

Communication Harassment Response: A Guide for Department Chairs, Supervisors, Faculty, and Staff

This document was created in response to concerns raised by faculty and staff about harassment related to their syllabi, bios, research, and/or programming. It serves as a guide to resources available to support our faculty and staff.

At-A-Glance Summary

If you receive harassing communication:

- Take care of your personal wellness.
- Don't respond to the individual.
- Don't delete messages.
- Don't click on links.
- Contact our Campus Police Department.
- Contact Human Resources who can help to facilitate contacting other individuals
 - Human Resources works with IT to determine the extent email can be blocked at an individual, department, or campus-wide level.
- If the communication is from students, contact the Dean of Students.
- If the communication involves mention of race, gender, sexual orientation, etc., contact OEO.
- Forward email communication to Marketing & Communications using (weberstateuniversity@weber.edu).
 - Notify John Kowalewski and Bryan Magaña to monitor inbox.
- Contact Kyle Stoddard to turn off phone and voicemail.
- Contact Anna Burleson to change the department web page.
- If a faculty member or academic department is targeted, notify the dean and college marketing director.
- If a staff member is targeted, notify your supervisor and/or vice president.
- At the end of this document is a quick guide for responding to potential harassment.

Introduction

This document contains information on how to address a communication harassment event. The trigger event may be something that you or another faculty or staff member has said or done, or it may be in response to information that is posted willingly or surreptitiously. Regardless of the trigger, the community is responding to that information by attempting to communicate with you as a representative of the university.

The nature of that communication ranges from information notification (Did you know that XYZ occurred?) to requests for comment to threats of harm against you. Depending on your communication platform and the amount of publicly available information, a communication harassment event may include:

- Emails
- Phone calls
- Voicemails
- Text messages
- Social media messages/posts
- Physical mailings

This guide provides information and resources on steps to address communication harassment, protect yourself and the university, and mitigate the ongoing effects of the harassment. If you receive inquiries about course or programming content, consult with your supervisor and next-level supervisor as to how to respond. You can also reach out to Marketing & Communication and Legal Counsel for additional guidance.

Personal wellness

Getting attacked through work and personal communication channels is a difficult experience. Processing the emails and phone calls puts you under significant emotional strain which can lead to both physical and mental health consequences. Most importantly, you need to care for yourself in healthy ways. Talk to your supervisors, trusted allies and wellness professionals to develop strategies to cope through the experience.

- [Wellness Resources @ WSU](#)
- [Counseling Help from Blomquist Hale](#)

Responding to communications

The sympathetic reaction to communication harassment is the standard “fight or flight” reaction to stressful and dangerous situations: increased heart rate, rapid breathing, narrowed mental focus, etc. As experts on the content and processes of our disciplines and areas, part of that reaction will be to respond to the communication to correct and defend yourself, your academic freedom, and your discipline/area. **Don’t.**

It is likely that other faculty, staff and administrators are also receiving communications regarding the incident. A severe attack (doxxing) may involve hundreds of communications to you, let alone others. You are not the spokesperson for the university. Instead of responding to the communications, send the information to University Marketing & Communications (MarComm) and limit the ability for others to communicate with you.

If any of the messages are sexual, racial or otherwise address a protected class ([PPM 3-32](#)), contact the Office of Equal Opportunity immediately.

The Dean of Students Office, Human Resources, Information Security, Marketing & Communications and WSU Police Department have all dealt with these types of matters. It's important to let these offices know quickly in order to implement crisis communications plans, as appropriate. Human Resources can work with IT to determine the extent email can be completely blocked at an individual, department, or campuswide level. IT can set filters so that the communications still go to a designated individual(s), which is important to continue to monitor communications, but are no longer hitting your inbox. Human Resources supports all employees and can be a valuable resource in providing guidance and support to you.

If you are being doxxed or harassed, contact Campus Police immediately. You should also notify Human Resources if the individual is an employee and the Dean of Students Office if the individual is a student.

- Weber State Police Department, x-6460
- Meagan Thunell, Assistant VP of Human Resources, x-7496, meaganthunell@weber.edu
- Jeff Hurst, Dean of Students, x-7256, jhurst@weber.edu
- Alexandra Babilis, Executive Director OEO, x-6240, alexandrababilis@weber.edu

Save communications

In the event that the situation escalates, it is important to archive the communications you are receiving. The Gmail filters can help you organize and save emails. Contact Telecommunications to have any voicemails saved.

Maintain proper email hygiene

As you read and sort through email messages, you may encounter embedded links. Use the same standards you would when receiving a message from any unknown source regarding links and documents in an email. Be wary of clicking on any links or opening any documents. Crisis lowers your guard in some aspects and invites opportunity for additional victimization.

- [IT Service Desk](#)

csupport@weber.edu
801-626-7777

Email filtering

Gmail has a system for automatically [processing and filtering emails](#). Despite the filtering capability, you will likely need to manually go through the messages at some point to ensure that communications from valued sources are not accidentally ignored. You want to set up a general filter that forwards the email to MarComm's weberstateuniversity@weber.edu account and archives it.

