



Office of Advancement and External Relations
Broadcast Communications Policy for Alumni and Donors

Contents

The Office of Advancement and External Relations has developed this guidebook to ensure consistency across The University of Baltimore for email communication with alumni and donors.

- Introduction
- Email Process and Policy
- Content Policies
- Alumni Data
- Analytics and Reporting
- Resources

A. Introduction

Broadcast email communication can be an effective way to communicate and build relationships with alumni and donors. Email broadcasts are a one-time email campaign sent to a certain group of your constituents. Such emails may include newsletters, event invitations, special offers, announcements, featured blog posts, etc.

The Office of Advancement and External Relations partners with Blackbaud communication products, which are compatible with the Raiser's Edge database that houses alumni data and contact information. The communication products and the database are owned by The University of Baltimore Foundation, Inc., and are used by the Office to communicate directly with constituents. The primary purpose of this document is to share email policies, procedure, style, and best practices with the University community to consistently bring the UBalt brand to life in communications with alumni and donors.

B. Broadcast Email Process and Policy

1. General Guidelines

- a. Campus communicators should be familiar with applicable rules and regulations affecting email communication. All emails sent to alumni and donors must adhere with University, University of Baltimore Foundation, General Data Processing Regulation (Europe), and federal rules, particularly in regards to the Federal Trade Commission Spam regulations and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines.
- b. Email communications to alumni and/or donors must be scheduled, approved by, and sent through the Office of Advancement and External Relations. Any office, school, or student organization wishing to contact alumni and/or donors through the Office of Alumni Relations must secure request and content approval from their respective head of communications.
- c. Requests should be submitted via the [Alumni/Donor Email Communications Request Form](#) to the Office of Alumni Relations **at least 14 business days** prior to the send date.
 - i. Your request should include the following:
 1. purpose of the email;
 2. audience you would like the email sent to (please reference Section B3);
 3. date you would like the email sent;
 4. content and images to include in the email; and

5. subject line and sender information.

- ii. If your request falls outside the timeline or scope of these guidelines, please email the Office of Alumni Relations directly at alumni@ubalt.edu so we can work together to craft a customized plan for your communication.
- d. If an email communication is being used to promote an event that the Office of Alumni Relations is collecting registrations and/or payments for, an [Events Request Form](#) must also be completed.
- e. If you are incorporating direct mail into your communication plan, see Section D.4 below for alumni/donor direct mail guidelines.

2. Scheduling

The Office of Advancement and External Relations maintains a communications calendar to track the number of email communications alumni and donors are receiving. When the Office of Alumni Relations receives your request, your send date will be cross-referenced with this calendar to minimize over-communication. The goal is to coordinate communications in an effort to maximize viewing and response of all emails sent to alumni/donors.

No more than one initial email and one follow-up email will be sent for each individual request. You will be asked to note your preferred send date—and indicate send-date flexibility—in the [Alumni/Donor Email Communications Request Form](#). *Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the Office of Alumni Relations.*

Approved communications requests will be scheduled on the Office of Advancement and External Relations communications calendar on a first-come, first-served basis. In the event of an unforeseen circumstance or a scheduling conflict, the Office of Advancement and External Relations may reach out to consult with you on an alternate timeline for your project.

If your request falls outside the timeline or scope of these guidelines, please email the Office of Alumni Relations directly at alumni@ubalt.edu so we can work together to craft a customized plan for your communication.

Although alumni and donors will always be given the opportunity to opt-out of receiving email communications, it is important to note that, as an audience, alumni and donors tend to identify all UBalt-related communications as coming from the University. That means that when any one partner over-communicates, it can negatively impact all partners who communicate with alumni and donors. By being mindful of the overarching email communication calendar and the number of emails being sent to alumni and donors, requestors will have the best chance of their message gaining the attention it deserves.

3. Audience Segmentation

When submitting your request, you will be asked to submit criteria for the audience you will be contacting. Please consider your target audience when submitting your criteria. Segmentation options can include college/school/major, geographic location, class years, etc. Your criteria will be reviewed by the Office of Advancement and External Relations and we may recommend changes based on the content of your email communication.

If you're interested in learning more about different segment criteria available to better target your

communication, please email alumni@ubalt.edu to request a meeting in advance of submitting your form.

C. Content Policies

1. Content Guidelines

Email communication is an essential element of many communication strategies and serves as valuable touchpoints with alumni and donors. This means emails should be designed and populated with care.

To help ensure recipients open messages more than they click delete or opt-out, all emails to alumni and donors must incorporate:

- an approved email template (please reference Section F1) *selected by the requester*;
- an email subject line that helps the audience know what information they will find in the message (subject lines should be no more than 75 characters and must be clear and not misleading) *provided by the requester*;
- a meaningful message/content for the target alumni and/or donor audience that aligns with the University of Baltimore Editorial Style Guide and Brand Guidelines and avoids common spam trigger words (for example, free, opportunity, offer, click here) *provided by the requester*; and
- an approved footer with opt-out information provided by the *Office of Alumni Relations*.

