SMS Texting Policy

Audience
All members of the University of Missouri–St. Louis community including prospective and current students.

Statement
SMS text messaging is an efficient and effective way of communicating with current and future members of the university community. The University of Missouri–St. Louis (UMSL) will only distribute text messages to users that opt-in to receiving our text message while providing the ability to opt-out at any point by changing their communication options related to SMS text messaging. Those who opt-out will be marked as such and not receive text messages until they opt back in.

Background
The University of Missouri–St. Louis recognizes that text messaging can be a highly effective means of communication, but the university is also aware of the need to protect user’s data and limit what information may be sent through a text. As a university, UMSL will follow all guidelines for FERPA, The Privacy Act of 1974 and the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. No information in violation of these laws may be sent via text. The university will not share any information via SMS text-messaging apps with any 3rd parties without allowing users to opt-out before sharing. The university must protect user data to ensure a positive communication experience.

Guidelines and Procedures
UMSL has developed and implemented an SMS Text-Messaging Management system to manage the opt-in or opt-out of users for text messaging. Users should visit MyGateway.umsl.edu and use the SMS text-messaging app to verify their cell phone number is correct and to opt-in or opt-out of different message categories. All new students applying to UMSL are automatically opted-in when submitting an application for admission to the university. (Please note: If a student does not want to receive text messages, they can reply to a text message with STOP, or visit the MyGateway portal to opt-out. These guidelines and procedures must be followed by each department / office responsible for sending SMS text communications). There are currently five different text-messaging categories.

1. Academic Messages – Users may receive messages about advising, tutoring, class scheduling, academic support services, etc.
2. Student Affairs – Users may receive messages about student affairs related resources and programming.
3. Finance – Users may receive messages about payments, student financial aid and scholarships.
4. Information Technology – Users may receive messages about Helpdesk work orders and possible security issues with your accounts.
5. Enrollment Management - Users may receive messages related to admissions information, registration and information related to enrollment.

Students can expect to receive:
- Guidelines for student success and support
- Reminders of important dates and deadlines
- Inquiries for providing assistance

Students can respond with:
- Questions
- Comments
- Responses

User Privacy:
Due to privacy laws, such as FERPA, certain information may not be able to be discussed via text messages, (such as grades, GPA, etc.). If the conversation evolves to the need to discuss sensitive information, the student may be asked to check their email account.

Email remains the official form of communication
Text messaging will be utilized to enhance communication. Email to a user’s university email account is and will remain the official form of university communications. Students should check their university email account on a regular basis for official and important university communications.

Frequency of SMS text communications
Participating departments will send an average of one to two text messages per month. During key times, such as registration, text messages may be sent more often.

Note: UMSL departments interested in utilizing text messaging for student communications should submit a Cherwell ticket. See the Procedure for Department Access to the Text Messaging Platform (Link from site) for more information.

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