
COMMUNICATION POLICY

Title:	Communication Policy
Policy Number:	GA 49/08.18
Effective Date:	September 2018
Issuing Authority:	Development - Communication and Alumni Relations Office

1. RATIONALE

This policy outlines the rules and regulations that govern the representation of the Rafik Hariri University to all audiences, internal and external, and across all communication channels and vehicles. The ultimate purpose of this policy is to ensure that all communication that takes place on behalf of RHU is done in a consistent manner that preserves the quality standards, branding and identity guidelines, editorial style guide and strategic positioning.

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- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations will be the sole office responsible and authorized for RHU media relations and to produce and disseminate press releases on behalf of the Rafik Hariri University, or any of its departments, colleges, and offices.
- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations is responsible to coordinate all university media activities including but not restricted to media releases, event promotions, and interviews with community members.
- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations is responsible to provide accurate, timely, and pertinent information about the Rafik Hariri University to internal and external audiences across mediums including the news media, social media, the University website, email, and others.
- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations pursues news that showcase RHU's high quality of education, research, scholarship, leadership, impact on quality of life, and the unique people that represent the university through their achievements and success stories
- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations should present RHU consistently and maintain strong relationships with the news media.

Internal Communication

Effective internal communication is everyone's responsibility. Maintaining a good internal communication will:

- Influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of community members by giving them the information they need in good time and in the best way
- Encourage pride and loyalty by celebrating achievements and successes and showcasing the very best the university has to offer

1. Communication of Pertinent Topics

- a- RHU uses webmail as the primary method of communication of topics important and urgent for the entire community or community sub groups of faculty, staff and students. This communication is governed by [RHU Mass Email Policy](#).

These topics include:

- Policies or policy amendments
- Core university operations and required actions that are of shared interest
- Time sensitive issues (immediate threats to health, safety, property or research)
- IT issues
- Official surveys
- Messages related to an employment or transactional nature

- b- RHU SMS Software

RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Office can send bulk SMSs to RHU community members to communicate information that requires immediate attention. Unlike bulk emails, SMSs are not as cost effective and proper regulation is required to avoid overuse or misuse and reduce recipient complaints who may judge the volume and relevance of the SMS content they receive from RHU.

- c- RHU uses the alumni software as the primary method of communication with RHU alumni. Communication with RHU alumni is governed by [RHU Alumni Relations Policy](#) and [RHU Alumni Association Bylaws](#).

- d- RHU uses the digital signage screens installed on campus to communicate information to RHU community members.

- Some screens are recognized as public channels and are used by the Communication and Alumni Relations Office to communicate information that is meant for the entire campus community (cafeteria, library, gymnasium, registrar)
- Some screens are recognized as private and are used by colleges to communicate information to the staff, faculty and students of their individual colleges.

2. Communication of RHU News and Events

The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations should be advised of all news and events related to Rafik Hariri University. The office should be aware and current of all university activities to represent RHU in the best interest and publicize events, seminars, workshops or other accomplished activities as deemed appropriate.

- Concerning events, the RHU Event Calendar on RHU website is the key reference to all academic and administrative offices and student organizations for RHU events. All RHU events are uploaded to this calendar. Scheduling of events need to be done in coordination with the RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Office. To plan your events please refer to [RHU Event Planning Policy](#).
- Concerning news, RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Offices issues press releases to relate information about RHU events and news. Press releases are valuable public relations tools and very useful for improving RHU brand image. Publishing press releases on time is healthy practice, especially for social media as social media nurturing requires immediacy. Our audience gets engaged when the communication over media networks is up to date and when it suits their immediate needs. RHU needs to reach out consistently and send relevant content in real-time.

To communicate news, a [News Bulletin form](#) is to be completed by the concerned head of an academic or administrative department and submitted to RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Office within a maximum of 24-72 hours. The concerned VP, Dean, or Director is responsible for the accuracy and legibility of the content of the news bulletin. Once filled the form need to be submitted in soft copy to the Office of Development, Communication and Alumni Relations.

