I. INTRODUCTION (Purpose and Intent)

The purpose of this policy is to articulate the University of South Florida System’s (USF System) position involving the use of mass communications using e-mail (sometimes called “bulk e-mail”), SMS (Short Message Service), MMS (Multimedia Message Service), Instant Messaging, and other electronic means to distribute official messages to members of the USF System community.

A federal law known as the “Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing (CAN-SPAM) Act of 2003” provides some relief from the ever-increasing amount of spam e-mail received. The law requires different policies and procedures for official and commercial messages. Since official messages relate to an employment or transactional relationship and are non-commercial in nature, they are exempt from the decline (opt out) provision in the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003.

II. SCOPE

This policy on the use of official mass electronic communication applies to members of all campuses. Mailing lists opted-in by the user are not under the scope of this policy.

III. DEFINITION

For the purposes of this document, Mass Electronic Messaging is defined as an official USF System message sent out using electronic means that is either: 1) a single electronic message received by 1,000 or more USF System users within a 24-hour period; or 2) multiple electronic messages of essentially the same content to a total of 1,000 or more USF System users within a 24-hour period.
IV. STATEMENT OF POLICY

A. Classification of Messages

Mass Electronic Messages will be classified in two categories: Emergency or Informational.

1. **Emergency Messages**

A message will be considered urgent if its message will directly affect:

(a) The daily schedule of the recipient of the message;

(b) The ability of the recipient to perform USF System-related duties;

(c) His or her ability to use USF System facilities due to unusual circumstances; or

(d) Any other civil emergency.

**Examples of such messages include:**

- Campus closure due to hurricane or other civil emergencies
- Downtime of Student Information Systems (OASIS) or similar wide-scale systems
- University network outages deemed severe
- Major access restrictions such as multiple building closures.

2. **Informational Messages**

Informational messages are messages that are relevant to a segment of the USF System community but are not considered urgent or official announcements by the parameters outlined above. Message content must be relevant to the USF System’s mission of teaching, research, public service, or student involvement. In no case shall mass messages be used for commercial mailings.

B. Approval Process

1. **Approval for Emergency Messages**

The following officials are authorized to approve bulk emergency messages:
2. Approval for Informational Messages

The following departments are authorized to approve bulk informational e-mail messages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Informational messages addressed to:</th>
<th>Must have the approval of:</th>
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| All USF System Students              | • Office of the President or<br>  
|                                      | • Vice President for Communications & Marketing<br>  
|                                      | • Vice President, Student Affairs or designee, or<br>  
|                                      | • Provost or designee         |
| All USF System Faculty Members       | • Provost or designee        |
| All USF System Staff Members         | • Associate Vice President of Human Resources<br>  
|                                      | • designee                   |
| Tampa Campus Students                | • Vice President, Student Affairs or designee, or<br>  
<p>|                                      | • Provost or designee         |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tampa Campus Faculty Members</th>
<th>• Provost or designee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tampa Campus Staff Members</td>
<td>• Associate Vice President of Human Resources or designee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separately Accredited Institutions and Regional Campus Users</td>
<td>• Campus Communications or Media Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USF Health Users</td>
<td>• Senior VP for USF Health or designee</td>
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Individual Colleges, Departments, and Campus Units, such as the Office of Research & Innovation, are authorized to send informational email messages to their students, faculty, and/or staff without prior approval.

University Communications & Marketing must also have the opportunity to review messages sent to Tampa Campus users and System Users to ensure that they follow USF System guidelines for mass communications.

Certain administrative departments make periodic announcements to members of the USF System community for a variety of reasons, such as federal reporting requirements. These units are granted authority to send bulk e-mail on matters of USF System business through appropriate discussions with the offices authorized to approve distribution of these messages.

C. Requirements

Independent of the type of message, the following items are requirements for sending out bulk e-mail:

1. Message being sent out must be clearly identified as Urgent or Informational by the use of the tags [USF-URGENT] or [USF-INFO] on the subject of the message, either on the beginning or at the end of the line. This tag can then be used by campus recipients to organize or filter their e-mail messages.

2. A notice that the message has been approved under the USF System’s “Mass E-mail Policy,” including the URL of the “Mass Mail Policy” must be appended to the body of the message.

3. A USF System unit or recognized organization requesting a mass e-mail must supply a valid e-mail address for the “From” and “Reply-To” e-mail address. This address must be a valid e-mail address in the usf.edu domain.

4. The same unit must also be clearly identified in the body of the message, followed by how a recipient would obtain more information about the content of the message.
5. Messages must be brief and may refer to a web site for additional information.

6. The message text must be formatted to be accessible by recipients who use screen readers or other adaptive technologies.

7. All electronic communications are expected to comply with relevant federal and state laws, as well as USF System regulations and policies, including those governing public computing resources, security considerations, and ethics in computing.

- Use of cell phone texting (SMS and MMS messages) is reserved for emergency messages only.

*Current Responsible Office: Information Technology

*Refer to the appropriate Responsible Office website for a current name of the Vice President or other Responsible Officer.