



Initiated 12/15/2023

Listserv Moderation

The VDS listservs are designed to advertise Vanderbilt Divinity School (VDS)-sponsored events, to share academic announcements (e.g. registration deadlines), to introduce new Vanderbilt policies or procedures, to provide building issues/renovation updates, to welcome new faculty/staff hires, and to disseminate other messages that promote a sense of community among VDS' many constituencies.

Requests to utilize the listserv may originate from Vanderbilt University departments and schools, Vanderbilt University Medical Center, VDS faculty and staff, VDS alumni, registered student organizations – see [Exhibit A](#), and off-campus community partners.

Roles

- **Owner**
 - If you are made the owner of a listserv, “with great power comes great responsibility.” You can:
 - Give privileges to others over a listserv, such as the “editor” option which allows someone to approve their own message for distribution to a listserv.
 - Give the privilege of “moderator” to someone, so they can review any message submitted to a listserv for approval or rejection (or rejection with a request to edit/correct).
 - Add or remove people from a listserv. It is your responsibility to add new hires and remove people who leave.
- **Editor**
 - Editors can approve their own messages for distribution to a listserv. There is a limit to the number of editors VDS can have.
- **Moderator**
 - Moderators receive a notification anytime someone (subscriber or non-subscriber) submits a message to be distributed to the listserv. It is the moderator’s role to determine whether or not a message is appropriate for the listserv audience and in compliance with Vanderbilt University policy for distribution.
 - If a message passes muster, they can click to “approve” it, or if not, they can “reject” it. In some cases, you may notice that a clarification or correction is needed before a message is sent. You can send a message to the person who attempted to send out the message and ask them to resend it to the listserv after making the needed corrections.
- **Back-ups**
 - Each owner of a listserv will have a back-up person to serve in that role when the owner is not working on a particular day. Back-ups must be fully trained in the owner’s roles and responsibilities to ensure seamless communications during the owner’s absence.

Types of Messages

- **Common Messages to Approve**
 - VDS event announcements
 - Academic announcements (registration deadline, graduation paperwork, etc.)
 - New Vanderbilt policies or procedures
 - Building issues/renovation updates
 - Grant opportunities
 - New faculty/staff hires
 - Condolences (notification that a community member has passed away or is ill)
- **Common Messages to Reject**
 - Phishing attempts
 - These may take the form of job ads, something advertising a “great service” for your community to take advantage of, etc.
 - Political campaigns
 - As a 501 3(c) and an institution receiving federal grant money, Vanderbilt cannot promote in any way a political campaign or appear to take sides. There is a local candidate who got ahold of our listserv and occasionally sends out messages which may seem innocuous or even good to share (such as a call to get out the vote), but all political messages MUST BE REJECTED.
 - Levi Strauss
 - Yes, the jeans company somehow has a listserv of ours on their distribution list.
 - Messages from outsiders
 - You might see random messages from someone about some big problem in the Christian community or someone sharing a list of churches; they have no business here and should be rejected.
 - “Reply-All” messages
 - Some members of our community are particularly guilty of committing this offense and will reply-all to the listserv with congratulations. This can really gum up everyone’s inbox, so they should be encouraged to send their congratulations directly to the person.
 - Non-registered student organizations – see [Exhibit A](#)
 - All student groups are encouraged to register their organization annually with the Office of Student Organizations, Leadership, and Service in order to be recognized by the University as a registered student organization (RSO).
- **Common Messages to Reject with an Invitation to Correct**
 - Messages without a subject line (bad form)
 - Messages with typos/other errors
 - Messages missing a promised attachment
 - Messages with unclear information (if you don’t understand what they are trying to say, chances are the audience at large will also have difficulties)
- **Messages that are Questionable**
 - Use your best judgement when reviewing messages. If in doubt, consult with the Dean.

- One example of passing the decision to the Dean was when someone wanted to advertise an upcoming art exhibit, and one of the art images included nudity. This would be contentious for some community members, so the message was rejected and the event organizer was encouraged to resend it using a different image from the art exhibit.

Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the VDS Dean or designee.

Listserv Owners, Editors, and Moderators

- Divinity Students divinity_students@list.vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Haley Bower
 - Backup – Angela Dillon
- DMin Students divinity_dmin@vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Haley Bower
 - Backup – Victoria Dorward
 - Editor – Melissa Snarr
 - Editor – George Schmidt
- GDR Students gdr_students@list.vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Merri Collins
 - Backup – Victoria Dorward
- Divinity Faculty div_faculty@list.vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Haley Bower
 - Backup – Victoria Dorward
- Divinity Faculty/Staff div_facultystaff@list.vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Haley Bower
 - Backup – Victoria Dorward
- GDR Faculty gdr_faculty@list.vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Merri Collins
 - Backup – Victoria Dorward
- Divinity Emeritus div_emeritus@list.vanderbilt.edu
 - Owner – Haley Bower
 - Backup – Victoria Dorward

Exhibit A

Officially Recognized Student Organizations Affiliated with the Divinity School

- Divinity Student Organization
- International Student Association (Divinity and Graduate School)
- LatinX Seminarians
- Methodist Student Organization
- Office of LGBTQIA Concerns, Vanderbilt Divinity School (GABLE)
- POIESIS
- Society of St. Cornelius
- Students Exploring Chaplaincy
- The Access and Inclusion Project
- The Office of Al's Pub
- Vanderbilt Black Seminarians

All student groups are encouraged to register their organization annually with the Office of Student Organizations, Leadership, and Service in order to be recognized by the University as a registered student organization (RSO). Registration must be completed by an INCOMING officer who will hold their position in the new academic year. All Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) are entitled to the following privileges (<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/studentorgs/registering-your-org/>):

- Financial support from the University (Student Services Fee allocation, and other sources when available)
- Use of University facilities for conducting regular business. Student organizations are prohibited from establishing offices, social spaces, or living quarters, off-campus
- Use of University meeting rooms and facilities at no charge or at a reduced rate
- Use of University electronic resources (e.g., Anchor Link, listservs, University-hosted website), and member subscription to the student leader listservs maintained by SOLS
- Use of common space and storage space allocated for registered student organizations
- Opportunity to solicit funds from, or make sales to, members of the University community on campus
- Participation in the annual Student Involvement Fair and other programs promoting participation hosted by the University
- Opportunity to advertise and promote the organization and its purposes on campus, and to advertise in Student Affairs-supported publications and other media
- Ability to publish events on Anchor Link and in the University Events Calendar
- Use of the official registered student organization mark, which incorporates the Vanderbilt University logo, official University spirit marks, and the name "Vanderbilt University," or titles indicating institutional affiliation, such as "Black and Gold," "VU," or "Commodore," for purposes generally consistent with the organizations' purposes and their usual activities or to identify themselves as campus groups (See Marketing and Communications policy for more information)