

An aerial photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, there is a paved plaza with a checkered pattern of light and dark tiles. To the right, a bronze statue of a person on horseback stands on a square base. In the background, there are several large, multi-story brick buildings. A hillside with trees is visible in the distance under a clear sky. A large, semi-transparent green rectangle is overlaid in the center of the image, containing white text.

# EMAIL WRITING FOR STUDENT GOVERNMENT

# IMPORTANT EMAIL TIPS

- ALWAYS READ EMAILS ALL THE WAY THROUGH
- ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR A LONG EMAIL
  - if you know you do not have the time/patience/mental focus to read a long email in detail and retain what is being said: LEAVE IT UNREAD UNTIL YOU HAVE TIME
- ANSWER WITHIN 48 HOURS\*\*
  - by Student Government stipulation...if action is requested of you and you do not respond within 48 hours...you can be given a HALF STRIKE
  - BUT -- the 48-hr response to the email doesn't necessarily have to be the completed action item
    - EX: Hi Maddie!  
Thank you for your email. I have seen your request for [ACTION ITEM] and I expect to have it to you by [DATE]. Please do not hesitate to follow-up if you do not hear from me by then.

# IMPORTANT EMAIL TIPS

- ANSWER WITHIN 48 HOURS\*\*
  - \*\*BUT...
  - Lead Team is flexible and understanding, especially in these uncertain times, so do not hesitate to reach out should something come up that makes it hard to respond to emails

# GENERAL EMAIL TIPS

- Emails and their length should have **PURPOSE and INTENTION**
  - Be as brief as you can be while still communicating all relevant and necessary information
- Long Emails vs. Short Emails
  - **Long Emails** should be used for the purposes of having a lot of information down in writing
    - EX: communicating a bunch of dates, an outline of a plan of action, a follow-up/de-brief of a meeting, critiques, etc.
  - **Long Emails SHOULD NOT BE USED** in place of a meeting and meetings **SHOULD NOT BE USED** in place of a long email -- **BE CONSIDERATE** of people's time
  - **Short(er) Emails**
    - EX: introduction emails, proposing a meeting, emailing attachments with a short description, confirming a meeting time and setting an agenda

# GENERAL EMAIL TIPS

- Say "Hello,"
  - You can use an introductory phrase that works for you, but if you do not know the title or pronouns of the person you are emailing, consider just saying: Hello,
- Be Professional
  - Use complete sentences and write in a way that is respectful to the person and their position(s)
  - **Think before you send: If I received this, would I think it's professional?**
- The Power of a Signature
  - Signatures can tell a little bit more about you, like your major, minor, any other positions you hold in other organizations or jobs.
  - It can make for good conversation!
  - There are many templates online for signatures, you'll know ~the one~ when you see it

# GENERAL EMAIL TIPS

- Accessible Subject Line
  - When writing a Subject Line, think: if I had to do a search of my inbox, what would I search for to get to this email?
    - EX: if i want to send out an email to the Services department/committee with a bunch of meeting times, my subject would be: Services Department Meeting Times
      - not just "Services Department" and not just "Meeting Times"
  - KEEP IT SHORT BUT BE SPECIFIC
- Copy and Paste - WITH CAUTION
  - Copying and pasting an email template is a great way to save time BUT you leave yourself vulnerable to mistakes
  - Before sending a copied-and-pasted email, make sure:
    - The proper person is being addressed
    - The information included pertains to and is meant for that person and not someone else
    - To double-check dates and times, contact information, etc.

# CC'ING FOR SENATE

- For Emails re: Initiatives, CC...
  - Speaker - Cassidy
  - Speaker Pro Temp - Natalia
  - Appropriate Chair
  - Anyone else working on initiative (i.e. Senate chair, etc.)
- For Emails to University Administrators
  - All of the Above
  - BOTH Advisors - Ben and Julianna

# CC'ING FOR CABINET

- For Emails re: Initiatives, CC...
  - President - Shelby
  - Vice President - David
  - Chief of Staff - Maddie
  - Appropriate Secretary/Undersecretary
  - Anyone else working on initiative (i.e. Senate chair, etc.)
- For Emails to University Administrators
  - All of the Above
  - BOTH Advisors - Ben and Julianna





Hi [Redacted]

I hope this email finds you well! Hope your first day of classes went alright 😊

This is going to be a long email with a lot of important information, just so if you have questions, you can go back and refer to this email. However, if you would like to talk all this through, just let me know and we can set up a meeting!

I wanted to check-in and talk about elections and a new SG amendment. I wanted to put this on your radar early since turnout for elections will be really important, and we want to utilize everything being online and social media, etc. to our advantage.

