

# Southern State Community College

## Messaging Policy & Configuration

Version: 4/25/19

### Introduction

Messages intended for the campus community are best communicated via the College's notification messaging platforms, website, digital signs, email, and printed materials, such as flyers.

The College uses two comprehensive notification systems. The first (Regroup a.k.a. SSCC Alerts) is used to broadcast important emergency and priority information, as well as limited non-emergency messaging. The second system (Navigate), is used for sending general college related academic reminders and marketing messages via email, text or push notifications to individual students or groups.

### Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA)

In 1991, Congress enacted the Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) to address certain calling practices that invade consumer privacy and threaten public safety. In part, the TCPA and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules prohibit: (1) making telemarketing calls using an artificial or prerecorded voice to residential telephones without prior express consent, and (2) making any non-emergency call using an automatic telephone dialing system ("autodialer") or an artificial or prerecorded voice to a wireless telephone number without prior express consent. However, the TCPA expressly exempts from these prohibitions calls made for "emergency purposes."

If the call includes or introduces an advertisement or constitutes telemarketing, consent must be in writing. Further, the FCC has concluded that the TCPA's protections against unwanted calls to wireless numbers encompass both voice calls and text messages.

More information regarding TCPA, types of messaging, and the FCC's declaratory ruling regarding additional relief can be found at:

<https://www.fcc.gov/tags/telephone-consumer-protection-act-tcpa>

[https://transition.fcc.gov/Daily\\_Releases/Daily\\_Business/2016/db0804/FCC-16-88A1.pdf](https://transition.fcc.gov/Daily_Releases/Daily_Business/2016/db0804/FCC-16-88A1.pdf)

### Messaging General Guidelines

Emergency and priority messaging is used by authorized College officials. Each department intending to send (Regroup a.k.a. SSCC Alerts) messages must appoint at least one authorized official who will be responsible for crafting messages in compliance with policy guidelines and working with the IT

department to ensure delivery. Advising and other student service members will be authorized and solely responsible for sending general messages via (Navigate). All messages will ensure compliance with the following:

### 1. Emergency & Priority Messages

Emergency messages may only be sent for situations affecting the health and safety of consumers. The FCC lists several school-related examples for messages sent without consent such as:

- a. Weather closures
- b. Fire
- c. Health risks
- d. Threats

The FCC has declared additional relief from TCPA consent requirements for messages closely related to the school's mission, yet not meeting emergency status. The College has categorized such messages as "Priority" and includes the following:

- a. IT/system outages
- b. Power outages
- c. Weather Delays

### 2. Accurate Student Information and Consent

New students will be prompted to allow or revoke consent for college related text messages during the initial application process. Such results will be recorded in the Student Information System.

Returning students, at the beginning of each semester, will be prompted to confirm accurate personal information is on file via a "Personal Information Update" window in MyRecords. This will similarly provide allow or revoke consent which will be recorded in the Student Information System. The message will read as follows:

*"By providing my phone number(s) I understand I will receive important College related text messages and TTS (text to speech) messages from Southern State (Yes/No)."*

3. Authorized officials sending messages must abide by all other policies regarding content, as well as ensure the following:

- a. Content is accurate.
- b. Wording is appropriate.
- c. List of recipients is correct.

- d. Information within the message is directly related to the student, their studies and/or College mission.
  - e. Message clearly states who the message is from and the action that the student needs to take to opt out (see section 6 below for more information.)
  - f. Number of messages received by a student should be appropriate to ensure he/she will continue to regard College messages as important information.
  - g. Messages are sent with adequate time for the action or activity.
4. Text messages must not be used as the sole means of communicating an essential message or announcement except in times when direct student advising is needed with (Navigate). The informational message must be supplemented by some other means of communication, such as the web, to ensure that all students, including those who have opted out, receive the message.
5. Messages must **NOT** be used for the following:
  - a. Communicating personal or confidential information.
  - b. Personal matters (e.g., items for sale, farewell messages).
  - c. Sending any messages containing social security numbers, passwords, credit card numbers or any FERPA-protected data. These are strictly prohibited.
6. All messages must be tagged with the appropriate identifier so recipients can immediately recognize its origin. For example, open with, "This message is from Southern State Community College."
7. Non authorized individuals desiring to send a message must receive approval from their supervisor. Authorized officials do not need prior approval to send periodic messages.
8. Messages should be as concise as possible (while still maintaining a conversational tone when appropriate.) They should include essential points and, if needed, further instruction (e.g., "Check your email for full details.").
9. Abbreviations and text messaging lingo should never be used.

