



## Internal Communications Policy

**Category:** Marketing and Communications;

**Jurisdiction:** President;

**Approval Authority:** Executive Team;

**Established on:** February 10, 2004;

**Amendments:** None.

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### POLICY STATEMENT

#### 1. Having a Voice

1.1 Students, Faculty, and Staff of Lakehead University have a right to express their opinion on any situation or issue concerning their area of responsibility and overall workplace environment. This right of expression entitles them to be heard without fear of recrimination or reprisal.

1.2 Students, Faculty, and Staff may use any or all of the communication vehicles available to them, as appropriate, to express their voice. In particular, everyone should feel free to initiate a dialogue with her/his supervisor on issues of concern.

#### 2. Communication Vehicles

2.1 A critical component of the communication process is personal communication between supervisors and their direct reports. Anyone with direct reports is responsible for ensuring that his/her direct reports hear of news affecting the University community directly from them (appropriate supervisors), in a timely manner. This will be effected through a combination of regular staff meetings to share information and ad hoc meetings whenever the occasion warrants. In cases where a specific news or situation may affect a particular individual, the appropriate supervisor is responsible for initiating a dialogue with that individual as soon as the supervisor becomes aware of the news or situation.

- 2.2 Administration is responsible for sharing news that impacts the University community in a timely manner. This will be undertaken through two "State-of-the-University" addresses by the President, other members of the Priorities and Planning Group (PPG), and other University staff or faculty as needed. These addresses are ideally held at the start of each term (September and January) and in conjunction with our annual budget process (March-April), and will be supported with hard copies of the report, which will be made available upon request to those who are unable to attend the addresses.
- 2.3 In addition to the above, the University will continue its current practice of using email (Communications Bulletin and Events at Lakehead) in combination with bulletin board postings or flyer handouts, as warranted, to communicate to the University Community. News releases that are made public are also posted on the website and may be covered in Agora and Lakehead Magazine.
- 2.4 Suggestion boxes are also placed in strategic locations (Agora, Fieldhouse, and Bora Laskin) for the purpose of eliciting comments and suggestions from the University community on any issue. The University community is encouraged to use these boxes - anonymously, if so desired - as all suggestions will be brought to the Priorities and Planning Group (PPG) for discussion and action.

### 3. Types of Information

#### 3.1 What is communicated

The types of communication notices disseminated internally will cover a comprehensive range of topics and include appointment notices (new hires), promotions, retirement, success/good news stories (awards, grants, scholarships, competitions), organizational changes, new initiatives, status on capital construction, physical moves, capital campaign updates, tuition news, new technology, technology breakdown, events, and health and security alerts. Internally, these may be covered through Communications Bulletins (key information) as well as the Agora (greater detail). Negative situations such as campus vandalism, theft, assaults, and deaths will be communicated factually and compassionately as soon as correct and up-to-date information is available. Anything that impacts students,

faculty, staff, and campus operations should be communicated by the appropriate supervisors to their staff.

### 3.2 What is confidential and may not be communicated

There may be circumstances when information should not be released internally (and externally) because such release may compromise individuals or the University.

The types of information that should be kept confidential (not released internally and externally) include but are not limited to: personal and personnel issues such as illness or medical information (unless it puts the wider community at risk), grievances, personal legal proceedings, discrimination issues, salaries; and non-factual or unproven information. In cases where the distinction may be unclear, the PPG will make the final decision on what may be released, with advice from other key University personnel such as the Vice Provost Student Affairs and the Director of Communications.

### 3.3 News that raises or diminishes profile

The University disseminates media releases, feature articles, and Public Service Announcements that cover a wide range of topics as mentioned previously. As a rule, however, news that does not raise University profile or create a positive image is not made public - unless it is in the public interest. The public has a right to know health and security-related news, for example.

## 4. Frequency

### 4.1 Communication notices are sent out daily, and in the case of time-sensitive

information, as soon as possible. If the news item warrants it, a special bulletin is also sent out or posted in addition to the daily bulletin

### 4.2 Supervisors are expected to hold regular staff meetings that combine group project

status or sharing vital information. In cases where there is breaking news that should be communicated in person, supervisors will be advised of the situation to enable them to call a special meeting with their direct reports. This will also give appropriate supervisors the opportunity to field questions and, if necessary, allay fears and discourage rumour mongering.

#### 5. Process – Internal vs. External Communications

The University will inform the University community first before a story is made public. Sometimes the information is released simultaneously, if timing is of the essence. Members of the University community have the right to know how a development or situation might affect them before the external public finds out.

