

Communicate in a Professional Manner

Developing your education and career plans will require you to reach out to faculty, advisors, and other university staff, as well as to individuals employed in the fields of business and public administration. As you seek out support from these individuals, you will want to ensure that all of your communication is conducted in a professional manner, part of which means not abbreviating words as is commonly done in text messages. You **should not** treat the conversations you have with them via phone or email as those you would have with your friends or family. Below are some practices that you will want to follow beginning your first day at CSUB!

- Include an **appropriate salutation** to the recipient of all email you send, regardless of whether you are initiating communication with someone or simply responding to an email you received. One of the worst habits you can get into is to send emails that do not acknowledge the person you are writing with an appropriate greeting.
- If you have not yet met the person you are writing, always begin your email with the greeting "Dear Ms./Mr. Last Name," (please note that you should not use "Mrs." when greeting someone you know to be a woman, unless you know that to be their preference). If you are already acquainted, your greeting can be "Hello, Mr./Ms. Last Name," or "Hi, First Name," if you are on a first-name basis with the person. This practice applies to the emails you send to all university staff and off-campus individuals.
- The title Dr. is used by anyone who has completed a doctoral degree (most typically a Ph.D.), while the title Prof. may be used by anyone who serves as an instructor for a college course. When you send an email to one of your professors and you do not yet know them well, you should include the greeting "Dear Dr./Prof. Last Name,". If you have had the professor for more than one class, your emails to them can begin with the greeting "Hi, Dr./Prof. Last Name,". Unless a professor informs you otherwise, always refer to them with the appropriate title of Dr. or Prof.
- Begin the practice of using your @csub.edu account for your email campus- and career development-related communication. The role you currently hold in your career development is as a university student, and it is important that those with whom you communicate are aware of your affiliation. For your personal communication with friends and family and for other personal experiences, however, be sure to use a personal email account.
- If you choose to use a signature in your email, keep it simple! Simply include your name, your affiliation with CSUB as a student with a particular major, and your expected date of graduation. Avoid including a quotation in your signature.
- If you choose to include a photo to be included in with your email, use one that it is a simple, professional-looking headshot in which you are wearing a button-down shirt or sweater.
- As you begin contacting individuals by phone, make sure that if they have to leave you a voice message at any point that they find the experience to be professional in nature. Leave an outgoing message that is simple, clearly stated, and something that would not embarrass you if it is heard by a potential employer.
- If your cellular carrier offers you the feature of having callers listen to music when trying to reach you, **DO NOT USE IT**. Chances are that any of the songs you select for this will be interpreted as unprofessional in nature.
- Keep in mind that once you begin communicating with anyone (a professor, a university staff member, or a potential mentor/employer) you are being evaluated. Use these interactions as an

opportunity to create the impression of you that you want them to develop in their minds.
Communication style is a critical tool for developing your career!