



## Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Decommissioning of Today@AU

### Why is *Today@AU* being decommissioned?

*Today@AU*, a text-based daily digest, delivered via email, was introduced 16 years ago. While it has served American University well, much has changed in terms of communication technology and practice. It is time to shift the university's internal communications efforts to more effective tools that have emerged and matured since 2001.

The system used to distribute *Today@AU* is dependent on dated systems that do not provide measures to evaluate the effectiveness, reach, and relevance of the content shared. Moreover, the numerous links are not mobile-friendly and make the experience of using it on smart phones frustrating and time consuming. Recent efforts to explore the effectiveness of various communication tools confirm that *Today@AU* has outlived its usefulness. Focus groups conducted to inform the RiSE Initiative (Reinventing the Student Experience) demonstrated that the volume and organization of items overwhelms staff and students, who prefer less frequent communications with easy-to-find, relevant information, customized to their personal interests. Furthermore, a 2016 AU Student Government Association Survey found that students prefer receiving information about the university via social media, email, and the Four Winds message boards to *Today@AU*. In short, while this tool makes it relatively easy to "broadcast" news and events, it is less and less likely that the information posted reaches those who want it.

The university community deserves to receive more timely and relevant news and events, presented in a compelling, responsive design that includes images and video. The launch of [American University News](#), a weekly, curated newsletter for all faculty, staff, and students, in April was an important step in that direction.

### What is American University News?

*American University News* is a curated weekly news digest prepared by University Communications and Marketing (UCM) and emailed to all students, faculty, and staff. Its purpose is to provide the most relevant and timely news and events from AU's leadership, colleges, schools, divisions, and offices in a responsive format. Readers also can personalize their news feed with a choice from a dozen topics. Soon, readers will have the option to receive *American University News* via SMS/text. An important benefit of *American University News* is the ability to measure its effectiveness to improve the content.

### How can I promote events and announcements without *Today@AU*?

Users can utilize more engaging and effective methods for promoting their events and announcements. These include:

- use the university events master calendar;
- post to social media per the [Policy on Social Media](#) and using [best practices](#)
- accessing UCM's Emma enterprise account to create a periodic newsletter to a targeted list of those specifically interested in or affected by the information to be shared
- send communications via school/department listserves

- publish news stories on the appropriate university web page, so the stories can feed into the 12 topic areas in american.edu news and potentially be chosen for *American University News*
- propose a story idea with links to any relevant web pages via the [Submit a Story Idea](#) link at the bottom of *American University News*
- display flyers/posters on campus and residence hall bulletin boards in compliance with the [Policy on Posting Materials](#)
- add your poster to the FourWinds Message board. Representatives of student organizations email [samarketing@American.edu](mailto:samarketing@American.edu) to get approval from University Center and Student Activities or Greek Life first. Representatives of academic and administrative units email [digitalsigns@american.edu](mailto:digitalsigns@american.edu).
- share your news and events with other owners of university newsletters
- list your university newsletter on the landing page that is going to be created for that purpose

### I represent a student organization. How can I promote my organization's events and announcements without Today@AU?

You can promote your events and announcements by reaching your specific audience where they look for information. You should consider posting to social media using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat. Remember, Facebook allows you to create events to invite participants. Also, [canva.com](https://www.canva.com) is a great tool for designing an image that can be used on any platform. Be sure to create a hashtag so you can engage with those viewing your announcement or event attendees before, during and after your event. That allows you and anyone else interested in your announcement or event to see all of the posts associated with the hashtag. Other ways to promote your event include posting flyers/posters on campus and residence hall bulletin boards according to the [Policy on Posting Materials](#) and adding your poster to the FourWinds message boards. Be sure to email [samarketing@American.edu](mailto:samarketing@American.edu) to get approval from University Center and Student Activities or Greek Life before posting to FourWinds.

### How do I use the university's master events calendar to promote events?

The master calendar only populates events that have been scheduled and confirmed in the [25Live](#) scheduling system, and are marked with a Preferred Visibility Level of 1 or more. To enter your event in the system, simply sign in using your AU Username/Login, and click the "Create an Event" button to submit your event information. Make sure you include an engaging description and important Custom Attributes (like Preferred Visibility Level 1 or more). If you do not see a "Create an Event" option when you log in, then please complete this brief [online training](#) for access. Alternatively, please speak to your department's web content publisher or event scheduler for assistance. Questions? Contact University Event Scheduling at [ues@american.edu](mailto:ues@american.edu) or x3939.

### What information do I need to promote my announcement/event?

If you can answer the five Ws and one H – Who? What? Where? When? Why? How? – you have all the information your reader needs, and enough to write a story, post a listing on the university's master events calendar, or utilize the other methods of promotion listed above.

### How do I get my events and announcements considered for *American University News*?

If you would like an event or announcement featured on *American University News*, you can [submit a story idea](#) to the UCM team. You may also advertise events on the master calendar or promote news

on the appropriate college, school, office, or division page. The *American University News* team chooses stories and events from these sources to highlight in the weekly newsletter.

### *Why wasn't my submission to American University News featured?*

The American University News team strives to curate stories that appeal to the entire AU community and reflect the university's strategic priorities. If your submission meets these two criteria, then our team will do everything it can to accommodate your request. That said, we do not have the resources to address every submission.

For an event to be placed in one of the three featured slots on the newsletter, its complete information must be accessible somewhere online (preferably on the university master events calendar) and the URL must be shared with the [American University News editor](#). You can also send suggestions to [aunews@american.edu](mailto:aunews@american.edu).

As the weekly newsletter is distributed on Wednesday mornings, events that have a longer "lead time" are preferable. The further away an event is from the announcement, the more time your audience has to plan accordingly. We do not highlight events that scheduled for the same day the newsletter is distributed or early the following morning.