

UC SES Committee Meeting
June 8, 2017
Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Michelle Byrne, Barb Caillet, Debbie Gannon, John Messina
Guests: Ron Bowman, Julie Cajigas, Maureen Davis, Dale Gooding, Wayne Hill, Bob Kropff, Bill Torgler, Mary Verstraete, Jim Weber

This meeting was called to discuss the best way to communicate with students given they rarely read emails or take phone calls. The discussion started with considering if we could use text messages effectively.

Bob Kropff emailed several policies from other universities (see links below). UA could use these as a guide for developing our policy.

Need for and concerns about texting

We need an effective mechanism to connect with individual students (not a large group text, but specific, person-to-person communication). Current mechanisms--email and phone calls--don't work.

Current use of texting: restricted to emergency (weather, safety)--not used extensively and only when it is, it's very important. It's also centrally controlled.

Financial aid, registration issues are urgent (but not emergencies). They need a method to connect with students.

Example of scope of problem: about 4,000 returning are not registered for fall.

Need a policy to keep texting to remain useful. If we overuse texting, students will ignore it. This is especially problematic if the texts are the main way we send out safety alerts.

Could texting come from individuals (advisers, etc)? The safety alerts would always be coming from one separate and distinct sender so there isn't confusion about it.

Options for Messaging Students:

GradesFirst has texting capabilities--license applies to texting. We buy 75. The texts go to the student from a number created for each sender. Students can opt out if they don't want the messages. Advisers (or whoever has the license) can send direct, personal messages to students.

New UA App options--process of replacing current app. New app will have notification capabilities.

Depts. Instructors, etc. could have notifications
Notifications will need to be customized to the student

Springboard--can messages be sent when student logs in? Make it something so the students have to dismiss it. Once concern about this is how often students check springboard, especially during breaks. This would be most effective during the school year.

MyAkron has notifications system (update for 9.2) that could do many of these things, but we haven't received the update. Currently, the system can do a broadcast, but not individual message.

Action Items:

Bill Torgler will talk to David Bird about how to use GradesFirst. Will learn about how to search & identify the students. Will run a pilot to see what the response is.

Michelle Byrne will talk to DDS about the possibility of using Springboard to message students.

Julie Cajigas will survey different units for need and also dates. Doing this we can try to rank the needs and decide which platform will be the best for which message.

Two UC committees, Communication and Student Engagement and Success, agree to work together on this goal of communicating with students as a goal for the next year.

Links from Bob Kropff:

Western Illinois University's policy

<https://www.usi.edu/policies/admissions-texting-policy/>

Southern Indiana:

<https://www.usi.edu/policies/admissions-texting-policy/>

The provost approves text messages at Washington State University:

<https://provost.wsu.edu/tag/text-message-policy/>

Minutes prepared by Michelle Byrne