



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
CROOKSTON



CAMPUS WEEKLY UPDATE

#IAMCROOKSTON

LEADERSHIP LETTER

From the Chancellor



Dear Students,

It has been nice to see the bottom half of many of your faces the last week. Please note though if you wish to wear your mask you can continue to do so. Remember, they are still required in the formal classroom. The University continues to monitor COVID-19 outbreaks and fingers crossed we have gone from this pandemic to this next phase.

Email thoughts

Have you ever written an email and wondered –

- Why didn't they respond to me?
- Did they even receive the message?
- Why has it taken more than a week for them to get back to me?

These might be questions, which have gone through your mind (they certainly have crossed my mind) about emails.

It has dawned on me that perhaps with the average person receiving more than 130 emails per day, mine got lost. Wondering if someone received my email got me to reflect a little. Why don't I respond right away to some emails and what are the expectations I (and we collectively) should have on our email communications.

This E-Update will introduce the topic and “best practices,” but I encourage you to consider these thoughts. Openly discuss with your colleagues the information below about emails, and also our responses to social media and other ways we communicate with each other.

Before delving deep into the topic of emails, know that this E-Update is intended to serve as a way to cut down on emails. Instead of bombarding you everyday with updates, we are asking you to put them into a more organized and predictable queue for information flow. Our students told us before we transitioned from the daily email barrage that they had more than 3500 emails on an average semester that they didn't even bother to open. Most of them were from us telling them about an event, an update etc.

Before getting into the “why we don't respond to some emails,” let me suggest a few best practices about emails:

- Write a clear subject line.
- Keep it short.

- Watch your tone—make an extra effort to come across as positive.
- Write like nothing is confidential—because it isn't. Emails are discoverable in Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.
- Stick to standard fonts: Calibri, Courier or Times New Roman 10-12 point.
- Use a professional signature, to access the acceptable signature format for the University of Minnesota click [here](#). Always double-check the recipient's name. Nothing makes a first impression like misspelling a person's name or addressing them by the wrong name altogether.
- Never send an email without proofreading it.
- Always enter the intended email address after you have proofread your email. This will prevent sending another email to correct a mistake.
- Give timely responses. As a rule of thumb, you should respond to your teammates during the same day, other colleagues, parents, students within 24 hours. Sometimes the response can be as brief as "I received your email," or if a response is warranted and you need to think about it, "I received your email and will provide a response within the next several days."
- When the answer is "no," respond quickly to stop the continuation of unnecessary emails.
- FYI is just that. Someone forwarded it to you for you to be in the know. You can acknowledge with a quick "thanks," but no more is necessary.
- Out of office replies are helpful to set expectations if you are on vacation, etc. but if you are at a University sponsored conference or event it isn't necessary to set them up. Instead take 15 minutes and respond within 24 hours.
- Use "Reply all," only when necessary. Just respond to the sender.
- If the email is not clear don't be afraid to clarify an opaque note. Come back with something such as "As I read your email I think you are saying 'x'. Is that what your email is asking?" Asking some variation of the question forces the writer to tighten up their query and get specific about the help/question they have.
- Try to touch an email only once. Respond, forward or delete it.

And now the thorny question "Why do we not respond to some emails."

For one thing we get too many. In 2021 more than 319 billion emails were sent. By 2025 it is projected to be 376 billion. The average person spends more than four hours a day taming their inboxes. It isn't great for our mental or physical health either. One study found that as emails pour in throughout the day, our blood pressure, heart rate and cortisol levels all increased.

Some messages are easy but the messages that linger in our inboxes are the ones that create emotional stress and the ones we tend to procrastinate on. Sometimes they are logistical hurdles, need to check calendars, waiting to hear back from someone else on another meeting, etc., etc.

Sometimes they are because we are avoiding something. In a recent article by Dorie Clark "The Real Reason We Dread our Inboxes," she suggests we are dodging difficult questions, so be on the lookout for patterns in your communication that may indicate this. She suggests that our inboxes may in reality be mirrors of what we don't want to address or do. She further suggests that we need to confront the reason we are not responding and frequently we compound our problems whenever we delay our response. Psychologically it is far easier to put off answering rather than send a response you know will disappoint someone. But as Clark says, "this will continue to plague you as an open loop and begins to look rude after a while. Set aside time for emotional or high-stakes responses. With a bit of space and without putting pressure on yourself in that moment you can give these responses the care they deserve."

