

COMMUNICATION POLICY

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| Title: | Communication Policy |
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| Approval and Review: | Approved by the RHU Administrative Board on October 22, 2024 |
| Issuing Authority: | Development - Communication and Alumni Relations Office |

1. RATIONALE

This policy outlines the rules and regulations governing the representation of Rafik Hariri University to all audiences—both internal and external—and across all communication channels and platforms. Its primary purpose is to ensure that all communication on behalf of RHU is consistent and upholds the university’s quality standards, branding and identity guidelines, editorial style, and strategic positioning.

- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations is the sole office authorized to manage RHU media relations and to produce and disseminate press releases on behalf of the university and its departments, colleges, and offices.
- This Office is responsible for coordinating all university media activities, including but not limited to media releases, event promotions, and interviews with community members.
- It ensures the provision of accurate, timely, and relevant information about RHU to both internal and external audiences through various media such as news media, social media, the university website, email, and others.
- The Office actively pursues news that highlights RHU’s excellence in education, research, scholarship, leadership, impact on quality of life, and the unique achievements of its community members.
- It is also responsible for consistently presenting RHU’s image and maintaining strong relationships with the news media.

Internal Communication

Effective internal communication is everyone’s responsibility. Maintaining strong internal communication will:

- Influence the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of community members by providing timely and well-delivered information.
- Foster pride and loyalty by celebrating achievements and showcasing the best the university has to offer.

1. Communication of Pertinent Topics

a) RHU Webmail

RHU uses webmail as the primary communication method for important and urgent topics affecting the entire community or specific subgroups of faculty, staff, and students. This communication follows the RHU Mass Email Policy. Topics include:

- Policies or policy changes

- Core university operations and required actions of shared interest
- Time-sensitive issues (immediate threats to health, safety, property, or research)
- IT issues
- Official surveys
- Employment or transactional messages

b) RHU SMS Software

The RHU Communication and Alumni Relations Office may send bulk SMS messages for urgent communications. Unlike emails, SMS is less cost-effective and requires careful regulation to avoid overuse and recipient complaints about volume or relevance.

c) RHU Alumni Communication

Communication with RHU alumni is governed by the RHU Alumni Relations Policy and Alumni Association Bylaws.

2. Communication of RHU News and Events

The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations should be informed of all RHU news and events to post it on the RHU Event Calendar. Staying updated on university activities enables the office to best represent and publicize RHU through events, seminars, workshops, and achievements.

- **Event Scheduling:** The RHU Event Calendar on the university website serves as the main reference for all academic and administrative offices and student organizations. All events must be uploaded there and coordinated with the Communication and Alumni Relations Office.
- **News Communication:** The Office issues press releases to share information about RHU news and events, which are essential for public relations and enhancing RHU's brand image. Timely publication, especially on social media, is critical as audiences engage more with current and relevant content.

To communicate news, department heads must submit a completed Press/Media Release Form to the Office of Communication and Alumni Relations within 24 to 48 hours. The responsible VP, Dean, or Director ensures the accuracy and clarity of the content. The bulletin should include as appropriate:

- Purpose of the event
- Type, title, date, and location
- Main speaker(s), title, and affiliation
- Collaborating persons/agencies
- Target audience and expected number of participants
- Key takeaways for readers
- Notable anecdotes or quotations

External Communication

1. Brand and Brand Identity

- Any public use of the RHU name or logo must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Communication and Alumni Relations Office.
- RHU Brand Identity Guidelines provide templates, artwork, and guidelines for colleges, departments, and offices to develop communication materials.
- The RHU Design Services Policy governs the provision of design services to university 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, with some content appearing on all channels, several channels, or select channels only. Its activities include posting RHU news and events on the university website, issuing the electronic newsletter, coordinating with media outlets to publish press releases in print and online, and managing RHU's social media platforms, alumni pages, and groups.

- a- The University Website (home page), News and Events sections
Posting is coordinated per the RHU Website Policy.
- b- The RHU E-Newsletter "RHU Pulse"
Sent to roughly 4,000 subscribers, including faculty, staff, alumni, co-op partners, schools, media, higher education institutions, friends, and others. The newsletter tracks engagement metrics like open rates and link clicks.
- c- External Media (newspapers, magazines, online news portals, TV, Radio)
All media activities require coordination with the Communication and Alumni Relations Office. See the RHU Media Policy for guidelines.
- d- RHU Social Media Platforms
RHU maintains official accounts on:
 - **Social Networks:** Facebook, LinkedIn
 - **Photo & Video Sharing:** Instagram, TikTok, YouTube
 - **Microblogging:** X (formerly Twitter)
 - **Messaging:** WhatsApp

Refer to the RHU Social Media Policy for detailed guidelines.

Photography and Videography

- The Office of Communication and Alumni Relations provides photography and videography services for all academic and administrative units, requiring a 3-working-day notice and subject to photographer availability.
- The office can arrange freelance photographers/videographers upon request, billed to the requesting unit.
- High-resolution photo submissions are accepted, but the office reserves the right to decline publication based on quality.
- The office maintains a photo and video archive organized by academic year, unit, and event.

2. STAKEHOLDER IMPACT AND SCOPE

It is the responsibility of every RHU student, faculty, and staff member to familiarize themselves with the RHU University Communication Policy relevant to their role, and to fulfill their responsibilities in reviewing petitions and completing forms accordingly. This policy also extends to and impacts our external audiences.

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

Approved by RHU Administrative Board on October 22, 2024