MID-AMERICA

CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Communication Standards & Guidelines

Office of Strategic Communication

Updated draft: March 2024

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Policy

The Communications Policy of Mid-America Christian University (MACU) reflects our commitment to establishing clear and effective communication standards across the institution. By designating the Office of Strategic Communications to conduct an annual review by June 1, we ensure that the policy remains current and aligned with the evolving needs of our University community. This regular evaluation process allows us to incorporate any necessary updates, address emerging communication challenges, and adapt to the dynamic nature of the academic landscape. This policy must receive final approval from the President's Cabinet to ensure alignment with the strategic vision and overarching goals of MACU. Each department head is responsible for implementing the following guidelines to comply with this policy.

Standards - Email and Print

Email Style
For all incoming/outgoing messages, use the following styles:

Outlook
- Font: Arial, 11 point, regular font
- Color: Black (R − 0 / G − 0 / B − 0)
- Background Color: White

Gmail
- Font: Sans Serif, Normal Point
- Color: Black (R − 0 / G − 0 / B − 0)
- Background Color: White

Rationale for email style:

- The Oklahoma Board of Regents, and all of our accrediting bodies, presently communicate with the Office of the President using a white background. A plain white email background is considered the professional look for these accrediting bodies.
- The Board of Trustees' Policy Manual requires all publications to be first approved by the President, including electronically formatted communications.. The Trustees feel the Office of the President is responsible for approving the published image of the University, therefore this policy removes the potentially time-consuming process of the Office of the President approving every email communication sent by MACU.

Email Signatures

All email signature information requirements are standardized for Microsoft Outlook and Gmail.

The use of badges, icons, or alternate/outside logos is prohibited — do not include badges, icons, alternate/outside logos, or quotes in your signature block.

Email signatures may include credentialing certifications after your name with appropriate application to your position. Preference of highest degree level first and no more than two acronyms following the name to avoid confusion and clarity. By prioritizing the highest degree

level and limiting the use of acronyms to a maximum of two, we aim to enhance the professionalism and readability of titles, fostering a workplace environment where credentials are communicated clearly and concisely.

Standardized signatures will use Arial/Sans Serif font standards and include the following information:

Approved Email Signature

Outlook

Name (Bold, Arial 11pt, MACU Red RGB 170-24-44)
Job title (Bold, Arial 10pt)

Mid-America Christian University
3500 SW 119th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73170
Office telephone # | email@macu.edu
(Arial 10pt on contact information)

Gmail (Please copy and paste from this document directly into your Gmail settings)

Name (Bold, Sans Serif 11pt, MACU Red RGB 170-24-44)
Job title (Bold, Sans Serif 10pt)

Mid-America Christian University
3500 SW 119th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73170
Office telephone # | email@macu.edu
(Arial 10pt on contact information)

Approved Email Signature Line with Highest Degree/Certification <u>as it applies to your position.</u>

Name, MBA (Bold, Arial 11pt, MACU Red RGB 170-24-44)
Job title (Bold, Arial 10 pt)
Mid-America Christian University
3500 SW 119th Street, Oklahoma City, OK 73170
Office telephone # | email@macu.edu
(Arial 10pt on contact information)

Employees should only use their title and the University's name for official University business.

Acceptable and approved uses of the University's technology and email are covered in the [Acceptable Use Policy For Information Technology](#) hosted on EvangelNet.

Print, Digital, and Letterhead Standards:

Letterhead

- MACU letterhead will adhere to the standard of using Arial font guidelines. The letterhead uses the "Arial, 11 point, regular, black font." This font is to be used throughout the letterhead's body text.

- All letterhead must be printed using the Branded Letterhead Template provided by the Office of Strategic Communications and hosted on the www.macu.edu/graphics site. An appropriate Vice-President must approve any alternate use of a letterhead (for example, letterhead specific to each department).

- Link to updated University approved letterhead that is already created.

