

University of Florida Foundation, Inc.
Broadcast Email

Policy #: 3.04
Effective Date: October 26, 2007
Responsible Department: Computing

1. **PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for the appropriate, efficient, and professional use of electronic mail using UFF's database in communicating with alumni, donors, and friends.

2. **APPLICABILITY**

Broadcast email means any electronic message that is distributed simultaneously to 25 or more of the University's alumni, donors, or friends. It does not include emails sent out to the University's internal community. This policy also does not address emails to college or unit volunteer boards or councils.

3. **POLICY**

Electronic mail is used with increasing frequency to communicate with alumni, donors, and friends. In addition, electronic mail is used to initiate and generate responses from the Foundation's stakeholders and the general community. The ease and affordability of using electronic communications increase the danger of overburdening alumni and friends with frequent, seemingly disconnected messages, making the University appear disorganized and unprofessional in its communications approach.

In defining protocols for fundraising and alumni-related electronic communications, the following assumptions have been made:

- Electronic communications, appropriately thought out and executed, can significantly advance the relationship of stakeholders with the University.
- Poorly conceived electronic communications can have a significant negative impact on the reputation and image of the University.
- Electronic communication should be part of a broader communications strategy.
- UFF does not wish to restrict or control fundraising or alumni-related electronic communications, but rather to establish quality controls and procedures to ensure that alumni and friends are not inundated with University-related email..

This policy is to govern the use of UFF's database and confidential email addresses of alumni, donors, and friends of UF.

- A. These email addresses will not be made available for:
 1. commercial purposes (unless they provide an alumni benefit as determined solely by the Alumni staff);
 2. political purposes;
 3. non-UF groups;
 4. UF student groups (unless an exception is granted after confirmation that the specific program is in the best academic interest of UF).
- B. All uses of UFF email addresses, if approved, shall be only through the UFF list server. The unit requesting the use of this list for a broadcast email must provide UFF staff with the design for the message. Each such message must contain a link to a menu of “unsubscribe” opt-out options or an approved opt-out message. UFF staff requires at least one week of prior notice for such broadcast.
- C. UFF reserves the right to control the timing of such broadcast emails, as it is responsible for the overall coordination of all solicitations and alumni communications.

Key Principles

As fundraising and alumni programs grow increasingly reliant on electronic media, it is essential to keep the following principles in mind:

- Email is a strategic tool to be used strictly for reaching well-defined target audiences quickly and efficiently.
- All messages distributed from UFF must meet minimum standards of University and industry guidelines for readability, accessibility, and packaging that conform with current best practices in the marketing industry.
- All communications must respect recipients’ privacy.
- All technical requirements must be met to ensure efficient distribution, feedback, and tracing.
- All communications must be treated as an invitation to recipients to correspond with the sender, and as such require appropriate levels of service support.

Guidelines under these principles are listed below.

1. Email is a strategic tool to be used strictly for reaching well-defined target audiences quickly and efficiently.

Consider who you are trying to reach. Resist the temptation to broadcast widely when your requirements are better satisfied by targeting more narrowly. By broadcasting you may annoy people for whom the message has no relevance and lower a person’s tolerance for electronic messages from the university. Consider what other messages have been sent to any constituent you are interested in emailing, in the past 30 days. Balance the need to communicate with the need to sustain recipients’ interest in the messages. As an alternative to sending out a single-topic broadcast email, consider incorporating messages of interest to all alumni in the

alumni electronic newsletter. It is distributed weekly to all alumni for whom UFF has a valid email address and permission to send email. Contact the editors to discuss the inclusion of a news item. Also, consider what other vehicles you are using to distribute this message. Is email being used strategically to enhance your overall communication strategy, or are you communicating this message strictly by email? Make sure your various methods of communication work well together.

2. All messages distributed from UFF must meet University and industry guidelines for readability, accessibility, and packaging that conform with current best practices in the email marketing industry

READABILITY:

- Consider that email is a different medium from print; your readers will scan, not read, your message.
- Use spell check! When in doubt consult a style guide.
- Always use short sentences and plain language. An informal, conversational tone is almost always appropriate for email.
- Be sure your email contains links to a web page that offers greater detail. Check that all links (and related links) listed are functioning and up to date.
- The format of the text message should be:
(blank line)
(blank line)
- Consider carefully what will appear “above the fold” in most email programs (sometimes as few as 6-8 lines). The content of these first lines visible on the screen is of paramount importance.