## Regroup (SSCC Alerts) Configuration

### Required Groups

#### **-Emergency (Email, Text & Voice)**

All registered students and active employees will be placed in the **Emergency** group with their SSCC email address, cell and home numbers for both texts and voice phone calls. This will be used for emergency notifications only.

A system administrator will populate College emails and phone numbers from Jenzabar into the Regroup system for the Emergency group at the beginning of each semester, and remove all members at the end of the semester. Notifications will be sent via email, text and voice.

#### **-Community Emergency (Email, Text & Voice)**

Members of the community, including parents, business partners, event organizers or any interested third parties will be able to join the **Community Emergency** group. This opt-in group will be used for emergency notifications only. A system administrator will remove all members once a year on the first schedule-permitting day in August. Notifications will be sent via email, text and voice.

#### **-Student Non-Emergency (Email & Text)**

Students who have opted in to receive College related messages will be added to this group in order to receive general College messages via email and text. This group will be used as an alternative to Navigates messaging platform if needed.

#### **-Faculty & Staff Non-Emergency (Email, Text & Voice)**

Active employees will be added to this group with their SSCC email address. Employees will have the option to update their preferences to receive text and voice messages via the SSCC Alerts interface located on SSCC's website.

A system administrator will populate email addresses from Ceridian into the Regroup system for the Faculty & Staff group at the beginning of each semester, and remove all members at the end of the semester. Notifications will be sent via email automatically, and with text and voice only if employee sets this preference in the SSCC Alerts interface.

#### **-Instructor's Class (Cancellation) Non-Emergency (Email & Text)**

All students who have opted in to receive College related messages will be added to this group in order to receive class cancellations in accordance with their instructors per semester.

A system administrator will remove all group members at the end of each semester. Notifications will be sent via email and text.

Please note class cancelations are also posted on social media and digital signs.

#### **-Delivery Modification**

Recipients have several options to modify how messages are received. Depending on the intent, messages can be blocked through the recipient's cellular provider or through Regroup.

Cellular Provider:

Recipients wishing to permanently block delivery options through their cellular provider can reply to a text message with the key word “**STOP.**”

#### Regroup:

Recipients may also stop receiving emergency text AND Text to Speech (TTS)/voice messages on a cell phone by replying with keyword “Leave + (space) + group Keyword or groupID.” This will register the removal through Regroup.

Non-cell users can log into Regroup (a.k.a. SSCC Alerts) to update their preferences or contact Tech Support 800-628-7722 x2800 and request to stop receiving voice messages.

#### \*Please Note:\*

\*While group members may choose to STOP or Leave a group, they will not be able to opt out of receiving emails.\*

\*Opting out through Regroup will not impact Navigate messages and vice versa.\*

\*All messages sent via the Regroup platform will include directions for a recipient to opt out from further messages.\*

\*Email instruction will be sent to students at the beginning of each term regarding how to opt-out via the SSCC Alerts interface located on the website.

\* Stopping Non-Emergency texts does not automatically stop Emergency texts\*

\*Students opting out through the “Personal Information Update” prompt each semester will prevent their information from being loaded into Navigate and all Regroup groups except Emergency and Priority messages.

## **Navigate Guidelines & Configuration**

The Navigate platform offers text and email messaging to communicate with students and/or across the board for appointment and advising reminders, as well as general college related academic and marketing messages. Students will have the ability to opt out of messaging through the Navigate interface but those that do will continue to receive SSCC Alerts via Regroup.

Navigate's academic purpose is to support College advising and student success initiatives. Therefore messages should be appropriate for such uses. The College designates Navigate for communicating messages regarding the following uses:

- a. Graduation advising
- b. Appointment campaigns

- c. Appointment Notifications/Reminders
- d. Probation advising
- 1. Appointment Notifications/Reminders

All students will receive an email when an appointment is scheduled and a reminder email the morning of their appointment. Students that have not opted out from receiving text messages will similarly receive the same text notices as well.

- 2. Individual Student Messages

The use of individual student messaging should be used sparingly in order to be strategic about when messages are sent, the purpose, and frequency to avoid inundating students.

- 3. Authorized officials sending Navigate messages must abide by all other policies regarding content, as well as general messaging guidelines listed earlier in this policy. Additional specific guidelines include:
  - a. Messages have a 160 character limit
  - b. Use a website or tiny url if you need to refer students to a longer message
  - c. Content of messages should be timely and action-oriented
  - d. Example Message:

*This message is from Southern State Community College: File your intent to graduate for spring 2017- Dec 2, 2016 deadline. Reply with STOP to unsubscribe.*