

# REACHING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE

*An email communication guide to help raise readership rates.*

This document was created by the Campus Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Communications Action Team to address the concerns raised by students in the CHNA that they are inundated with emails on a daily basis yet do not have access to pertinent information when they need it most. Below are suggestions for making your emails more effective when communicating to students.

## ADDRESS FIELDS

- Add email address(es) last. You don't want to send an email accidentally before you have finished writing and proofing your message. Even when you are replying to a message, it's a good precaution to delete the recipient's address and insert it only when you are sure the message is ready to be sent.

This is where the recipient's e-mail address belongs. The sender expects a reply from the recipients. Sometimes people are more apt to read or reply based on who the recipients of the email are.



A screenshot of an email client's address fields. It shows a 'Send' button on the left, followed by 'To...', 'Cc...', and 'Subject:' labels, each with a corresponding text input field.

## SUBJECT LINES

- Optimize your subject line for mobile readers. Keep your subject line short (50 characters or less), clear, and direct.
- Call to action. Using action-oriented language can help improve your open rates.
- Capitalization. Using caps in a subject line can be useful, but only when you use them sparingly.
- Add "PLEASE FORWARD." If you're asking recipients to forward the message to another audience, include this call to action in your subject line.

- CC: All addressees listed here should be aware of the e-mail and its contents, but the sender doesn't expect a reply from them.
- BCC: these recipients are hidden. Depending on the contents of the message, they may or may not be expected to reply. BCC is often used for data protection reasons.
- **BCC is should be utilized when emailing a group of students to align with FERPA regulations in order to avoid exposing students personal information.**

### Examples of effective subject lines:

- LAST DAY To Register For Classes
- Harris Mentor Program | Night Out Event | February 3

## SALUTATIONS

- Double check the name spelling
- Always use professional salutations. Dear, Hi, Hello, and Greetings are all acceptable.



A screenshot of an email client's salutation field. It shows a 'Send' button on the left, followed by 'To...', 'Cc...', and 'Subject:' labels, each with a corresponding text input field. Below these fields, the text 'Dear \_\_\_,' is visible.

## EMAIL BODY

### Format

- Make content easy to scan.
- Use bullets, numbers, and/or bolding to make your email easily digestible, emphasizing the key deadlines/action needed.
- Keep fonts classic and refrain from colored backgrounds keeping in mind accessibility.

### Content

- Lead with the ask (deadline/action needed). It's important to put your "ask" at the top of your email—within the first sentence or two if possible. The goal is to get the reader's attention and have them understand the action that's being requested immediately.
- Establish your credibility. Why should recipients care? It's important to identify yourself, especially if recipients don't know you.
- State your reasons. In one or two sentences state your why. For example, "We value your partnership and the previous work you have done for our company, but your current price exceeds your competition at a cost we cannot justify."
- Be direct, people appreciate brevity.
- Check for "shrinkers" and unnecessary apologies — words and phrases like "just," "actually," and "just a minute." Delete them!

