

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Communicating with Employees
NO.:	ADMIN-266
RESPONSIBILITY:	Associate Vice President, Communications and Marketing Chief Administrative Officer
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
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1. Introduction

This policy and procedure provides a framework for a solid internal communications strategy ensuring effective employee communication practices are in place regarding Durham College (DC) information, events, activities and announcements. Effective internal communication is critical to the success of our organization.

The Communications and Marketing (C+M) department collaborates with internal stakeholders to reinforce the institutional goals and objectives, as well as to connect employees to the work of the College.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure internal messages align with DC's strategic priorities and brand and all internal stakeholders have equal and timely access to all messages.

3. Definitions

Refer to [Durham College's Standard Definitions](#).

4. Policy statements

- 4.1. Clear, concise, accurate and timely communication is a strategic necessity.
- 4.2. Timely communication refers to the period of time determined in order for information to be useful and effective. Time-sensitive or urgent information that could impact health and safety, security or business continuity should be disseminated as soon as an individual is made aware of a situation.
- 4.3. A critical component to ensuring effective internal communication is the flow of information between managers and their direct reports. Unless this information is confidential, managers are expected to keep their direct reports informed and up to date on College information through direct communication and indirectly by encouraging employees to monitor DC's Information Centre for Employees (ICE) and emails from Durham College on a daily basis.

- 4.4. Managers are responsible for distributing, in a timely manner, relevant internal communications and information to direct reports, contractors and vendors, as appropriate, who do not have access to campus-wide emails, ICE, etc.
- 4.5. The College utilizes campus-wide emails, an emailed employee newsletter and/or posts on ICE to broadly communicate information to employees. The method used to communicate with employees is dependent on the nature of the information to be shared. C+M can provide guidance if a requestor is unsure of the best method for message distribution.

- 4.5.1. Campus-wide messages that are time-sensitive and urgent, are distributed directly to employees via email. These messages are reserved for communicating information of enhanced importance and relevance for the majority of the College's employees, or for disseminating key information that impacts the ability of employees to effectively fulfill the duties of their roles.

Examples include, but are not limited to: urgent service disruptions; significant organizational changes and updates; security alerts; death of members of the College community; major changes to campus operations; major funding announcements; world events that have the potential to affect the well-being of employees; etc.

- 4.5.2. ICE posts provide information of interest to employees that is not of an urgent nature or does not have a significant or immediate impact to College operations. Examples of information the type of messages posted to ICE include: upcoming events; non-urgent service disruptions; workshops or training sessions; job postings; promotions or new employee hires; etc.
- 4.5.3. The employee newsletter is emailed to all DC employees on a weekly basis to streamline communications, reduce the number of emails to employees and help surface important information. This link-based email newsletter consolidates campus-wide messages and ICE announcements into a single channel, as well as highlight DC success stories to inform, educate and inspire readers as DC employees and ambassadors.
- 4.5.4. While the College's social media accounts and website are key elements of DC's communication strategy, these tools should be considered options to complement the distribution of key information but should not be utilized as the sole vehicles for communicating important information to employees.

5. Procedure

5.1. Campus-wide messages

- 5.1.1. These email messages should be related to high-importance communications that significantly impact employees, College business, operations or research projects supported by the College and are time-sensitive and/or urgent.
- 5.1.2. A request for distribution of a campus-wide message should be emailed to the director, Communications. The requestor must obtain the approval of their manager prior to submitting a request and the manager should be copied on the email request.
- 5.1.3. The requestor should provide a draft of the message to be distributed, as well as the following information when submitting their request:
 - Preferred date of distribution, if message is time-sensitive
 - Name of employee on whose behalf the message is being distributed (name, title, department, phone extension)
 - Name of individual where questions can be directed (name, title, department, email address)
- 5.1.4. Campus-wide messages for employees are approved by the director, Communications, or designate. Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.1.5. Campus-wide messages are reviewed by a communications team member to ensure the language aligns with the DC brand and style. If significant changes have been made, the C+M employee will provide this feedback to the requestor, with the opportunity to review edits prior to distribution.

5.2. The following exceptions apply and are sent directly by IT Services (ITS):

- 5.2.1. Computer virus warnings or any other imminent or active information security threat.
- 5.2.2. Widespread system outages (e.g. telephone, software or facilities) or resource threats that demand immediate awareness.
- 5.2.3. Information technology-related notices of service disruption.
- 5.2.4. Information about new enterprise systems or significant changes to existing enterprise systems.

5.3. ICE postings

- 5.3.1. ICE postings for employees include but are not limited to, communications of high importance that significantly impact College business and/or operations; general information related to College departments/schools, services, employees, students and the community that connects them to the goals and people of the organization. All campus-wide messages are also posted to ICE.
- 5.3.2. Information is posted to the applicable section on the home page of ICE (Announcements or Celebrating our People, for example). Events are posted to the calendar section of the home page.
- 5.3.3. Announcements are reviewed by a communications team member to ensure alignment with the DC brand and values. Announcements should be submitted through ICE by a team content co-ordinator.
- 5.3.4. Announcements or calendar items for posting on the home page of ICE should be posted on the content co-ordinator's Team page with the "display on homepage" option selected. A member of C+M will review the submission and determine if it is applicable to appear on the home page of ICE.

5.4. Employee Newsletter

- 5.4.1. Content for the employee newsletter is curated by the communications team on a weekly basis. It includes:
 - links to all ICE posts from the previous seven days that continue to be relevant (omissions would include, for example, a service disruption that has ended);
 - links to upcoming events that impact DC employees; and
 - links to New and Notables, blogs and high-profile media coverage.
- 5.4.2. The newsletter is emailed to all DC employees weekly on Thursday mornings during regular operating hours.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. C+M is responsible for ensuring all content distributed by campus-wide email meets the criteria outlined in this policy and adheres to DC brand and style guidelines, with the exception of campus-wide messages distributed by ITS, as outlined in 5.2.
- 6.2. ITS is responsible for all aspects of campus-wide messages as it pertains to 5.2, including drafting and distribution of their messages. ITS staff must obtain the necessary ITS departmental approvals prior to distribution of these messages.

- 6.3. C+M has oversight for content posted on ICE, with the exception of content on team pages. Team content co-ordinators are responsible for the content on their individual pages.
 - 6.3.1. A current list of content co-ordinators can be found under the resources section on ICE.
 - 6.3.2. For information on how to become a content co-ordinator, the role of content co-ordinators or how to add or update content, please refer to the [ICE guidelines](#) or submit a request through the feedback mechanism on ICE.
- 6.4. If any ICE postings are found to be non-compliant with this policy, they will be removed by a member of C+M and/or Team page content co-ordinator for ICE. The person whose posting was removed will be contacted and informed of the reasons for the removal of their post.
- 6.5. C+M has oversight over the content included in the employee newsletter.
- 6.6. This policy and procedure applies to all groups on campus including work-study or placement students and employees.
- 6.7. All employees in C+M are required to uphold the confidentiality of any information pertaining to DC.

7. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act considerations

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards have been considered in the development of this policy and procedure and it adheres to the principles outlined in the College's commitment to accessibility as demonstrated by the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

8. Non-compliance implications

Non-compliance with this policy and procedure could negatively impact the current and prospective College community with both external stakeholders and the media, which could lead to significant financial loss and damage to the College's reputation.

9. Related forms, legislation or external resources

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