

# New survey identifies most common challenges and opportunities for improvement in college and university communications

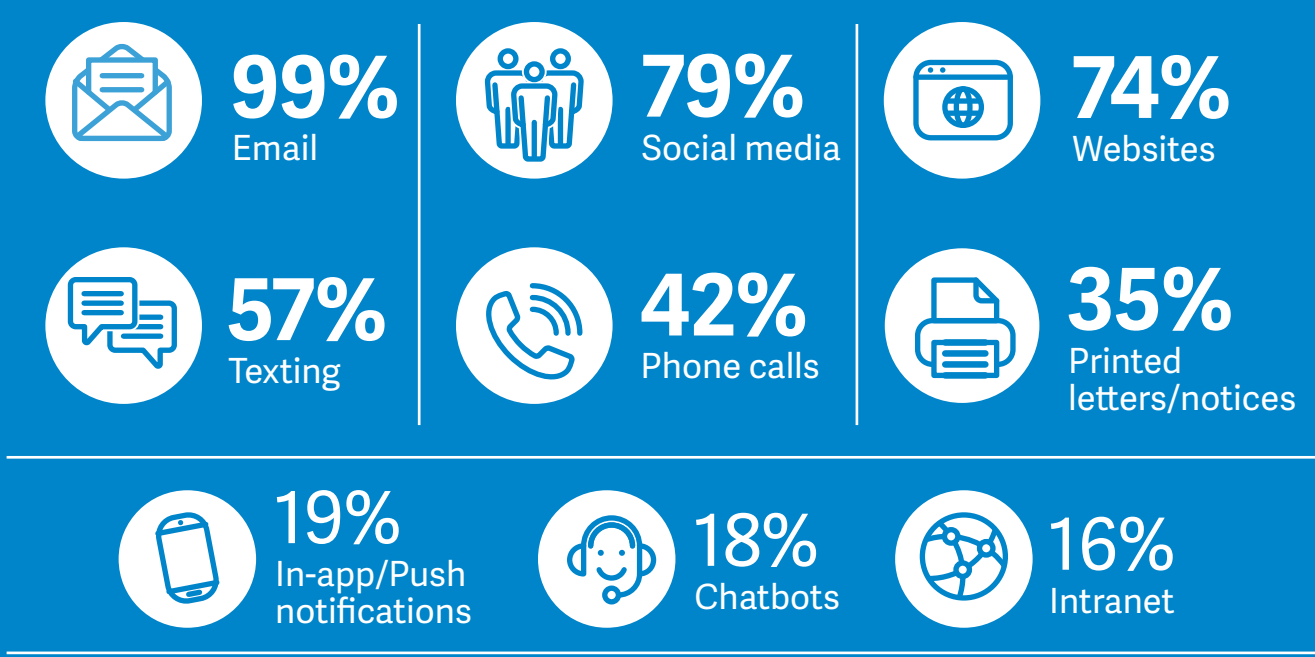
University Business and Jenzabar partnered to develop and deploy a survey of higher education leaders in September 2021, asking them about which communications channels are used at their institutions, and to describe their communications strategies and most significant challenges. More than 220 higher education leaders participated, including presidents and vice presidents, marketing and communications leaders, provosts, deans, and more. A wide variety of sizes and types of institutions from around the country were represented.



## COMMUNICATIONS METHODS, CONFIDENCE, AND TRUST

Respondents were asked to identify which channels their institution used to engage and communicate with students. By far the most common channel was email (99%), followed by social media (79%), websites (74%), texting (57%) and phone calls (42%).

### Which channels is your institution most commonly using to engage and communicate with students?



When asked to rate their level of confidence that their students were receiving the right communications, at the right time, from their institution, the average rating was just 2.8 out of 5 stars, with 30% of respondents saying they had a low level of confidence.

When asked if they agreed or disagreed with the statement, “Communication issues at our institution can create a trust gap with our students.” 31% strongly agreed and 52% agreed, for a total of 83% saying that communication issues can create a trust gap with students.

83% of respondents said that communication issues at their institution can create a trust gap with students.

78% of respondents said they agreed with the statement: “My institution would benefit from a tool that enables us to deliver unique, seamless campus-wide communications through a single platform.”

When asked specifically if the COVID-19 pandemic had created communication issues or problems at their institution, 24% said “Definitely” while 36% said “Somewhat.” Another 38% said the pandemic had created “Very few” communication problems, resulting in some 98% of respondents acknowledging that the pandemic had caused some level of communication issues or problems.

## INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

The survey also asked respondents about the concept of an “integrated communication strategy,” described as a definitive plan that details who should be given specific information, when the information should be delivered, and which channels should be used.

Just 24% of respondents said that their institution had an integrated communication strategy, while another 14% said such a strategy was currently in development. 31% said their institution did not have such a strategy, while 31% said they weren’t sure.

When asked if their department had an integrated communication strategy, a higher percentage of respondents could answer definitively. 31% said yes, 47% said no, 14% said it was in development and only 8% said they weren’t sure.



## COMMUNICATIONS PAIN POINTS

When asked to identify their institution’s biggest communications pain points, by far the most common answer was “**Siloed communications**,” selected by 64%, followed by “**Lack of an integrated communication strategy**” (48%), “**Poor interdepartmental collaboration and visibility**” (47%), “**Lack of consistent messaging**” (41%) and “Lack of integration/interoperability between systems” (36%).

Other top answers included “Poor engagement with students, faculty, staff and community” (34%), “Too many tools and systems” (26%) and “Poor satisfaction rates” (10%).

Respondents were then asked to identify what they thought their students would say are their institution’s biggest pain points when it comes to communications. The top three answers were “**Having to speak to multiple people and repeat information**” (54%), “**Too many communications**” (49%) and “**Lack of consistent messaging, causing confusion**” (44%). Other top answers were “**Disjointed approach**” (34%) and “**Too many systems, platforms or channels**” (26%).

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### What are your institution’s biggest communications pain points?



“The survey illustrated many of the challenges that institutions are facing when it comes to communications, including siloed, disjointed technologies and platforms, and a lack of integrated strategies,” says Les Zimmerman, Vice President of Product Development at Jenzabar. “The expectations of students, faculty, staff, and community members have been influenced by the integrated, seamless digital experiences offered by other industries. It’s crucial that institutions create more unified experiences designed to maximize engagement.”

Built directly into Jenzabar One, Jenzabar Communications enables institutions to eliminate communication silos, reduce redundancies between departments, improve engagement and increase collaboration across campus through a single platform.

To learn more, go to [jenzabar.com/product/communications](https://jenzabar.com/product/communications).