

## Western Illinois University Leverages Regroup for Improved Emergency Alerts and Preparedness



With four full-time police departments spanning both Macomb and Quad Cities campus locations, Western Illinois University takes a proactive approach to ensuring a safe campus environment. As public safety alerts become a more prominent aspect of mass communication throughout higher education, Western Illinois University knew it needed to stay ahead of the curve with an efficient emergency alert system to stay connected to the entire campus community.

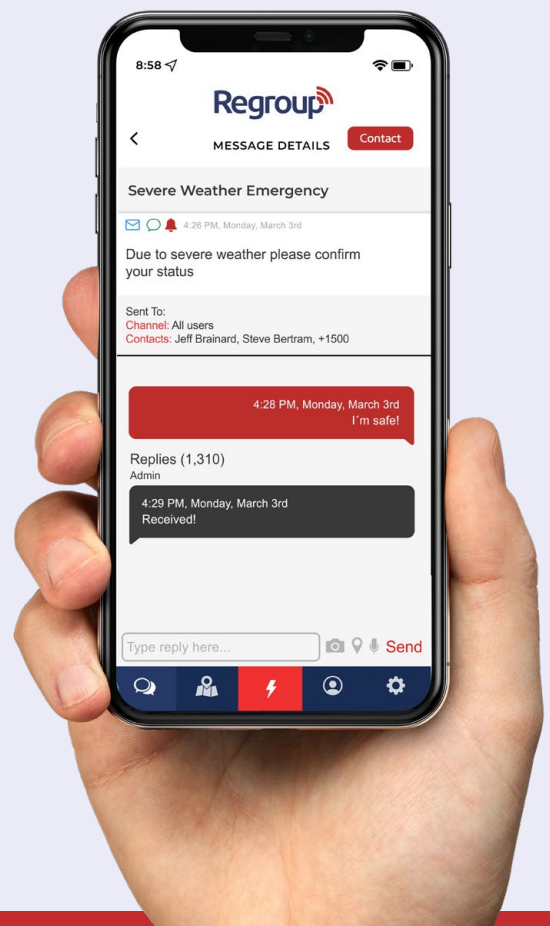
With an increasing student population and expansive network of students, staff, and faculty on and off campus, WIU tapped into Regroup's mass notification platform to maintain organization and streamline communication strategies for emergency notifications and automated weather alerts.

### ✓ Dynamic Notifications and Emergency Alerts

Western Illinois University needed a versatile, user-friendly mass notification system capable of handling routine critical emergency alerts, including weather-related announcements and notifications about potential threats to students and staff members. This need for greater flexibility led key decision makers to invest in Regroup.

According to Alisha Looney, Interim Assistant Vice President, Communications & Media Relations at Western Illinois University, *"We primarily use Regroup for emergency use and weather-related closures."* Once WIU implemented Regroup, administrators could send alerts instantly and create a centralized touchpoint for communication through various channels.

*"I've been using Regroup for just over two years in my position—when we use it, we use it for email, text message, and phone calls to carry out our emergency messaging,"* Looney continued.



## ✓ Regroup Encourages Flexibility and Customization

It's one thing to sell a university on the idea of a product like Regroup, but it's another thing to guide an organization through each step of the implementation process and unique customizations while administrators get accustomed to the tool.

Western Illinois University saw instant value in using customization tools to pinpoint the exact audience it needed to reach. When WIU first onboarded with Regroup, it utilized multiple channels and groups to send notifications, but quickly realized the tools' functionality allowed for a more efficient means of sending mass notifications.

*"About a year ago, we decided to target only one audience. We used to have multiple, but since we only use this for emergency alerts, we wanted to include as many people as possible," Looney explained. "We have two campus locations—one with very few in-person students, so it is more successful to target one audience using multiple channels like text, email, and voice messages."*

## ✓ Western Illinois University Motivated by Regroup

Western Illinois University relies on innovative features within Regroup to keep its communities and campuses safe. Considering western Illinois's diverse weather patterns and geography, automated alerts from NOAA and NWS keep students and faculty aware of the latest weather developments that may impact them and support the institution's safety and operational efficiency.

Another powerful feature, automated message translation, translates notifications into over 80 languages based on the user's device settings. WIU employs this tool within the Regroup platform to deliver critical information in recipients' native tongues, increasing the comprehension of important information with every send.

Western Illinois University learned to rely on Regroup's reliable, scalable, and efficient communication solutions to reach its community promptly. *"We don't have any other way of doing that in a fast manner as efficiently as we can with Regroup,"* Looney continued. *"Unfortunately, we have had some emergencies on or near campus, but we have had tremendous success using Regroup to notify the campus quickly. It has been very well received, and we are happy with it."*



## ✓ Scalable Communication Solutions

Western Illinois University works alongside its local Office of Public Safety to publish helpful tips, notifications, and safety measures for staff and faculty to implement throughout the year. WIU maintained organization and improved efficiency with the help of Regroup to consolidate these automated messages into one system.

Whether there is an emergency directly on campus or your institution works with an adjacent organization, Regroup is here to help you scale your emergency alerts with precise, accurate messaging. *"There was an off-campus event unrelated to the university, but we sent out an alert that police were present and to avoid the area."*

The efficiency with which Regroup can target a select audience is paramount to alleviating panic amongst the student body and eliminating any cross-functional friction between departments. *"Communication plays a role in all of this, and we have been praised for how quickly we get a message out to the campus community,"* said Looney. *"We have parents, alumni and community members to reach, and Regroup helps establish an added layer of communication and transparency with the public."*

## ✓ Put Your Best Foot Forward with Regroup Mass Notification

Western Illinois University is set up for continued growth and evolution with flexible solutions from Regroup. The platform's user-friendly approach improves value across the entire university, and Regroup's framework offers the potential to delve into untapped resources and expand the possibilities of emergency alerts and mass notification.

WIU currently uses Regroup for emergency and weather alerts, but Looney sees room for further growth in the future and recommends other universities implement Regroup. *"We have discussed breaking it down by residence halls and locations on campus to direct our communications more specifically. My advice for other universities would be to do it because Regroup is wonderfully helpful."*

*"I can hop on my cell phone or use the app from anywhere, and send a notification to the whole community if a tornado is coming to town or if there is a major weather event or a fire, so I would encourage anyone to use a system like this,"* said Looney.