Campus Memos

Campus memos should be used to communicate vital information that impacts all of campus promptly and efficiently.

- Campus-wide memos must utilize Arial, 11-point, regular, black font.

- All memos must be formatted using the Memo Template hosted on EvangelNet and submitted to the Divisional Vice President for review and approval 24 hours before the memo needs to circulate.

TV Slides

TV slides circulate upcoming MACU events and initiatives around the academic buildings on campus.

- When creating a TV slide, please double-check the brand guide to confirm the slide aligns with the guidelines.

- TV slides should be submitted as a presentation-sized (1920 x 1080 px) .png file.

- To submit a TV slide, email whitney.knight@macu.edu with the attachment as a .png and include the dates you would like the slides to begin and end running.

Print Pieces

Departments that are printing any public-facing material should adhere to the following:

- When creating the document to be printed, please double-check the brand guide to confirm the piece aligns with the guidelines.

- Quotes from external printers: The Office of Strategic Communications has relationships with several local printers. If you need a quote or have questions about printing, please contact the Office of Strategic Communications.

- If requesting creative assistance with a marketing or promotional piece, please contact the Office of Strategic Communications at least 30 days prior to needing the finished product. This timeline may vary depending on the quantity and scope of the project. If you have any questions regarding timelines, do not hesitate to reach out to the Office of Strategic Communications.

- The Office of Strategic Communications will provide 3 proofs, with the third serving as the final proof prior to the project being sent to print. These proofs serve as an opportunity to provide edits in a cohesive and timely manner.

Guidelines - Written and Verbal

Email Communication

Our University values clear and effective communication through email as an essential tool for collaboration. To ensure a productive and respectful email environment, employees are encouraged to use professional language, maintain a concise and focused message, and consider the appropriateness of the recipients before sending emails. Additionally, employees should prioritize brevity and clarity to enhance understanding.

It is crucial to promptly respond to emails within a reasonable timeframe and notify colleagues of potential delays. Confidential information should be handled with the utmost care (see FERPA), and employees are reminded to use the appropriate channels for sensitive matters. Overall, our communication policy aims to foster a culture of transparency, efficiency, and professionalism in all email exchanges within the division.

1. Employees are required to carbon copy (CC) their immediate supervisor in emails under specific circumstances. These instances include communications related to project updates, significant milestones, and any information pertinent to the supervisor's responsibilities, seeking approval, providing important status reports, or involving the supervisor in decision-making processes.

This practice ensures transparency, keeps supervisors informed of relevant developments, and facilitates efficient collaboration within the team. However, employees are encouraged to use discretion, avoiding unnecessary carbon copies (CCs) to maintain clarity and streamline communication channels.

FERPA

Adhering to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) in all email communication is required to safeguard the confidentiality and privacy of student information. FERPA establishes guidelines for the release and handling of educational records, ensuring that sensitive details remain protected.

By strictly following FERPA regulations in our email communication, we demonstrate our commitment to ethical practices and mitigate the risk of unauthorized disclosure of student data. All employees must understand and implement FERPA principles consistently to uphold our institution's integrity and prioritize our students' privacy rights.

For more information, questions, or training on FERPA, please contact the Registrar's Office.

University and Leadership Reference Language

When representing the University, there are several key areas to use appropriate, proper mentions:

- Reference Mid-America Christian University (MACU) upon first mention, and use MACU thereafter when speaking.

- Reference President Phil Greenwald upon first mention and use President Greenwald thereafter when speaking and writing.

- Capitalize University when writing of MACU specifically. (Example: Throughout the past seven decades, our University has remained deeply committed to our core values.)

- When using an employee title, capitalize each word of the title, except for minor words. (Example: Dr. Bobbie Spurgeon-Harris, Executive Vice President and Chief of Staff)

- When using our tagline "Dream **Bigger**. Do **Greater**.", be sure to capitalize the first letter of each word with a period between each phrase and bold the words "**Bigger**" and "**Greater**" when possible.