But sometimes an email is the best communication approach. My daughter has a coffee cup that says "I just survived a Zoom that should have been an email." Don't be disrespectful of our

colleagues by calling a zoom when there are other ways to communicate more effectively. Sometimes an email is the most effective use of time.

Best,

Chancellor Mary

CAMPUS UPDATES

Commencement, in person Saturday, May 7

Currently there are no guest limitations or mask requirements. The time of ceremony has yet to be determined, contingent on the keynote speaker's travel schedule. Faculty and staff are encouraged to wear Regalia and attend the ceremony as part of the Faculty procession. If you plan on attending, email Chris Winjum at cwinjum@crk.umn.edu.

Graduating students in order to successfully plan the necessary details of the Commencement ceremony, need to confirm attendance with the Registrar's Office no later than Monday, April 4. Indicate whether you will or will not be attending by completing the survey emailed to you. If you did not receive an email, please contact Cyndi Wentz at weber434@umn.edu.

Celebration of Achievement, Student Award Ceremony is slated for Thursday, April 28

Does your department have an award or awards with scholarships for acknowledgement? Complete this [Google Form](#) to submit the awards you/your department would like to present. (fill out the form separately for EACH award). Contact Brooke Novak (novak303@umn.edu) with questions.

Office of Student Programming & Transitions

Golden Eagle Move-In Day, Thursday, August 25

Golden Eagle Welcome Weekend is set for Thursday, August 25 through Sunday, August 28. Fall semester begins Monday, August 29. Mark your calendar, more information as the date nears.

Master of Nursing Pathway rep on campus today, March 28, 12-1, Minnesota Room

Consider the nursing profession after graduation. Students, stop by and talk with Laurissa Stigen, MS, RN Coordinator, School of Nursing and Campus System Partnerships and learn about the [nursing pathway](#) and the Master of Nursing program.

Student Success

Interested in becoming a Peer Mentor?

UMN Crookston is beginning to recruit peer mentors to guide our incoming students for the upcoming fall semester. Peer mentors assist incoming students to adjust with their transition to college during their first semester through UMC 1200 - Introduction to University life and a variety of out-of-class connections. Interested students can view the [Peer Mentor Job Description](#) or stop into the Student Success Center for more details. To apply to be a peer mentor, be ready to upload a resume and cover letter and answer a few questions through the [First-Year Eagles Peer Mentor Application](#).

EVENTS

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- 23rd Annual Grad Fest, March 30, 8:30-2 in the Sargeant Student Center.
 - Game of the Year; Baseball fields @ 1:30 and 3:30 April 9
 - In the Spirit of Cinco de Mayo, April 22 3:30 - 8, Sergeant Student Center
 - Pancakes and Ponies, [April 24](#), 10-1pm, University Teaching and Outreach Center (UTOC)
 - UMN Crookston [Commencement](#), May 7
 - [Northern Great Plains Youth Institute](#), May 9
 - Faculty/Staff Awards Luncheon, Tuesday, May 10, 11:30-1:30, Bede Ballroom
 - Rotary Youth Leadership Youth Camp, July 9-16
 - CYFAR Youth Immersion Camp, July 25 and 26

[CLICK FOR ALL EVENTS](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

Athletics and UMC Teambackers

Game of the year celebration on April 9 and 24

- Baseball: April 9 vs Wayne State (1:30/3:30 p.m.)
- Softball: April 24 vs Wayne State (12/2 p.m.)

Join Golden Eagle Athletics and UMC Teambackers for a game of the year. All are welcome, so come out and enjoy a fun time. There will be food and a good time! Door prizes will be given away, wear your maroon and gold, and enjoy a UMC Teambacker tailgate!

Location: Golden Eagle Baseball/Softball fields.

For more information on other activities and events, check out the [Events Calendar](#)



The University of Minnesota Crookston will welcome Wongdue Sangbo Gurung, a Buddhist monk from Nepal, to campus April 11-20 as he will take part in the ancient [Tibetan Buddhist tradition of the creation and destruction of a sand mandala](#). The community and students on the UMN Crookston campus will be able to watch him create the sand mandala in person or online at <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/0s711>. The creation of the sand mandala will commence Monday, April 11 in the west side of the International Lounge within the Sargeant Student Center.