#### 6. University Spokesperson – Media

The media will sometimes contact various individuals in the University to comment on specific issues, events, or situations. Following established protocol, no one may make statements to the media on behalf of the University without prior agreement with the Office of Communications (OOC). As part of the University's process, the media will contact the OOC, who will in turn determine the best spokesperson for a specific requirement. Typically, the OOC will work with appropriate departments to prepare the interviewee - craft key messages, and determine positioning and the manner in which the messages should be conveyed. If a member of the media contacts a staff or faculty member directly, the reporter should either be referred back to the OOC, or the staff or faculty member should discuss the matter with the OOC.

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**Review Period:** 7 years;

**Date for Next Review:** 2019-2020;

**Related Policies and Procedures:** Internal Communications Policy Attachment:  
Communications Bulleting - attached;

**Policy Superseded by this Policy:** None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format:

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: [univsec@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:univsec@lakeheadu.ca).



## Internal Communications Policy Attachment: Communications Bulletin

**Category:** Marketing & Communications;

**Jurisdiction:** Chief of Staff and Director, Media Relations;

**Approval Authority:** Executive Team;

**Established on:** June 28, 2005;

**Amendments:** None.

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### Introduction

The Communications Bulletin is sent out daily (as needed) to staff, faculty, and Board members. The purpose of the Bulletin is to communicate more effectively with the University community.

### Guidelines

- All Bulletin items must be submitted electronically. A call to ensure that the email has been received is encouraged. If the item is of high importance or is time-sensitive, a call is expected to ensure the email was successfully delivered.

*Rationale: This eliminates the chance of error, ensures that the Office of Communications has a contact person in case of questions regarding the posting, and eliminates the amount of paper used on campus.*

- All items for the Bulletin must be received by 1 p.m. Any item after 1 p.m. will be held for the next day.

*Rationale: To ensure that all bulletins are released at approximately the same time each day (between 2 p.m. to 3 p.m.) and that there is adequate time to edit or clarify the messages.*

- Items may be published three times only, with at least a week and no more than 10 days between postings. An email reminder request must be made for items to be repeated. For repeat notices: the headline to the story will be clearly marked as a repeat item, and will be placed at the end of the bulletin list.

*Rationale: Too many repeat items reduce the effectiveness of the bulletin messages.*

- Items which occur regularly need to be submitted regularly (i.e. open meetings which occur on a weekly or monthly basis need to be submitted the day before the notice is to appear).
- All items must have a direct link to Lakehead University.

#### ACCEPTABLE ITEMS INCLUDE:

- University policies
- Open meetings
- Staff, faculty, and student achievements and success stories
- Important administration notices – University-sponsored initiatives

#### ITEMS WHICH WILL NOT BE INCLUDED:

- Advertising/fundraising for any non-Lakehead group, even if a Lakehead U community member is affiliated with it, unless it is a group/initiative headed directly by a Lakehead U community member
- Events or achievements of past University members (exception: Professors Emeriti, Chancellor, Alumni)

*Rationale: This will ensure all messages are relevant to the present University community and will keep it Lakehead-oriented and current.*

- Notices should be kept to a maximum of 175 words. If the notice is longer, a link should be provided to the entire notice online.

*Rationale: Longer notices are not as likely to be read. Keeps the bulletin's concise.*

- The Office of Communications (OOC) reserves the right to edit/withhold notices/events. Notices which have undergone a major edit will be sent back to the originating party for approval. If notices are sent back for approval, the OOC will post the event the next day, unless approval is received by 2 p.m. the same day.

