



COLLEGE COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

Internal Communications

Internal communications tools are integral to effectively conveying the information necessary to support and advance the mission of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design. The Hines College has reviewed the communication practices used by colleges across the University of Houston to prepare the following guidelines for its internal communications policy.

Faculty Email Listserv

- The purpose of this listserv is to communicate administrative information to faculty relevant to the College's mission and business.
 - Appropriate College-related topics include:
 - Operations
 - Instruction
 - News
 - Grants and research funding
 - Scholarly competitions
 - Professional development
 - College and industry events
 - University-wide information and initiatives
 - Emergency information
 - Inappropriate topics include:
 - Content unrelated to the College's mission and the role of faculty at the College
 - Solicitations other than University-sponsored fundraising initiatives
 - Personal messages
 - Messages violating university policies
- Designated "owners" of the listserv include the College's dean, assistant and associate dean(s) – as applicable, and the College's communication lead. Only list owners can send emails to the listserv. All requests to communicate information via the listserv should be sent to a list owner for approval and circulation.
- At the start of the fall and spring terms, the list of recipients is updated with current faculty and staff.

Staff Email Listserv

- The purpose of this listserv is to communicate administrative information to staff relevant to the College's mission and business.
 - Appropriate College-related topics include:
 - Operations
 - Instruction
 - News

- Grants and research funding
 - Scholarly competitions
 - Professional development
 - College and industry events
 - University-wide information and initiatives
 - Emergency information
- Inappropriate topics include:
 - Content unrelated to the College’s mission and the role of staff at the College
 - Solicitations other than University-sponsored fundraising initiatives
 - Personal messages
 - Messages violating university policies
- All staff members may send to the listserv when adhering to the topics outlined above.
 - The list of recipients is updated with staffing changes.

Student Email Listserv

- The purpose of this listserv is to communicate administrative information relevant to the educational experience of the College’s students.
 - Appropriate College-related topics include:
 - Operations
 - Enrollment
 - Advising
 - Career Development
 - Instruction
 - News
 - Scholarships
 - Scholarly competitions
 - Student organizations
 - College and industry events
 - University-wide information and initiatives
 - Emergency information
 - Inappropriate topics include:
 - Content unrelated to the student’s educational experience
 - Solicitations other than university-sponsored fundraising initiatives
 - Personal messages
 - Messages violating university policies
- Designated “owners” of the listserv include the College’s dean, assistant and associate dean(s) – as applicable, and the College’s communication lead. Only list owners can send emails to the listserv. All requests to communicate information via the listserv should be sent to a list owner for approval and circulation.
- Personal and protected student information should never be included in communications via the listserv.

At the start of the fall, spring, and summer terms, the list of recipients is updated with current students.

Faculty Microsoft Teams “Team”

- The purpose of this team is to communicate administrative information to faculty and staff relevant to the College’s mission and business.
 - Appropriate College-related topics include:
 - Operations
 - Instruction
 - News
 - Grants and research funding
 - Scholarly competitions
 - Professional development
 - College and industry events
 - University-wide information and initiatives
 - Emergency information
 - Inappropriate topics include:
 - Content unrelated to the College’s mission and the role of faculty and staff at the College
 - Solicitations other than University-sponsored fundraising initiatives
 - Personal messages
 - Messages violating university policies
- Designated “owners” of the team include the College’s dean, assistant and associate dean(s) – as applicable, and the College’s communication lead. Only owners post to the team. All requests to communicate information via the team should be sent to an owner for approval and posting.
- At the start of the fall and spring terms, the list of team members is updated with current faculty and staff.

Staff Microsoft Teams “Team”

- The purpose of this team is to communicate administrative information to staff relevant to the College’s mission and business.
 - Appropriate College-related topics include:
 - Operations
 - Instruction
 - News
 - Grants and research funding
 - Scholarly competitions
 - Professional development
 - College and industry events
 - University-wide information and initiatives
 - Emergency information
 - Inappropriate topics include:
 - Content unrelated to the College’s mission and the role of staff at the College
 - Solicitations other than University-sponsored fundraising initiatives
 - Personal messages
 - Messages violating university policies
- All staff members may post to the team when adhering to the topics outlined above.
- The list of team members is updated with staffing changes.

