

## **BRAND VOICE**

The voice of Northern State University is part of our identity—it's the way we communicate with current and potential students, as well as alumni, parents and friends of the university.

When it comes to voice, consistency is important, but our personality also needs to shine through. Because it's not just what we say, it's how we say it—the style and tone we use as well as the words themselves.

Our voice is woven into every message we craft and every story we share about Northern, helping us show off our diverse, welcoming campus community of engaged learners.

This guide is here to help us maintain a consistent voice in all communications. Have questions not addressed here? Contact [NSU Communications and Marketing](#) for help!

## **PERSONALITY**

Style and tone come together to show off our unique personality. At Northern, perhaps the best example of this personality is our tagline:

UNLEASH *your* POTENTIAL  
— JOIN THE PACK —

This robust phrase was derived from months of research and creative brainstorming that identified general themes of our university:

- Caring, supportive environment with a strong community – a pack
- Diamond in the rough, undervalued institution – potential
- Momentous time for enrollments, scholarships and campus development – unleash

Besides our tagline, we also chose several key words that best describe our overall university personality:

### **Friendly**

Fostering an atmosphere of enthusiasm and congeniality across campus

### **Informative**

Providing helpful, timely information as well as high-quality education

### **Caring**

Supporting students and meeting their needs as individuals, inside and outside the classroom

## **Professional**

Maintaining a respectful demeanor at all times within our community and with the public

## **Welcoming**

Being a space for all people to belong and thrive – a place they can call home

Collectively, our tagline and these additional words drive the voice and image of our brand.

## **FLEXIBILITY**

That doesn't mean every message needs to incorporate those specific words or our tagline in its entirety; rather, they should be top of mind to make sure your message represents the tone and feelings they evoke.

For example, with our tagline, we sometimes take key words – “unleash” and “pack” – and infuse them into marketing materials in other ways:

*Unleash your talents* (School of Fine Arts materials)

*Find your place in the pack* (Admissions materials)

There are also several examples on the NSU website where our voice shines through. Take a look at our [About Campus](#) page and see how many of our key words you can find.

## **GETTING IT RIGHT**

Still unsure? Below are examples of the right way – and the wrong way – to incorporate Northern's voice:

### **Confident, not arrogant:**

DO: *Northern's rigorous academic programs rival those at a larger institution.*

DON'T: *Northern's academic programs are stronger than any other university in the state.*

### **Encouraging, not aggressive:**

DO: *At Northern, you'll have numerous opportunities to find your place in the pack through campus clubs and organizations.*

DON'T: *At Northern, you'll have no excuse not to get out of your residence hall and get involved in our campus clubs.*

### **Approved designations for the campus are:**

1. Northern State University

2. Northern
3. The university *or* Our university
4. NSU (in general, reserve this for formal titles, such as NSU Theater or NSU Athletics)

## **WRITING STYLE GUIDE**

Consistency in our voice is the best way to keep our messages clear and professional. The university follows Associated Press style as spelled out in our [Writing Style Guide](#). This guide addresses common grammar and punctuation issues and contains Northern-specific facts. For questions not addressed in the guide, [contact us](#)!