- The OOC will strive to have the bulletin out between 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. each day (as needed). This time is dependent on the number of items received, and other unavoidable delays such as media events, a high level of incoming calls/requests from the media and general public, and computer problems. The bulletin will come out between 1 p.m. (notice submission deadline) and 4 p.m.
- Standalone Notices - On occasion, special notices will be issued by some departments/offices in the University, which will run as standalones. These include messages from: Security; Technology Services Centre (TSC); and the offices of the President, Vice-Presidents, and Vice Provost. Also, a Report from the Board of Governors is issued after each BOG meeting. All other items will be placed in the Bulletin. No notices will be sent out after normal working hours (4:30 p.m.). Only one Communications Bulletin will be sent per day (special notices listed above are not considered "Communications Bulletins").
- Events and public lectures are not posted on the Communications Bulletin. They will be held until each Friday for publication in the Events at Lakehead (see below for Events at Lakehead criteria). If an event or public lecture is submitted after the Events at Lakehead deadline (Thursdays at 10 a.m. prior to the event), and there is no Event at Lakehead going out before the event/public lecture date, this event will be posted on the online calendar only - it will NOT be included in the Bulletin.  
The exception: From the last week in April to the last week in August no Events at Lakehead is published. During this time, events will be placed on the Bulletin.  
*Rationale: Keeps Bulletin content consistent and relevant to entire University.*
- All notices must have a contact person (either by phone or by email).  
*Rationale: Directs questions/comments to the appropriate party, and not vetted through the Office of Communications*
- Subject headings in emails requesting posting of a notice should be clearly indicated. Using one of the subjects "For the Bulletin," "Notice to go out," or "From the Department of (which)" is good. Using a subject heading such as "Here's one," "For you," no subject, or any vague subject is not good as it may get dismissed as spam.

## NEW PROTOCOL

- In order to better manage message content as well as the submission process for the announcement of news pertaining to significant successes and achievements, a new protocol for these types of messages is being implemented. Effective February 17, 2009, submissions concerning successes and achievements must be approved by the Department Chair and Faculty Dean before submission to Communications. When submitted, the message should include the line: This message has been approved by the Department Chair and Dean of the Faculty of X.

## EVENTS AT LAKEHEAD

### Introduction

The Events at Lakehead is a weekly email to staff, faculty, students, and friends of Lakehead University. This mail-out is edited according to audience (staff and faculty, students, friends). It contains sports events, general events, and public lectures. The student email also includes notices. It is mailed out on Fridays each week.

### Guidelines

- All events must have a direct link to Lakehead University

#### ACCEPTABLE ITEMS

- Events, public lectures, workshops, information sessions hosted on or off campus by a member of the Lakehead U community (staff, faculty, or student) in the name of Lakehead University or its affiliates (e.g. Centre of Excellence)
- Events held on campus but not necessarily hosted by a Lakehead member (i.e. Outpost, Study, Agora)
- A Lakehead U-sponsored event

#### ITEMS WHICH WILL NOT BE INCLUDED

- Advertising/fundraising for any non-Lakehead group, even if a Lakehead U community member is affiliated with it, unless it is a group/initiative headed directly by a Lakehead U community member
- Events or achievements of past University members (exception: Professors Emeriti, Chancellor, Alumni)



- All Events- at-Lakehead items must be submitted electronically. A call to ensure that the email has been received is encouraged. Methods include email or the online calendar.
- All items for the Events at Lakehead must be received by Thursday at 10 a.m. Any item after that time will be held until the next Events mailing. If the event is for the next week and will not be relevant in the next mail-out, then this event will be available to be read on the online calendar only. **A special email will not go out.**
- Events which take place regularly need to be submitted each week.
- Submissions to the online calendar may be done at any time online at: <http://communications.lakeheadu.ca/submitevent.php>. The same timelines as those outlined in this policy apply to having this notice on the Events at Lakehead.
- Items on Events at Lakehead can be posted up to one month in advance, and will be posted each week until the event is over.
- Attachments cannot be sent with the Events at Lakehead email; however, a link to a website may be used. This website should be set up in advance by the party submitting the event and the proper address must be submitted with the notice.
- Notices should be kept to a maximum of 175 words. If the notice is longer, a link should be provided to the entire notice online.
- Abstracts cannot accompany notices of public lectures. Please have a contact number or website where people can call/email for abstracts.
- The Office of Communications (OOC) reserves the right to edit/withhold notices/events. Notices which have undergone a major edit will be sent back to the originating party for approval. If notices are sent back for approval, the OOC will post the event in the next week's Events at Lakehead, unless approval is received by 11:30 a.m. on Fridays.
- The OOC will strive to have the Events at Lakehead out by 12 p.m. on Fridays. This time is dependent on number of items received, and other unavoidable delays such as media events, a high level of incoming calls/requests from the media and general public, and computer problems. The bulletin will not come out before 12 p.m.
- All notices must have a contact person (either by phone or by email).
- Subject headings in emails should clearly indicate the event posting. Using one of the subjects "For the Events Bulletin," "Events to go out," or "From the Department of

(which)" is good. Using a subject heading such as "Here's one," "For you," no subject, or any vague subject is not good as it may get dismissed as spam.

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