Alumni

The word "alumni" refers collectively to male and female graduates or a group of all-male graduates and is plural. "Alumnae" refers to a group of women graduates and is plural. "Alumna" refers to a single female alum, and "alumnus" is a single male alum. The terms "alum" (singular, not gender specific) and "alums" (plural, not gender specific) are acceptable in informal settings, particularly when the gender is unknown.

In written communications, always reference alumni by name, followed by their graduation year in parentheses.
Examples:
- Undergraduate Degrees ('72)
- Undergraduate and Graduate Degrees ('16, G'20)
- Honorary Doctorate ('86, H'21)

Social Media

New social media accounts must go through an approval process with the Office of Strategic Communications. To limit confusion and keep a strong brand voice and identity, student organizations or event chairs should send information to the Office of Strategic Communications with a minimum of one week for a story post and a minimum of one month for an in-feed post on official MACU social media. If a greater social media campaign or logo/design work is needed, a meeting will be held with the stakeholders and the Office of Strategic Communications to discuss overall goals and strategy.

Approved Student Organization accounts must also submit a username and password to all social media platforms to the Office of Strategic Communications to have on file, as well as a dedicated faculty or staff advisor who provides instructional support and excellence and alignment of content.

Student Media Guidelines (including Videos and Podcasts)

In adherence to our commitment to fostering a dynamic and respectful learning environment, our student media guidelines extend to cover student podcasts as a valuable form of expression. We encourage students involved in podcast production to uphold the principles of integrity and accuracy. All podcasts recorded and produced in "The Studio at MACU" should align with our educational mission, avoiding content that could be deemed offensive or inappropriate.

Students are encouraged to use their creative platforms responsibly, acknowledging the potential impact of their words on the broader community.

Language and Demeanor

Effective communication is not solely about the message conveyed but also encompasses the nuances of how the communication is delivered. This section is dedicated to the pivotal role that language and demeanor play in shaping our culture and the effectiveness of our interactions.

If you want to say this…	Try saying this instead…
Kennedy Hall is right over there…	Let me walk you over…
We're under construction…	Pardon our mess! It will be worth it…
Campus Closed/Out of Office	The University is closed, we'll be back (date).
This is MACU, how can I help you?	It's a great day at MACU! How can I help you?
Hello.	Welcome to campus! We're glad you're here.
I don't know..	Let me look into that. / Here's what I know.
What?	Could you repeat that?
That's not my job/problem..	Let me direct you to someone who can help…
Sorry this is late/delayed…	Thank you for your patience...

News Media

All press releases and statements to the news media must be routed through and disseminated by the Office of Strategic Communications.

It is the responsibility of the Office of Strategic Communications to initiate and/or respond to news media requests and to manage those interactions. When an employee or department is contacted by the news media, he/she must immediately notify a staff member from Communications before providing any information or responding to questions.

Communications with news media on behalf of the University or in a manner that officially represents or appears to represent the University must be conducted by administrators and staff as designated by the Office of Strategic Communications.

Brand Guidelines

Our brand guidelines are an integral component of our communications policy. These guidelines ensure a consistent and compelling representation of our brand across all communication channels.

This comprehensive guide provides valuable insights into the visual elements, messaging strategies, and tone that collectively contribute to a cohesive and impactful brand presence. Embracing these guidelines aligns us with our organizational values and reinforces our commitment to professionalism, clarity, and uniformity in all communications.

Our brand guide and files can be accessed anytime on our [MACU Brand site](#).

Failure to comply with our brand guidelines will result in a compromised brand image, potential confusion among our audience, and a dilution of the carefully crafted identity that defines our organization, effectively undermining our efforts to establish a solid and unified brand presence.

Consequences may include corrective actions, retraining, loss of privileges, or other necessary measures to bring communications back into alignment with our established brand guidelines.