In preparing the news bulletin make the following information needs to be included as appropriate:

- Purpose of the event,
- Type, Title, date and location of the event,
- Main speaker, title and affiliation,
- Collaborating persons/agencies,
- Target audience groups and number of participants,
- The takeaway from the event of interest to the potential reader,
- Anecdotes/quotations that stands out from the event.

External Communication

1. Brand and Brand Identity

- Any public use of the RHU name or logo must be reviewed and approved by RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Office in advance.
- [RHU Brand Identity Guidelines](#) provides templates, artwork, and flexible guidelines for all colleges, departments, and offices to use when developing various communications materials.
- [RHU Design Services Policy](#) organizes the provision of design services to university academic and administrative units

2. Communication Platforms and Channels for RHU News and Events

The Office of Communication provides coverage for university news and events across multiple platforms. Some coverage may appear across all, several channels; or on limited channels only. The office conducts traditional and digital media activities to include posting the RHU news and events on the owned RHU website, issuing the monthly electronic newsletter, coordinating with the media to publish media releases on print and online websites, publishing the annual digital yearbook, and managing RHU social media platforms, alumni pages and groups.

a- The University Website (home page), News and Events sections

Coordination of posting of news and events on RHU website is governed by RHU Website [Policy](#)

b- The RHU Monthly E-Newsletter "RHU Pulse"

The RHU E-Newsletter "RHU Pulse" is a monthly communication that is published to around 2200 subscribers, including RHU community of faculty, staff, students, and alumni, schools, coop partners, media representatives, and RHU friends. It is an email marketing tool and provides valuable insights as to how many subscribers opened the newsletter, who they are, what links were clicked, and who unsubscribed.

Considerations:

The E-Newsletter is prepared towards the end of every month. Press releases for events that take place or are communicated on the 28th of a month and beyond will be included in the E-Newsletter issue of the upcoming month.

The E-Newsletter announces events for the upcoming month (i.e. the Newsletter of April announces the upcoming events of May). Events that are not planned ahead or not communicated to the Office of Communication and Alumni Relations shall not be included.

c- External Media (newspapers, magazines, online news portals, TV, Radio)

All university media activities including but not restricted to media releases, event promotions, and interviews with community members must be coordinated with the Office of Communication and Alumni Relations at RHU.

Refer to the [RHU Media Policy](#) for the detailed guidelines governing RHU media activities.

d- RHU Social Media Platforms

RHU has established an official presence on a number of social media platforms.

Social Networks: Facebook, LinkedIn

Microblog: Twitter

Online Video: YouTube

Online Audio: Soundcloud

Photo Archive: Instagram

Refer to the [RHU Social Media Policy](#) for the detailed guidelines governing RHU social media presence.

Photography and Videography

- a- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations will provide photography and videography services for all academic and administrative units. Requests require a 3 working days' notice and will be pending the availability of university photographers.
- b- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations will arrange freelance photographers and videographers upon request, to be billed to the requesting academic or administrative unit.
- c- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations will accept high resolution photography submissions and maintain the right to decline publication of any news item based on quality of the photo submitted.
- d- RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Office maintains an inventory of RHU photos and videos archived by academic year, unit, and event.

2. STAKEHOLDER IMPACT AND SCOPE

It is the responsibility of each RHU student, faculty and staff member to familiarize themselves with RHU University Communication Policy relevant to their area of work, and execute their responsibilities in reviewing petitions and completing forms accordingly. This policy will also impact our external audience.

3. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- > University Design Services Policy
- > University Event Management Policy
- > University Mass Email Policy
- > University Media Policy
- > University Social Media Policy

- > University Website Policy
- > University Brand Identity Guidelines
- > University Strategic Handbook 2015-2020
- > News Bulletin Form
- > Design Request Form
- > University Catalogue

4. APPROVAL AND REVIEW

OFFICER RESPONSIBLE: VP for Development

AUTHORITY: University Administrative Board

POLICY REVIEWED BY:

EFFECTIVE DATE:

REVIEW DATE: As needed

REVISION HISTORY:

RELATED POLICIES: All University Policies and Procedures

FINAL APPROVAL BY THE PRESIDENT:

Signature:

Date: