

TYPE:	Administrative
TITLE:	Communicating with Employees
NO.:	ADMIN-266
RESPONSIBILITY:	Chief Administrative Officer & Associate Vice-President, Communications, Marketing + Student Recruitment Chief Administrative Officer
APPROVED BY:	Durham College Leadership Team
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REVISED DATE(S):	
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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, Marketing + Student Recruitment (CMR) 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) 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 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. CMR can provide guidance if a requestor is unsure of the best method for message distribution.
 - 4.5.1. Campus-wide messages 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. 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.

- 5.1.2. A request for distribution of a campus-wide message should be emailed to the manager, 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.

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, phone extension)

- 5.1.3. Campus-wide messages for employees are approved by the manager, Communications, or designate. Requests are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- 5.1.4. 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 CMR 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 Information Technology 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 enterprises 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.

- 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 CMR will review the submission and determine if it is applicable to appear on the home page of ICE.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1. CMR 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. CMR 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 CMR 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. This policy and procedure applies to all groups on campus including work-study or placement students and employees.
- 6.6. All employees in CMR 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 (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 Accessibility Plan (ADMIN-203).

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. Communications plan

- A message will be posted on ICE alerting employees when new or revised policies and procedures are added to ICE.
- A message will be posted on MyCampus alerting students when new or revised policies and procedures are added.

10. Related forms, legislation or external resources

- None.