EAB Navigate Text Messaging Functions: *Guidance on Best Practice*

Text messaging can be an effective means of communicating with students in support of a variety of campaigns, and the EAB Navigate platform makes texting students simple. **However, we need to carefully consider when and for what purposes texting is most effective, in order to not diminish its effectiveness.**

This document guides the expectations for purposes and practices of using text for student communication.

Text Message Purpose and Content

Students have been shown to be responsive to receiving texts about deadlines or opportunities related to them, but they do not want what they perceive as spam. In general, text messaging is best when not the sole method of communicating essential or urgent information/announcements. Consider it as part of a suite of messaging.

* Academic and student success purposes, e.g.:
  + Encourage to come in for academic advising;
  + Send campaign to engage with resources;
  + Remind to check email for a longer set of directions.
* Messages of a timely nature, e.g.:
  + Nudge to action;
  + Remind of specific deadlines;
  + Announce special college events.
* Individual messages, e.g.:
  + Congratulate for an achievement;
  + Encourage a specific advisee on an upcoming exam.
* Messages must NOT be used for:
  + Communicating person or confidential information;
  + Personal matters (e.g. items for sale, farewell messages);
  + Sending any messages containing social security numbers, passwords, credit card numbers, or any FERPA protected data. This is strictly prohibited.
* **Before you hit send, ask yourself, “Is this valuable information for students?”**
  + **Then ask yourself again, “Is it really?”**
* Strike a good balance in tone between personal and professional. Text like you would talk – it’s ok to have your real voice come through and to use emotion. But don’t be too artificially chatty or humorous.

Text Message Best Practice

Consider the length, type, and timing that best meets the needs of each audience and fits within the technical constraints. **Note that students with a mobile number will automatically receive texts but may choose to opt out. If students do not have a mobile number, the message will be sent to their Saint Rose email address.**

* Compose concise messages in Word first and use the Word Count feature to **eliminate anything you don’t need in order to fit within the 160-character limit**.
* Identify yourself or your office because students will not know who you are from the incoming number. If you do not have space to identify and still convey the message within 160 characters, consider sending a first message with your identifying information and a second message with the content or consider pointing students to a website or tiny url or an email if you need to refer students to a longer message.
* **Sending to less than 100 students:**
  + Texts will be sent from a rotating 10-digit number that is not attached to a particular person or identifiable as a specific Saint Rose office
  + Student responses are allowed
  + Responses come into the Conversations area in Navigate, and you can respond back by text through Navigate
  + Responses also come into the sender’s outlook, where the conversation can continue by email.
  + Be prepared to set aside some time to respond especially if you’ve asked if they want more information - students will have an expectation of quicker turn-around time.
* **Sending to 100+ students:**
  + Texts will be sent from a 5-digit “short code” that will not be identifiable as a specific Saint Rose office
  + Students cannot respond.
  + **Best for general announcement or reminder texts.**
* Avoid sending [text](https://simpletexting.com/) outreach too early in the morning or too late at night, and respect privacy of weekends and holidays unless there is a particular event that requires it.

**Examples of Text Messages**

**Individual Student (students are able to respond to you through Navigate Conversations)**

* Hi Melissa! This is your advisor, Ashton Darrett. Advisement Day is next week. Please check your email to sign up for an appointment with me!

**Under 100 Students (students are able to respond to you through Navigate Conversations)**

* This is a message from the Registrar’s Office: Spring 2022 Applications to Graduate are due October 15, 2021. Send yours in today!
* Hi, this is Ashton Darrett, your advisor. The course add/drop deadline is Friday, September 3, 2021. If you need assistance, please reply to this message.
* This is a message from the Residence Life Office: the last day to change your meal plan is Friday, September 3, 2021 through MyHousing.

**100+ Students (students are not able to respond to you)**

* This is a message from the Registrar’s Office: Spring 2022 course registration starts November 15, 2021. Check your email for more information.
* Reminder from Student Development: New student orientation starts today – we will see you there!

**Text Messages and SMS Responses**

Listed below are SMS commands students can use with Navigate text messages, which let them receive or not receive texts from Navigate as they wish (only if the message comes from the 5-digit “short-code”.

| **SMS Command** | **Expected Response** |
| --- | --- |
| HELP, INFO | "This service sends messages on behalf of your school such as personal messages from staff and appointment related information. Reply 'STOP' to cancel. Reply 'START' to opt in. Msg & Data rates may apply." |
| STOP, QUIT, CANCEL, UNSUBSCRIBE, END | "You have opted out from receiving texts to this number. Please reply 'START' to opt back in. Msg & Data rates may apply." |
| Other text: e.g. 'hi there' | "We're sorry. This number does not support incoming messages. Reply 'HELP' for info. Reply 'STOP' to cancel. Msg & Data rates may apply." |
| START | "You have opted in to receive texts to this number. Reply 'STOP' to opt back out. Msg & Data rates may apply." |

**Other Things to Consider**

Before sending texts related to the topics below, please check with our Student Development team to promote institutional coordination as they are currently sending these messages as texts to students.

* Payment reminders
* Notification to check email for important update
* Some registration reminders
  + Registration open
  + Texting tree to inquire if the student is going to register
* Orientation invites
* Orientation reminder
* Institutional Event invite
* Institutional Event reminders
* Some campus announcements to enrolled students