

# External Email Client Best Practices

The College Alumni Programs Office of the Harvard Alumni Association encourages Class Secretaries to use an email client that works best for them in order to regularly communicate with their classmates. If using a third-party broadcast email client (such as Mailchimp) instead of sending class-wide emails out through the HAA's broadcast email system or a [classes.harvard.edu](https://classes.harvard.edu) website, please consider these best practices:

- Request a new class list from your HAA staff liaison annually. This will be shared by a secure download link over email. Please save this locally on your computer (i.e. not in a Google Sheet, cloud storage, or shared with others).
- If you hear from anyone who wants to be added to your class list or from those who want to be taken off because they affiliate with a different class, please let your HAA staff liaison know, and they can make the edits on their end too. Similarly, if your HAA liaison hears from anyone about these points, they'll let you know so you can make the updates on your end. If these changes result in an alum needing to be removed or added to a different class list, the HAA staff liaison will follow up with the appropriate Class Secretary.
- If anyone reaches out to you with any updates to their contact preferences, please ask them to also update their preferences in their profile at [community.alumni.harvard.edu](https://community.alumni.harvard.edu) or by emailing [haa\\_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu](mailto:haa_collegealumniprograms@harvard.edu) (since you updating their preferences in your email system won't result in a change on Harvard's end unless they take this action).
- Create a test list that includes the rest of the leadership of the Class Committee, and any relevant staff members. Share with this group what your preferred plan is for them to give feedback on the tests (whether you will send them a reminder note after every test asking for feedback, or if they should just plan to send you feedback whenever they receive a test message).
- Once the test has been reviewed and finalized by the necessary people, share a preview of it with your wider Class Committee just for their awareness before it goes out to the class (so they can be ready for any questions they might receive from classmates).
- Ensure any relevant HAA or HCF staff members are included on your class list so they can also receive your emails and see what your class is up to!
- If email replies are going to a Class Committee email account you created instead of your own personal email account, be sure to check it frequently, especially after an email is sent or as you approach any key dates or deadlines mentioned in your message.
- Reminder emails are often very helpful! Plan to market each of your events/action items at least twice. Consider if a final additional reminder is needed depending on the prior cadence of email sends, the current response, and the date of the event/deadline for the task.
- Personal email accounts should never be used to email your entire class (only broadcast email clients should be used). If you will use your personal email (or a Class Committee email account

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you created) to message smaller groups of classmates, please be sure to put them on the BCC line so their names and emails aren't revealed to each other. An exception would be if this is about something they have specifically opted into and have given permission for their information to be shared within that group.

- If your email client provides analytics about the email send (open rates, clicks, etc.) it might be helpful to review the data regularly to see how your emails perform. Based on that, you might find a send date and time that works best for your class, or a preferred type of subject line.
- Based on the preferences of your classmates, or any analytics on your email sends, you can decide if multi-topic digest-style emails might work best, or if you should send (possibly with more frequency) emails with a single call-to-action.