ACCESSIBILITY:

- Attachments: Attachments of any kind are strongly discouraged: they add substantially to the file size of an email (placing strain on the disseminating server and recipients’ systems) and greatly increase the potential for virus transmission. Instead, whenever possible, link to files on a server. (Scan that file thoroughly for viruses!)
- Images: Images are included in email by making links to image files on a server – images of a reasonable file size will generally appear in recipients’ messages after a delay of just a few seconds. Larger or numerous images can take much longer. For that reason, images should be used sparingly, generally only to establish branding and, if necessary, to accompany the main story/subject of a newsletter.
- Links: Ensure that all embedded links work at the time the email is sent, and will continue to work. Links with a long string of characters should be accompanied by instructions to copy and paste the entire link into a browser if the link code gets broken by the email application.

- Format: All broadcast emails from UFF must have a text only version. Through the UFF mass email tool, recipients can stipulate whether they want to receive HTML or rich text (see “Format” below) on their email preferences web page.

PACKAGING:

“Packaging” refers to the From, Reply To, Bounce back, To, Subject and Date lines, as well as to any headers or footers.

- From: Unless the message is explicitly from a person (*e.g.*, Dean, President, etc.) it should be from the “University of Florida College of X.” Not only does this identify the sender more clearly (as opposed to being from joe.staff@university.edu), it also helps a grad find your message more easily by sorting alphabetically. The “From” field should never contain an individual staff member’s personal email address unless he or she is completely prepared to handle ALL feedback. Note that the From alias and email address are easy to change; however, make sure that the email address actually exists and that the owner is aware that recipients can cut and paste a reply directly to that address.
 - Reply to: When recipients hit “reply,” their messages will go to this address. This mailbox will need constant and consistent attention from your service/RSVP representative to ensure that inquiries are acknowledged in a timely manner.
 - Bounceback: Emails sent to temporarily inoperative or invalid (“dead”) addresses will be “bounced back” to a specific address. Generally, four or more bouncebacks strongly suggest that an email address is no longer valid.
 - To: If you are not using a system that allows you to put the recipient’s name or email address in this field, try to use a group title such as “Greater Metro Area Gator Alumni” to help the recipient understand why he/she is receiving the message.
 - Subject: Choice of words in the subject line should be very specific, to encourage recipients to open your message (*e.g.*, use “Join Miami area University alumni on Jan. 28” instead of “Message to Miami alumni”). Avoid spam-type words: “free,” “act now,” “sign up now,” “limited offer,” etc., and all exclamation marks. Limit subject line length to a maximum of 35 - 40 characters (including spaces). Short subject lines allow users to quickly scan the contents of their inboxes without having to open each message.
 - Headers and Footers: The top of each message should contain a short, accurate overview of the contents of the newsletter, plus pointers to the email preferences link at the bottom of the message. The bottom of each message should contain the appropriate standard disclaimers and copyright information (below) as well as pointers to each user’s email preferences web page.
3. All electronic communications must respect the recipient’s privacy and must indicate our commitment to protecting them from viruses, etc.

- Ensure you have checked for all appropriate restriction codes in order to respect previous requests regarding types of communication alumni are willing to receive. The UFF mass emailing tool allows users to set these preferences through a subscription management web page. This page can be updated at any time by the user.
 - All broadcast emails must include a standard “footer” that will be provided by UFF.
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4. Technical and distribution requirements must be met to ensure efficient distribution, feedback and tracing.
- Ensure appropriate resources are allocated to handling bouncebacks and personal replies.

Emails sent to more than 25 recipients should use the mass emailing service provided by UFF. Along with being highly reliable and reducing administrative requirements, this service will ensure that recipients can determine what they will receive from the university, and that email address changes are efficiently tracked.

All electronic communications must be treated as an invitation to the recipient to correspond with the sender.

- By nature, any email message comes with the reasonable expectation that responding to it will potentially start a correspondence. (All email clients are equipped with a reply button.) Any recipient has the right to expect that a “reply” email is an appropriate vehicle to respond to a broadcast message.
- Email sent in reply to a broadcast must be directed towards a valid and well-monitored email account.

Key E-Communication Tools

To request the use of any of the three mass email broadcast strategies below, please contact enewsletters@uff.ufl.edu.

E-invitations

UFF will offer the service of producing and sending E-invitations on behalf of the divisions. UFF will send only one E-invitation per event. No event reminders will be sent via email.

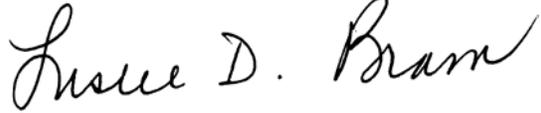
E-solicitations

An E-solicitation is defined as a request for financial support generated through a mass email communication and/or an outright appeal on behalf of annual or special projects within the University. Such appeals will be produced and disseminated by the Florida Fund annually or on an ad hoc basis.

4. **CLARIFICATION**

Requests for clarification of this policy should be sent to the Associate Vice President (lbram@uff.ufl.edu).

Approved Date: October 26, 2007

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leslie D. Bram". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Leslie D. Bram, Associate Vice President

Revision history: Original version