Making the Most of Automated Email Replies

The following three examples differ markedly in both tone and content. Given these differences, what are some principles for creating an effective automated email reply? How can you enhance your own email communications with students?

**Example 1: Automated reply (June 2016)**

STUDENTS INQUIRING ABOUT ADDING A CLASS FOR FALL 2016:  The fall semester does not begin until August 24, 2016.  Any requests for adding a class or for a permission number prior to that time will go unanswered.  Students will need to submit such inquiries subsequent to the beginning of the semester.

**Example 2: Automated reply (June 2016)**

This is an automated message.

Spring advising by faculty has ended and fall advising will begin when the fall semester begins.

Many of your questions can be answered by going to the CSUN website or the CSUN [Department Name] webpage.

If you need to **apply for spring or summer 2017 graduation**, the instructions are posted on the CSUN [Department Name] website. If you are unable to meet with your option advisor, complete the paperwork and drop it off at Building X, Room Y for signatures. It will be ready for pick up within about a week.

For **fall** **course permission numbers** due to SOLAR problems with your prerequisites, please contact the course instructor directly. If the instructor name is not listed, please send me a follow-up email with a PDF copy of your current DPR attached and the specific section number you would like to take.

For information about my **fall 2017 course (XXX)**, please go to the link below:

<http://www.csun.edu/mysite/mycoursepage>

If you cannot find an answer to your question and need assistance, please visit the College or Department Academic Advisor, [Insert Name Here], during her [summer office hours](https://mycsun.app.box.com/notes/30823866441?s=h9o99dwyavn2p9kfteufeffvq20ky3ee) (Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. in Building X, Room Z).

**Example 3: Automated reply (January 2017)**

Attention Student Inquiries:

I will be out of the office until January, when Spring Semester begins.  Any inquiries can be handled by appointment then.  I hope you have a great Holiday break.    
  
Sincerely,

[Name]

[Department]