OMD Best Practice

HOW TO ENGAGE STUDENTS VIA TEXT

Students often keep busy schedules, making it a challenge to effectively communicate via email alone. Therefore, text messaging is typically most effective for delivering updates, checking in, and eliciting quick responses.

OMD student-facing staff regularly use text messaging – in addition to email – to communicate with students. This guide on how to productively engage students via text messaging is rooted in years of experience through providing wrap-around support to community college students.

WHEN

Students may have different perceptions of schedule boundaries and may send or reply to a message at night or over the weekend.

• Tip 1: Get permission first. Some students may not want interaction to move to personal texts.
• Tip 2: Set (and learn) expectations up front.

EXAMPLE

“You’re welcome to message me at your convenience, but you should only expect to hear back from me between 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.”

ABOUT ONE MILLION DEGREES

One Million Degrees provides tools, resources, and guidance that put community college students on an accelerated career path to economic mobility. We firmly believe – and our results show – that a purposeful support system can create pathways of opportunity for community college students, their families, employers, and our region.
**HOW**

Clarity, tone, and pacing are key.

- **Tip 1:** Make it easy to reply by asking a specific question; make the purpose of the text clear.

- **Tip 2:** Use a welcoming tone - not as formal as an email, but not as casual as texting a friend.

- **Tip 3:** Pace your messages. Stick to one piece of information and one question per message.

  **Example:** “Hi Raul, this is Mike from OMD. I hope midterms are going well! I saw we do not have a FAFSA on file for you yet. I can get you connected to assistance if needed, but we need it to keep you eligible for OMD. Can you let me know if you’ve started that application yet?”

**WHERE**

Use a text platform that works for you and the student but know when not using text messaging is the best option.

- **Tip 1:** Consider using Google Voice, Telegram, or Remind.com rather than your personal phone number.

- **Tip 2:** If the conversation becomes detailed or long, an email, phone call, or virtual meeting may be best.

  **Example:** “We’re getting into a lot of details, and I think we might have an easier time on the phone. Is there a good time to move this conversation to a phone call this week?”

**WHAT**

What should you say? Here are a few examples:

- Hi Jasmine. This is Mike from OMD. I haven’t heard from you in a while and wanted to see how you were doing with classes and your SAP appeal. Do you have a few minutes to stop by or call me this week? I have a few time slots open.

- I think we can pair you with assistance on campus. Do you have a time this week to talk via phone to speak about the different options on campus?

- I think the details of your application are key and we should schedule a call to speak about next steps. Do you have time next week for a call?