EAB Navigate Text Messaging Functions:
Guidance on Best Practice

*Access the Navigate icon in the **AccessUH** portal.*

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.
- Before you hit send, ask yourself, "Is this valuable information for students?"
- 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.
- Example text messages:
  - *When are you enrolling for Fall term?! Need help? Your XX Advising Office is ready! Not planning to take classes? Please tell me so I can update your file. Thanks!*
  - *Good luck on College Day 1! Swing by XXX office for a map and directions to class!*
  - *From XX Advising Office: We don't want you to lose your classes! Pay or choose a payment plan today - Student Financials section of myUH self-service account.*
  - *See your email now for important internship instructions from your advising office!*

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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.

- 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.
- Sending to 100 or fewer students:
  - o Texts will be sent from a rotating 10-digit number that is not attached to a particular person or identifiable as UH or a certain office
  - o Students responses are allowed
  - o Responses come into the Conversations area in Navigate, and you can respond back by text
  - o Responses also come into the sender's outlook, where the conversation can continue by email.
  - o 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 101+ students:
  - o Texts will be sent from a 5-digit "short code" that will not be identifiable as UH or a certain office
  - o Students cannot respond.
  - o Best for general announcement or reminder texts.
- Avoid sending text 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.

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