61.99.99.C0.06 Non-Emergency Communication with Students by Text/SMS Messages

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Procedure Summary

To support student success, it is important that Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMU-CC) communicates timely and effectively with its students so that the students receive the official university information that they want and need. Text/SMS messaging is one of the methods of non-emergency communication that TAMU-CC may use to communicate directly with students. Text/SMS messages sent by TAMU-CC using an automatic texting system must comply with the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), 47 U.S.C. §227, and this procedure. For the purpose of this procedure, the term "student" refers to both current and prospective students.

Definitions

Automatic texting system: Application or AI-enabled system which has the capacity to read, store, or produce telephone numbers to be sent text messages, using a campaign or program. This definition applies to text/SMS messages.

Procedure

1. REQUIREMENTS

1.1. Any department/unit within TAMU-CC that sends text/SMS messages using an automatic texting system is responsible for complying with the TCPA and the following requirements:

(a) Prior express consent of the recipient of the text/SMS message(s) must be obtained using a channel other than text/SMS message;

(b) The recipient of text/SMS message(s) must be provided with the option

to opt-out of future text/SMS messages; and

(c) No further text/SMS messages may be sent if consent is withdrawn or the recipient opts-out of future text/SMS messages from the department/unit.

1.2. These requirements apply whether the mobile/cell phone number(s) are pulled from a central university database or from a list created at the department/unit level.

2. BEST PRACTICES

Text/SMS messages sent by TAMU-CC, whether sent using an automatic texting system or by direct dialing, should follow the best practices listed below to ensure that students remain in the texting program and do not opt-out due to an excessive number of texts/SMS messages.

2.1. Texting campaigns are subject to the approval of the respective unit vice president or their designee(s) and require coordination with other approved texting units on campus via the shared Outlook calendar.

2.2. Each approved unit must select at least two (2) and not more than three (3) authorized full-time university employees to be designated as platform users who are responsible for crafting, routing for approval, sending, and monitoring text/SMS messages on behalf of their channel.

2.3. Text/SMS messages should only be used to send students important and time-sensitive official information, including health and safety information, notices critical to student success, account information, registration, advising, and financial aid.

2.4. Text/SMS messages should be concise (no more than 160 characters), accurate, include essential points, and, if needed, contain call to action.

2.5. Wording should be appropriate and fit the university's voice and brand as detailed in the university's Brand and Style Guide (see Appendix).

2.6. The list of recipients should be reviewed to ensure that it is correct and relevant to the message being sent. Information in the message should be directly related to the recipient(s).

2.7. All text/SMS messages must begin with an appropriate identifier so recipients can immediately recognize the sender. For example, TAMU-CC Admissions or TAMU-CC Registrar.

2.8. Text/SMS messages should clearly state the action that the recipient needs to take or how the information impacts the recipient and who to contact for additional information.

2.9. The number of text/SMS messages sent should not be excessive.

2.10. Text/SMS messages are sent with adequate time for a response, action, or activity.

2.11. Text/SMS messaging abbreviations should not be used. Abbreviations for the university name and its units are acceptable to help identify the sender and/or pertinent office.

2.12. Text/SMS messages should be sent at times that are considerate of recipients' availability and the unit's availability to respond. For example, text/SMS messages should not be sent to students early in the morning or over the weekend if the unit is not available to monitor responses.

2.13. Replies should be addressed and responded to as soon as possible during business hours, no later than within 24 hours.

2.14. Text/SMS messages must not be the only form of communication for messages relating to employment, academic progress, status, requirements, or actions.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

Telephone Consumer Protection Act, 47 U.S. Code §227

Appendix

Brand and Style Guide

Contact Office

Contact for Clarification and Interpretation:	Marketing & Communications 361.825.2420