Student Microsoft Teams “Team”

- The purpose of this team is to communicate administrative information relevant to the educational experience of the College’s students.
 - Appropriate College-related topics include:
 - Operations
 - Enrollment
 - Advising
 - Career Development
 - Instruction
 - News
 - Scholarships
 - Scholarly competitions
 - Student organizations
 - College and industry events
 - University-wide information and initiatives
 - Emergency information
 - Inappropriate topics include:
 - Content unrelated to the student’s educational experience
 - Solicitations other than university-sponsored fundraising initiatives
 - Personal messages
 - Messages violating university policies
- Designated “owners” of the team include the College’s dean, assistant and associate dean(s) – as applicable, and the College’s communication lead. Only owners post to the team. All requests to communicate information via the team should be sent to an owner for approval and posting.
- Personal and protected student information should never be included in posts on the team.

At the start of the fall, spring, and summer terms, the list of team members is updated with current students.

Weekly Digest Emails

- The Marketing and Communications sends weekly digest emails on Thursday afternoons during the fall and spring semesters (excluding any holidays falling on Thursday). The purpose of these emails is to summarize communications sent over the College’s listservs and highlight important University and College information. Content should be submitted to the College’s communications lead by Wednesday each week.

External Communications

External communications are a reflection of the Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture and Design to our alumni, donors, prospective students, community stakeholders, and industry partners. In conjunction with University communications policies and procedures, the Hines College has prepared the following guidelines as its external communications policy.

Branding

All collateral used to promote the College's programs, centers, events, and initiatives must adhere to and be designed according to the [University of Houston Branding Guidelines](#) in order to ensure consistency and recognition of the University and College brands.

- Any Hines College program representing itself as a part of or belonging to the College or University must adhere to the official [University Logo Usage Guidelines](#). Marketing activities and advertising materials must contain a University-approved logo in the University-approved format. University-approved logos can only be created by the University Marketing, Communications, and Media Relations Division. The creation of logos related to Hines College programming must be submitted to the College's communications lead for approval at the College and University levels. Requests for College logos should be submitted through the College's [online request form](#).
- Programming within the College cannot present itself as a standalone entity and therefore must carry the College brand.
- Given the College's lengthy name, acronyms and abbreviations are commonly used to represent the College through internal and external communications. To ensure clarity and consistency, as well as reinforce the College's identity as part of the University of Houston, the following should be observed:
 - The acronym "UHCOAD" should be used to abbreviate the College's name in external communications. While it is preferred that "UHCOAD" be used for internal communications as well, "CoAD" or "COAD" is also acceptable.
 - When abbreviating the College's name in a body of text, "UH Hines College," "Hines College," or "UH College of Architecture and Design" should be used as appropriate.
- The Hines College Marketing and Communications team is very resourceful when it comes to working within University brand guidelines. The team is available to offer assistance as you navigate branding in your work.
- The Hines College Marketing and Communications team cannot promote collateral related to College programming that does not follow the [University Brand Guidelines](#).
- Any collateral requiring UH Branding approval should first be submitted to the College's communications lead for review before submission to UH Branding.
- Per University finance policies, UH Branding approval must be obtained before purchasing branded collateral. The approval documentation must be provided with the receipt when submitting for reimbursement or with an expense report.
- The College's communications lead must review all external communications and collateral representing the College before anything is published or circulated. Submissions for approval should be made in writing within five business days prior to the proposed publishing date.

News Media

The Hines College Marketing and Communications team works regularly with the Office of University Media Relations to pitch newsworthy stories and promote the College. University Media Relations has access to numerous news media contacts and works with the College to coordinate publicity or visibility for programs, events, or newsworthy issues.

- If the Office of University Media Relations promotes a College news story, all parties involved will work closely with the College's communications lead and UH media relations specialist throughout the process. This includes everything from developing the original story to responding to news media requests upon its release.
- It is the responsibility of the Office of University Media Relations 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, they are strongly encouraged to notify University Media Relations immediately before providing any information or responding to questions. The College's communications lead can help connect you to the appropriate person in University Media Relations.
- The Office of University Media Relations often reaches out to the Hines College to connect faculty with news media seeking to interview experts in the field. The majority of these requests are time-sensitive. When the College's communications lead or UH media relations specialist reaches out to you with a request, please respond as soon as possible.
- If a faculty or staff member is featured by a news media outlet, they should inform the College's communications lead for promotion and inclusion in College records.