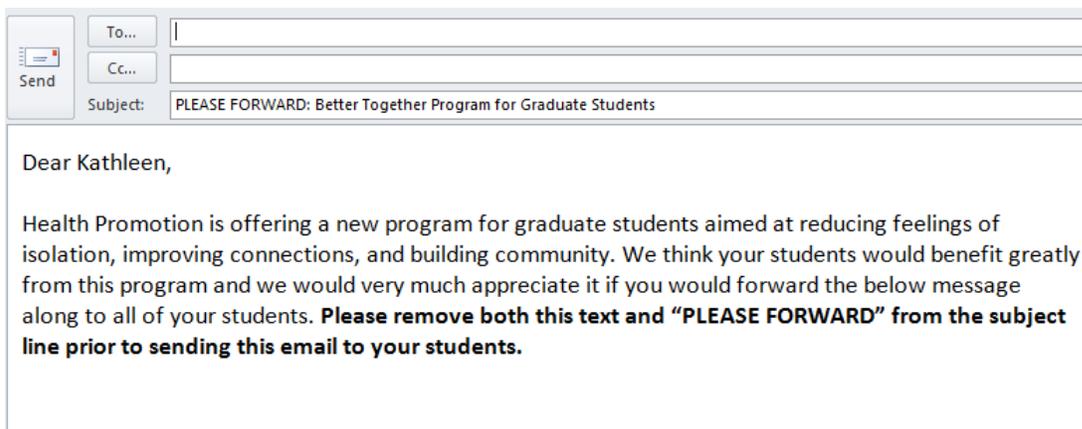
### Tone and Language

- Keep tabs on your tone. Tone is easy to misconstrue without the context you'd get from vocal cues and facial expressions. For best results, avoid using unequivocally negative words ("failure," "wrong," or "neglected") and use positive language such as "We invite you to" or "We ask" Be aware that people from different cultures write differently.
- Use abbreviations and jargon sparingly. This might be confusing and take away from your overall message. But do consider who the message is going to; jargon may be helpful with certain audiences.
- Thank your audience for their time, effort, commitment, etc. For example, "Thank you for your time, efforts and partnership. We look forward to hearing back from you."

## EMAIL BODY FOR FORWARDED MESSAGES

- Be specific. When asking someone to forward a message to another end audience, it is helpful to include a note at the top of your email letting them know who the intended audience is, why this is useful for the end audience, when you would like them to forward the message and directions about any text that needs to be deleted or updated.

### Example



To... |

Cc... |

Send

Subject: PLEASE FORWARD: Better Together Program for Graduate Students

Dear Kathleen,

Health Promotion is offering a new program for graduate students aimed at reducing feelings of isolation, improving connections, and building community. We think your students would benefit greatly from this program and we would very much appreciate it if you would forward the below message along to all of your students. **Please remove both this text and "PLEASE FORWARD" from the subject line prior to sending this email to your students.**



To... |

Cc... |

Send

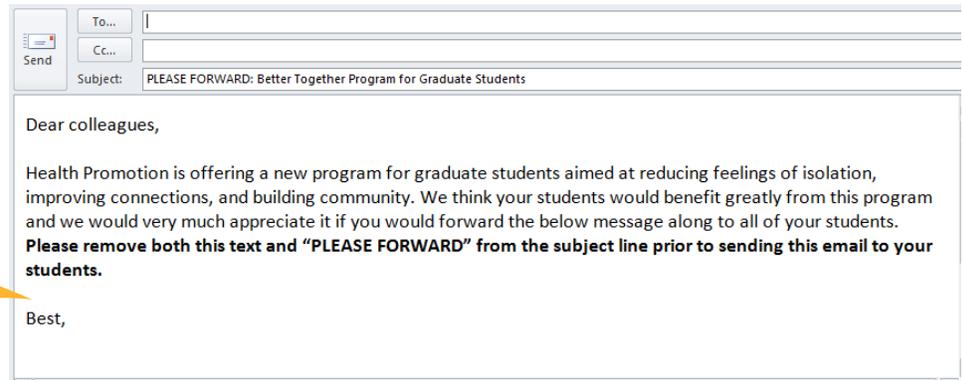
Subject: |

Dear colleagues,

|

## CLOSING

- 'Best' is usually the safest possible choice and universally appropriate.
- Consider using 'sincerely' in a situation where you want to make a professional first impression.



## SIGNATURE

- Include a signature block that is consistent with your division or department's guidelines.

## ATTACHMENTS

- Size matters. Consider utilizing hyperlinks when possible rather than attachments as it will increase the chances that your message will be read, and will load faster and appear more secure to both spam filters and recipients.

### FINAL CHECK BEFORE YOU HIT SEND

- Make sure your email addresses are correct. You don't want to send your message to the wrong person.
- Add "Resolved" to the subject line if you are responding to an email with requests and have resolved an issue or completed a task. This is especially helpful when responding to the emails that have several recipients and back and forth communications.