

Anatomy of a Memo

Masthead

Memo or **Memorandum**; often bold and in a large typeface

Header

Include the following information with an extra space between lines for easy readability. Space entries for each line

To: Specify recipient(s) of memo; include a **CC:** line along with the name(s) of recipients not directly addressed by the memo.

From: The writer of the memo or the person for whom the memo was written on behalf of.

Date: Publish date

Subject: should clearly describe the contents of the memo in six words or less. *How could this subject line be improved?*

Including a **signature** in the header is common for those in high organizational positions.

Message

A standard approach is to first describe **what** is happening. In this example, the Chancellor is describing what took place. In most cases, the first paragraph clearly describes any changes in policy, procedure, or protocol.

This is followed by short paragraphs that describe the purpose of the change including the goals and justification. Use data and research here to support the change.

Conclude with a paragraph that accurately describe any desired actions including contact information.

The following is an overview of what a conventional memo should look like. Be sure to consult with your instructor for their preferences; organizations also have proprietary styles and may not reflect the guidance offered here.

Official Stationary

Publish memos on stationary or be sure to include logo; in this example, the Chancellor's name are prominently displayed.



Memorandum

GARY L. MILLER
Chancellor

To: University Community

From: Gary L. Miller *Gary L. Miller*

Date: March 22, 2016

Subject: Thankful

This past week Georgia and I had the opportunity to travel with our men's and women's basketball teams as they competed in the first round of the NCAA basketball tournament. Traveling with us were students from the university pep band, the cheer squad and student trainers and assistants. Student fans joined us for each of the games. The professional manner in which all of these students represented UWGB and the community of Green Bay was superb.

This precious time with UWGB students affirmed how fortunate and honored I am to have the privilege of being part of the lives of our students. In the coming weeks, we will have many opportunities to witness the extraordinary capacity, energy and commitment of many UWGB students. Jazz, chamber and wind ensembles will perform. Our students will participate in opera and musical theatre workshops. Business students will be honored in the annual Business Week celebration. Several of our students will be special participants in activities of the Board of Regents meeting to be held on campus and many others have volunteered to make that important event a special one. Student researchers will present their work to the Regents and a select group will travel to Madison to be part of the annual Posters in the Rotunda event. We will honor student employees of the year. Senior art students will exhibit their work and present it to the community in an open house. Large numbers of our students will assist with an all-day visit of local 8th grade students. And, of course, in May, we will honor student leaders, student scholars and celebrate with our graduates at Spring Commencement. I know there are many other student events not listed here.

All this is possible because of the extraordinary commitment of the faculty and staff of UWGB. I hope you feel as fortunate as I do as you enjoy your time with our students in the remaining weeks of the semester. What a group they are!!

Thank you all.

I N N O V A T I O N T R A N S F O R M A T I O N P L A C E

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Note: Although we could argue that this memo would be more appropriate as an email, it is worth considering the benefits of this example being published in this way. It is not unusual for leadership to write friendly, personable memos as an archive that provides a glimpse into a moment in the organization's history.

Additional Notes & Suggestions

- Memos are almost always written for an audience that is within an organization. As in the example here, however, memos should be written as potentially being viewed by an external audience.
- When no other style is required by the organization, write your release using Time New Roman, 11-point font with 1-inch margins.
- Compose using an objective tone, third-person plural perspective (we/our), and language that is suitable for the audience of the memo.

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