Filters are created through the following steps:

- Click the three sliders icon in the search bar at the top of the Gmail screen
- Select key words or phrases that the message may contain in the subject line or body of the text
- Click “Create filter”
- Apply the following filter actions by checking the box:
 - Skip the Inbox (Archive it)
 - Apply the label (*you should create a new label to store the emails*)
 - Forward it to (you need to select or add weberstateuniversity@weber.edu)
 - Also, apply the filter to matching messages (*this will go through your current Inbox messages and move them as well*)
- Click “Create filter”

The filter will be applied to email in your Inbox (read and unread) and move everything to the archive label you created. Contact MarComm to let them know you are sending volumes of email to [weberstateuniversity@weber.edu]. This is a lightly-monitored inbox. Your key MarComm contacts are:

- John Kowalewski, Executive Director, jkowalewski@weber.edu
- Bryan Magaña, Public Relations Director, bryanmagana@weber.edu
- Anna Burleson, Web Content Manager, annaburleson@weber.edu

Phone and voicemail

If your office phone number is released, you will receive calls. If your phone has voicemail turned on, there will be messages. Caller ID is your friend at this point. During the crisis period, it is acceptable to only answer calls from sources that you recognize. It is also acceptable to deactivate your phone. Unplugging your phone from the wall is only a temporary stop-gap and may actually cause other issues (e.g., cutting off your internet hardline).

The Telecommunications department within the Information Technology division can help deactivate your phone and voicemail. They can also archive the voicemail communications you have received if needed later.

- [Telecommunication Services](#)
- Kyle Stoddard, Telecommunications Systems Engineer, kstoddard@weber.edu, x-6024

Website management issues

Your program website is likely the main source of contact information for you and your faculty/staff. It may be in the best interest of the institution to suspend the website, temporarily replacing it with a general statement and substitute contact information. Even if you have access to the campus website builder application, this is something that should be coordinated with MarComm. Contact Anna Burleson to coordinate temporary changes to the program or division website aligned with the institution's overall response strategy for this incident.

- Anna Burleson, Web Content Manager, annaburleson@weber.edu

Threats of harm or violence

You may receive threats targeted at yourself, your family or other members of the WSU community, as well as threats against university property. These may include threats to harm individuals, damage property or congregate and demonstrate in locations including campus or your home neighborhood. While you should take every threat seriously, it is unhealthy and unproductive to panic. The WSU Public Safety Team will coordinate investigation and protection as needed. Instead, follow these steps:

- Report the threat to WSU authorities
 - If it is an emergency, call 911 or WSUPD Dispatch x-6460
 - Dane LeBlanc, Director of Public Safety, dleblanc@weber.edu, x-8003
 - Seth Cawley, WSU Police Chief, sethcawley@weber.edu, x-8150
 - Mike Davies, WSU Police Captain, mdavies1@weber.edu, x-8126,
 - Forward any threatening emails to wsupd@weber.edu
 - If it involves a protected class (race, gender, etc.) call OEO x-6240, Alex Babilis, Executive Director, alexandrababilis@weber.edu

Statement on Academic Freedom

At Weber State University, we support and empower the free exchange of ideas through teaching, research and innovation, and debate. This includes the freedom of expression in the classroom on topics that are relevant to the discipline, the course, and teaching pedagogies. We support our faculty's academic freedom in their duties to our students and strive to protect individuals from harassment.

Quick Guide to Handling Harassment

See [Communication Harassment Response](#) for more details and information.

- If a faculty member or academic department is targeted, notify the dean and college marketing director.
- If a staff member is targeted, notify your supervisor and/or vice president.

If there are	Contact:	What Else?
Harassing E-mails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT Service Desk Support Computing 801-626-7777 • John Kowalewski, Executive Director, MarComm jkowalewski@weber.edu • Bryan Magaña, Public Relations Director, MarComm bryanmagana@weber.edu • Anna Burleson, Web Content Manager, MarComm, annaburleson@weber.edu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filter emails to Weber State University • Don't respond.
Harassing phone calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kyle Stoddard, Telecommunications Systems Engineer, kstoddard@weber.edu, x-6024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Screen calls. • Disconnect phone (Telecommunication Services)
Threats of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If it is an emergency, call 911 or WSUPD Dispatch x-6460. • Other contacts: 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dane LeBlanc, Director of Public Safety, dleblanc@weber.edu, x-8003 ○ Seth Cawley, WSU Police Chief, sethcawley@weber.edu, x-8150 ○ Mike Davies, WSU Police Captain, mdavies1@weber.edu, x-8126, ● Forward any threatening emails to wsupd@weber.edu 	
Harassment/Threats to a Protected Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● OEO x-6240, Alex Babilis, Executive Director, alexandrababilis@weber.edu 	
Harassment/Threats from a Co-Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact above as appropriate, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Meagan Thunell, Assistant VP of Human Resources, x-7496, meaganthunell@weber.edu 	
Harassment/Threats from a Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contact above as appropriate, plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jeff Hurst, Dean of Students, x-7256, jhurst@weber.edu 	
Resultant Stress and Anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wellness Resources @ WSU ● Counseling Help from Blomquist Hale 	