Social Media

The Hines College uses social media channels to promote its news, events, and student work.

- Requests for promotion on the College's social media channels should be submitted ten business days prior to the proposed date(s) of posting. In general, the College's social media is planned and scheduled ten business days in advance through the College's social media management platform.
- The College's communications lead must approve the creation of any new social media accounts representing College programming before any accounts are submitted to University Marketing and Communications for consideration. All new accounts must be approved by University Marketing and Communications and adhere to University [social media guidelines](#).

Website

The Hines College website provides a range of important information for prospective and current students, alumni, donors, and other external constituencies. All requests for updates to the website should be made in writing to the College's communications lead. Upon receipt of the request, a timeframe for the update will be provided.

E-Newsletter (Hines Highlights)

The *Hines Highlights* monthly e-newsletter promotes the College's news and events to alumni, donors, and friends. All requests for inclusion in the monthly e-newsletter should be submitted to the College's communications lead by the end of the day on the first Tuesday of every month. All requests submitted after the deadline may be held for the following month's e-newsletter.

Email Signatures

The daily communications of faculty and staff represent the College and University. Therefore, official University emails should adhere to [University Email Signature Guidelines](#). The University's [email signature generator](#) provides a simple process for creating your signature block. State rules preclude University employees from using public resources to promote private entities. Do not list other employment (for example, private practices) in your University email signature.

EMERGENCY STORM COMMUNICATIONS

Overview

In any emergency, all University of Houston colleges and units must follow the lead of the University's emergency operations team. University-wide communications come directly from this team, and no messaging from the Hines College should precede or contradict the University's official announcements.

Certain emergencies may uniquely impact our College in ways not fully addressed in University Communications. When this occurs, it becomes our responsibility to provide timely updates specific to our community.

Please note the Hines College's overall communication protocol during emergency situations:

- If an emergency does not impact the College beyond the University's scope, the College will not send additional updates. When the University is closed, the Hines College and its labs are closed as well. Classes should also be canceled. Faculty cannot suggest or require students to move to online platforms for instruction.
- If the College is directly affected, the College will send updates with relevant next steps and information.
- All emergency-related communications must be routed through the College's communications lead or their proxy if unavailable. This includes messages shared via listservs.
- College labs should not issue closure or operational updates independently. Centralized College communications will provide coordinated guidance regarding facility access and operations.

Team and Information Sharing

- Hines Emergency Communications Team (HECT):
 - *Dean*
 - *Assistant and Associate Dean(s)*
 - *Communications Lead*
 - *Communications Deputy Lead / Proxy*
- In the event of an emergency, timely and pertinent information should be shared with the HECT. In the absence of the College's communications lead, a communications proxy will manage the distribution of any communications through the College's appropriate channels.

- As the building coordinator, the College's business operations lead should ensure that any information provided by the University regarding the College's facilities is communicated to the HECT.

Creation and Approval of Messaging

While several individuals may assist in developing communications, it is natural for the College's communications team to take the lead in drafting them. To ensure consistency, thoroughness, and alignment, all communications, regardless of the author, should be reviewed by all HECT members before being shared. Final approval of content and distribution timing rests with the dean. If the dean is unavailable, an associate dean on the HECT will give final approval.

Distribution of Communications

All emergency communications are distributed by the College's marketing and communications team through its appropriate channels:

- SendIt Email
- Listserv Email (student + faculty/staff)
- Microsoft Teams (student, faculty, + staff)
- Social Media, as appropriate (Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn)

Communication via the College's listservs and Microsoft Teams should be reserved primarily for overall emergency messaging. In some cases, it may be appropriate to use these channels for other for specific messaging, particularly when targeting different audiences with distinct needs. However, all such messages should be reviewed by the HECT to help ensure alignment and avoid duplicating information already planned for distribution.

College labs and centers should not issue closure or operational updates independently. Any communications from these areas should be reviewed and approved by the HECT. If the College is not impacted by an emergency and, therefore, is not sending College-specific communications, College labs and centers should defer to University-wide communications and not send their own.

The timing of College emergency communications is determined by the HECT based on the current situation. Consistent communications are vital to maintaining an informed community.

After an emergency has passed, a final communication will be distributed by the HECT to summarize the emergency, acknowledge support, and provide any relevant follow-up steps.