2. Content Policies

- a. Emails sent to alumni and donors must be University-related.
- b. All requests for fundraising solicitations must be approved by and coordinated through the Office of Philanthropy. Please contact Leslie Joyce, Senior Director of Development ljoyce@ubalt.edu.
- c. Emails may not include any attachments. Your email should include a link to a website for alumni and donors to receive more information.
- d. The Office of Advancement and External Relations will approve all email communications before sending and reserves the right to edit content and messaging to meet University of Baltimore [editorial and brand guidelines](#). Edits will be shared with the requestor before sending.

3. Best Practices

- a. Refrain from using exclamation points in email subject lines. This can trigger spam indicators.
- b. Avoid using “click here” text in emails. Hyperlink the actual text or advise readers to “learn more” or “read more,” hyperlinking those specific words.
- c. Include up-to-date information to ensure constituents are receiving accurate details.
- d. Use white space and avoid wordiness. This ensures a clean layout to enhance clarity and to avoid clutter.
- e. Emails are typically scanned vs. read. Readers typically spend less than 10 seconds reviewing your email. Please review your content to ensure only relevant details are being included.
- f. Images should have a high resolution and will be cropped to fit the image dimensions within your chosen email template.

D. Alumni Data

1. Guidelines

Upon receiving the criteria for your communication, a data request will be submitted to the Office of Database Management on your behalf to generate an alumni/donor list that includes the most up-to-date information the Office of Advancement and External Relations has on file. Data requests also need to be submitted **at least 14 business days** in advance.

If you are unsure about your segmentation or are interested in learning more about different segment criteria available to better target your communication, please email alumni@ubalt.edu to request a meeting in advance of submitting your form.

We request that University partners who have a self-kept list send the list to the Office of Database Management at dbm-ia@ubalt.edu along with any unsubscribe information, to ensure Blackbaud Raiser's Edge and NetCommunity are using the preferred and most current contact information for email communications. Requestors should not maintain self-kept lists, as those contacts will not be accessible through Blackbaud Raiser's Edge or NetCommunity to manage contact preferences.

2. Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality of alumni and donor data, email address lists will be uploaded directly to Blackbaud NetCommunity by the Office of Alumni Relations and will not be shared. The Office of Advancement and External Relations is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of alumni and donor information and must take precautions to ensure that such information is not compromised. Data may not be copied or stored to create shadow databases.

3. Email Permissions and Preferences

The Office of Advancement and External Relations follows the opt-out method of permission marketing. Therefore, email recipients must click on the unsubscribed link in the footer of the email and/or notify our office with their communication preferences. These opt-outs and preferences are tracked on each individual's record in Blackbaud Raiser's Edge.

Each email sent will include options to opt out of email communications and to update their preferences. Requestors should ensure emails are clear and contain fresh content to inspire engagement and prevent opt-outs.

4. Direct Mail Option

If you are planning on sending a companion communication via direct mail, the Office of Advancement and External Relations can provide a contact list directly to your preferred vendor for mailing. A Data Request for a mailing list will also be generated on your behalf once you have filled out the Alumni/Donor Email Communications Request Form. **Requests for mailing lists must be submitted at least 14 business days in advance.** The Office of Advancement and External Relations is not responsible for any financial costs associated with companion direct mail communications.

Please be prepared to provide a contact email or upload link for the preferred mail vendor when completing the form. Mailing lists will not be generated without this information.

E. Analytics and Reporting

1. The Office of Alumni Relations can provide standard analytics on open rates, clicks, bounces, and unsubscribes for your email communication upon request. Please email alumni@ubalt.edu to request and allow seven (7) business days to receive your report.

F. Resources

1. Email Templates

Please see our [Email Communications Request Form webpage](#) for approved templates. We can build a custom template for your communication if appropriate. Please note which template and/or components you would like to use in your request.

2. The University of Baltimore Editorial Style Guide

Please familiarize yourself with the official UBalt [Editorial Style Guide](#). This resource was developed and is managed by the Office of Marketing and Creative Services to ensure consistency in text presentation in University print and electronic communications.

Special attention should be paid to the [University name](#), as well as to any alumni references.

3. The University of Baltimore [Brand Guidelines](#)

The UBalt brand creative platform and strategy provide specific guidelines and standards to the campus community for the implementation and use of the You Know Us brand in all forms of communication.

4. The University of Baltimore Office of Advancement and External Relations [Event Request Form](#)

5. The University of Baltimore Office of Advancement and External Relations Data Confidentiality Policy

6. Contact Information

For questions, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at alumni@ubalt.edu or 410.837.6131.

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