Policy Title: Acceptable Employee Use of College Email

Purpose: 
The College uses electronic communication as an official means of information delivery. This use is motivated by the convenience, speed, cost effectiveness and environmental advantages of using email rather than printed communication. Because of this reliance on and acceptance of electronic communication, email is considered an official means for communication at the College.

Implementation of this policy ensures that employees have access to this critical form of communication. It also ensures that employees can be accessed by email as the need arises.

Definitions: 
None

Policy: 
College Use of Email

Email is an official means for communication at Minnesota State Community and Technical College. Therefore, the College has the right to send communications to employees via the college email system and expects that employees will read those communications in a timely fashion. The College retains the right to send official communication via traditional methods.

Assignment of email addresses

Information Technology Services (ITS) will assign employees an official College email address. The College will send email communications to this official address.

Redirecting of email

Email can be electronically forwarded to another email address. If an employee chooses to have email forwarded from his or her official address to another email address (e.g., @msn.com, @q.com) the employee may do so at his or her own risk. The College is not responsible for the handling of email by outside vendors or for email redirected to another account.

Expectations regarding employee use of email

The College expects employees to check their email on a daily basis (scheduled work day) while employed or on contract, unless on approved leave or in travel status. During non-contractual periods of time, traditional methods (i.e., U.S. Postal Service, Federal Express, UPS) will be utilized to communicate urgent or time-sensitive material, with employees having the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time sensitive.
Educational uses of email

Faculty may determine how students will use email in their classes. It is highly recommended that faculty specify their email requirements and expectations in their course syllabus. Faculty may expect students to use their official College email address for instructional purposes. Faculty may use email for their courses accordingly.

Appropriate use of email

In general, email is not appropriate for transmitting sensitive or confidential information unless its use for such purposes is matched by an appropriate level of security. Confidentiality regarding student records is protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). All use of email, including use for sensitive or confidential information, will be consistent with FERPA.

All employees using any of the College’s IT resources, including email, must adhere to the Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources Policy and all other IT policies and procedures, as applicable. All employees are responsible for all matters pertaining to their access privileges to College IT resources.

Mass email & Unsolicited email

The College uses email as the primary means for communicating important information to students. Mass email messages are a useful and convenient way of informing the campus and college communities. However, their potential for unnecessarily consuming resources and cluttering campus inboxes require that senders of such messages adhere to some guidelines. As such, mass emails must be approved or sent by authorized users only. A mass emailing is an unsolicited email message sent to a group of otherwise unrelated campus email addresses. For example, sending a message to all faculty or all students would be considered a mass emailing. Whether such messages are sent by using a personally constructed list of addresses or a system-generated list, such as All-Staff@minnesota.edu, makes no difference in the effect or applicability of this policy. Sending a message to members of a club or a group of friends does not constitute a mass emailing. Sending messages to groups, committees, or divisions also does not constitute a mass emailing.

There are four basic types of college-wide and campus email distribution lists:

- All Faculty and All Staff, college-wide
- All Students
- All Faculty and All Staff at a particular campus
- All Students taking courses at a particular campus

While students and employees may maintain personal group lists, those lists should not be used to send unsolicited email that violates any of the College’s policies.

Use of College-wide and Campus Email Distribution Lists

College email is only for official college business. Use of College-wide and Campus-wide email distribution lists should be solely used for information important to all members of the college community.
Email primarily of interest to a particular campus should use the individual Campus distribution list.

Announcements of cafeteria menus, fitness center schedules, art shows, music performances, bookstore sales, etc. should not be sent to email distribution lists individually; it would be more appropriate to gather this information into a campus or student weekly newsletter to be sent out at the same time and/or post the information in a table tent, poster, campus monitor, or to a campus or College News and Events website/portal.

Faculty, staff, and student Email distribution lists are not made available to outside organizations other than as specified by legal or policy requirements. Emails from such groups may be sent to an M State distribution list by an appropriate M State representative.

Mass emails to students with information about new courses or programs should only be sent to student email lists with prior approval of the Vice President of Academic Affairs or designee and only once or twice a semester. The list should only provide a list of the new courses and programs with links to the appropriate Web site(s) for more information.

Individual faculty can send information about new courses and programs to students enrolled in their classes as they deem appropriate without prior approval.

Access to College-Wide Email Distribution Lists

The following individuals have access to the use of College-wide Email distribution lists:

- College President
- Chief Officers (CAO, CSAO, CFO, CHRO, CIO and CDO)
- College Registrar
- Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing
- College-wide Deans
- Campus Student Development Service Directors
- Information Technology Staff
- Administrative Assistants to the President and Vice Presidents
- Campus Directors of Student Engagement (Please work with Student Services to keep messages to students at a minimum.)

Members of Presidents Cabinet may approve permanent or temporary access to a College-wide Email Distribution List for another faculty or staff. Giving temporary access for someone to use a College-wide email distribution list will allow email replies to go directly to that individual. Timeline for gaining this approval is expected to be completed within two weeks.

Access to an Individual Campus-Wide Email Distribution List

The Academic Dean(s) and Campus Student Development Services Directors can determine who may send communications via Campus faculty/staff and student Email distribution lists. The following individuals will also have access to the Campus Email distribution lists:

- College President
- Chief Officers (CAO, CSAO, CFO, CHRO, CIO and CDO)
- College Registrar
- Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing
- College-wide Deans
- Campus Student Development Service Directors
- Information Technology Staff
- Administrative Assistants to the President and Vice Presidents
- Campus Directors of Student Engagement (Please work with Student Services to keep messages to students at a minimum.)

Separate access can be granted for the Campus faculty/staff and student lists. The Academic Dean(s) and Campus Student Development Services Directors can request access changes or request temporary access for an individual at any time. Giving temporary access for someone to use a College-wide email distribution list will allow email replies to go directly to that individual.

**Sending Attachments to Students Through Distribution Lists**

For employees who have been granted access to use the Student Distribution Lists, messages must be reviewed by the Director of Strategic Communications and Marketing or another designee for options and approval before being sent.

**Associated Policies:**
M State Academic Honesty and Integrity
M State Acceptable Use of Computers
M State Computer Use Agreement
M State Intellectual Property
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
Freedom of Information Act
M State Policy Student Directory Data
Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA)

**Policy History:**

*Policy Owner:* Chief Information Officer  
*Policy Author:* Dan Knudson and Peter Wielinski  
*Date of Adoption:* 8/4/2010  
*Date of Implementation:* 8/4/2010  
*Date and Subject of Revision:* 07/31/2012 Format revision only; 02/07/2018 policy content

*Policy Group Assignment:* Technology

*Procedure Written:* Not Needed