It is important for you to work with the Elections and Disputes Commission (EDC) in advertising the following things, so please don't feel like this is all on you and your department, as the EDC will be working with you, as well. The Chair of the EDC, Dominic Pino, and Commissioner Summer Brown have been CC'd on this email.

Below is a timeline of things we will need advertised and when:

**New SG Amendment – After September 3, 2020**

Shelby, David, and I, along with Senate Lead Team, worked this summer to create a constitutional amendment for the Student Body Constitution. The amendment will completely change the structure of the SG Senate, so we really want the student body to be informed with what is being proposed. Because we needed to get the word out about the Public Hearing on the amendment, I just whipped up a few graphics, but we want everything to still be advertised before Fall Elections. Since this was a Lead Team project, I can definitely help you with this. [Here](#) is the text of the amendment we are proposing. Basically: we want to change the structure of Senate to be partially representation for the entire university and partially representation for each of the Schools/Colleges within Mason.

**Information Sessions – DATES BELOW**

Fall Elections for the Student Senate are for freshman/transfer students and to fill any additional open seats left over from the Spring Elections. Students that want to run are required to attend an information session so they understand what is required of them should they be elected to the Senate. It will be really important to advertise these dates so those interested in running do not miss out. Students will register for these info sessions on Mason360 and the sessions themselves will be virtual on Zoom. You may want to look at the Instagram to see our posts for past information sessions.

Candidate meetings will be held on:

- Monday, August 31 at 5 pm
- Friday, September 4 at 9 am
- Monday, September 7 at 6 pm

- Friday, September 11 at 10 am
- Monday, September 14 at 7 pm
- Friday, September 18 at 11 am

**Elections – September 28, 2020 - October 2, 2020**

Fall Elections for the Student Senate will take place from Sept. 28 to Oct. 2 on Mason360. We want to advertise these elections as much as possible, across as many platforms as possible.

**Results – October 3, 2020**

The results of the Fall Election have to be posted by noon following the last day of the election. It might be helpful to just have a template ready ahead of time so you can just input all the names of the winners as soon as possible.

For your convenience with the PR department, I am also going to submit all of these in the graphic request form. As always, I am here to help if you have any questions or need help with graphics. If it's easier, feel free to text me at 856-343-7038.

Best,  
Maddie Portnoy

**Madeline Portnoy**  
*B.S. Criminology, Law, and Society*  
George Mason University  
Honors College Class of 2022  
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# LONG EMAIL EXAMPLE

- Warned at the beginning it would be long and WHY it was long + an offer to set up a meeting to discuss further if needed
- Spaced out information to easily follow
- Mentioned the people that are CC'd (that aren't the standard for Cabinet)
- Bolded the important information
- Hyperlinked reference material
- Provided alternate ways of contact to help
- Included my plan of action (to be held accountable!)



Hi Dr. Farris --

My name is Madeline Portnoy, and I am the University Services and University Academics chairwoman for the Student Senate. I wanted to write to say thank you for your presentation yesterday -- it is great to see how the Emergency Management department has turned a negative event into positive changes.

During the meeting yesterday, I was thinking about the possibility of a Safety and Emergency Awareness Week here at Mason. My vision involves have kiosking, events (like the one you had mentioned in the meeting with the inflatables and the like), and end the week with a SEERM town hall.

I was thinking this would take place the week of November 11-15, which is American Education week, as it would have a special focus on safety and emergency awareness. The town hall would potentially conclude the week's events on Thursday, November 14.

I have CC'd the University Life chairman David O'Connell, the Undersecretary of Well-Being and Safety Bella D'Alacio, Cedric Price, Cassidy Whitehurst, the Student Body President and Vice President, and the SG Advisors, who would be a part of this process, as well.

I would love to explore this idea with you and your team and hopefully meet some time soon.

Best,  
Maddie Portnoy

**Madeline Portnoy**  
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Honors College Class of 2022  
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# SHORT(ER) EMAIL EXAMPLE

- Professional, but not rigid, tone
- Introduction as a member of Student Government
- Gave overview of initiative idea, with specific dates included
- Spaced out information to easily follow
- Mentioned the people that are CC'd
- Asked for possible meeting

# TO SUM UP...

- When receiving emails...
  - Prepare for long emails
  - Always read them completely through
  - Respond within 48 hours (or let Lead Team know should something come up)
- When writing emails...
  - Be brief but intentional
    - Long emails are OKAY as long as they serve a purpose
  - Be professional, use complete sentences
  - Use a neutral opening if pronouns/titles are unknown
  - Accessible subject line
  - PROOFREAD!!!
  - CC appropriate people depending on branch + people involved