Tip Sheet: Best Practices for Student-friendly Communications

- Write for your **audience** (prospective students, current students, etc.); know their needs so you can write clearly to match their needs, emotions and expectations.

- Use language that is easy to digest so readers understand the message quickly, without having to decipher complicated sentences or vague jargon.

- Clear and concise information conveys transparency and credibility and removes barriers between you and your readers.

- Easy-to-read content is even more important online where end-users scan quickly for what they expect to find once on the page (i.e. from an online search).

- Choose words familiar to your audience. Use words that are simple and familiar instead of complicated words that might confuse readers. If you must use technical terms that your readers might not know, explain them first.

- Think of simplifying words (i.e. using “register” when applicable instead of “registration” or “confidential” instead of “confidentiality”)

- The words that you use in your copy should also reflect the words people would enter in search engines (keywords).

- Use short sentences and paragraphs. A basic writing principle is that good sentences have few words. Omit unnecessary language that adds little value to the message.

- Aim for 8-10 grade reading level. Reading levels correspond to people’s reading achievements, not their actual grade level, age or intelligence. Being direct and plainspoken is not talking down or dumbing down content. It is clear communication.

- Use tools such as [Web FX readability test tool](#) to check reading levels of content.

- Follow established [web-writing guidelines](#) to adhere to accessibility requirements and to maximize readability for the end-user.