Advising Center: 2-3 times a semester to tell students that it is time to be advised and register for classes. This is coordinated through the Director of Academic Advising and may be via GradesFirst

**Related Procedures**

IT Services will need to convert the BLAST/texting feature to be an **opt-out** system as opposed to the current opt-in system.