Electronic Mail (e-mail) Policy

Category: Operations and General Administration

Number: DRAFT, under Review

Responsibility: Associate Vice-President (Information and Communications
                  Technology)

Authorization: Board of Governors

Date: Last revised September 8, 2005

Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to define the acceptable use of electronic mail (e-mail) at the University of Saskatchewan, to outline responsibilities involving e-mail and to establish guidelines for effective practices and processes.

Principles:

- Information technology services at the University of Saskatchewan are intended to serve the educational, research, and administrative purposes of the University.
- The University e-mail system is part of the University's information technology services infrastructure and is maintained on University servers to assist with communication necessary in conducting the business of the University, including teaching, research and scholarly work.
- E-mail is a cornerstone of our electronic communications offerings and is a medium for the exchange of information within our community and with the wider academic and other communities of which we are a part. Service will be provided and maintained centrally.
- All faculty, staff and students are normally entitled to a University e-mail account, but the University may withhold or withdraw this service with cause.
- The e-mail address is the property of the University.
- E-mail messages sent using any University account and/or stored on any University server are University property. As institutional data such messages are subject to the institution's data policy.
- Any e-mail server that is University property is a University server and the records held therein are also University property.
- The University uses e-mail as an official communications tool.
- The centrally provided University of Saskatchewan e-mail account is the University's official electronic mailing address for all faculty, staff and students. The account holder is responsible for reading and attending to e-mail sent to this address. The University will not collect, store or maintain information in other accounts.

Policy:

The University will normally provide to all faculty, staff and students, an e‑mail account to be used in conjunction with their duties or activities at the University. The University may also provide access to e-mail services to others with whom it does business, including but not limited to alumni, retirees, and visiting faculty. Service to any user may be withheld or withdrawn with cause.

The appropriate Data Steward determines eligibility for e-mail service. Classification as faculty, staff or retiree is under the jurisdiction of the Associate Vice-President for Human Resources. Classification as student is under the jurisdiction of the Associate Vice-President for Student and Enrolment Services. Classification as alumnus, alumna or donor is under the jurisdiction of the Vice-President for University Advancement.

Access to e‑mail records is covered under the University's data policy and under federal and provincial legislation governing freedom of information and protection of privacy.

All users have a responsibility to ensure that they conduct e‑mail exchanges with professionalism and courtesy, and manage their e‑mail responsibly.

Procedures:

1. <u>Scope of this Policy</u>

   This policy has been developed in the context of, and is designed to complement,

   - existing University policies and regulations, particularly those governing computer use, university property and services, data management, privacy, copyright and intellectual property
   - *PAWS Communication and Content Guidelines*
   - collective agreements
   - *Student Appeals in Academic Matters and Student Academic Dishonesty Rules of the University of Saskatchewan*
   - *Policy and Procedures Respecting Non-Academic Discipline and Appeals at the University of Saskatchewan*
   - the provincial *Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
   - the federal *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Document Act (PIPEDA)*

2. Responsibilities of E-mail Users

The e-mail account provided on a centrally administered e-mail server will be considered the individual's University of Saskatchewan business e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail sent to his/her official University address is read in a timely manner. The e-mail may be forwarded.

E-mail messages may be either transitory or required for ongoing purposes. It is the responsibility of the recipient to retain any e-mail message that is required for ongoing purposes and to dispose of any e-mail message that is no longer required.

Since e-mail bears identification marks of the University of Saskatchewan, users are expected to treat e-mail in the same manner as they would use University letterhead, and to ensure that all communication is carried on in a professional, respectful and courteous manner. Appendix 2 refers to some guidelines.

Users must provide proper and correct sender identification in all electronic correspondence, both internal and external. Use of invalid or forged "From" addresses with the intent to deceive the recipient will be considered a violation of this policy.

The intellectual property provisions of copyright law are operative for all materials stored in electronic form, including e-mail messages. Unless such material is clearly in the public domain or there is an explicit release by the copyright owner, it may not be copied or distributed without permission.

Inappropriate or offensive e-mail, or e-mail that is threatening, discriminatory, harassing or obscene, must not be sent or forwarded, except as requested in making a complaint of inappropriate or offensive e-mail.

In general, the University recognizes that faculty, staff and students may occasionally make incidental use of University property and services for personal purposes. Incidental personal use, as outlined in the *Use of University Property and Services* and *Computer Use* policies, will not increase the University's costs, will not expose the University to additional risk, and is not part of an activity that the employee does for personal profit. Incidental personal use of the University's e-mail system is permitted.

3. Responsibilities of Service Providers

The e-mail accounts provided on University e-mail servers are institutional property, and those responsible for maintaining these servers are responsible for ensuring that institutional standards for security, user authentication and access control are appropriately applied.

The e-mail address provided by the University will be stored in the University's contact database.

Searchable electronic address directories will be maintained and populated from the e-mail addresses stored in the University's contact database. The contents of the e-mail address directories are institutional data.

The University reserves the right to reject any e-mail that could compromise the University network and any systems connected to it. Information Technology Services (ITS) will put appropriate processes in place to deal with e-mail containing viruses, to reject e-mail from known SPAM sites, and to scan incoming e-mail for SPAM, but the University has no liability for any damage resulting from e-mail.

4. Security and Access

E-mail is backed up centrally for purposes of disaster recovery only and not for recovery of specific items of deleted e-mail or other requests. There is no central back-up for archival purposes. Individual users are responsible for backing up any e-mail they require for ongoing purposes.

The University reserves the right to access all e-mail records, including those which have been deleted by the account holder but which may have been preserved centrally, for the purposes of recovering evidence while investigating allegations of misconduct and managing actual or potential civil litigation in which the University is or may become a party.

5. E-mail and Privacy

If a request for access is received under the Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, or by subpoena, existing e-mail records are included and must not be deleted. Requests for access to information under this Act are made to the University official who has been designated to oversee compliance with the Act, who may consult with the appropriate Data Steward.

Like other institutional data, e-mail can be accessed by those in the University with a "need to know" (refer to the Data Management, Data Access and Data Use Policy). This need may relate to a request under the Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, labour relations issues, a reasonable suspicion of abuse of the e-mail system, or the need for business access in the absence of an employee.

Wherever practical, employees will be notified promptly when their e-mail records have been accessed.

6. <u>Electronic Mailing Lists</u>

Electronic mailing lists are institutional data and are categorized as voluntary or involuntary.

<u>Voluntary Lists</u> are e-mail lists to which individuals may voluntarily subscribe, and from which they can remove their e-mail address at any time. Interest groups, service providers to employees and students, extra-curricular organizations and other groups that prefer to compile and maintain "client" lists beyond their own membership should do so on a voluntary subscription basis.

<u>Involuntary Lists</u> are e-mail lists that are automatically created and maintained based on individuals' association or role with the University of Saskatchewan. These lists comprise specific identifiable groups, such as all employees, all students, all faculty, department or division staff (employees) or class lists of students. Involuntary lists can be closed or open.

- Closed lists: Individuals may not request exemption from the list. Examples of closed lists are all employees, all staff, and all students in a class or college.
- Open lists: Individuals may request exemption from the list. An example could be a list of alumni. The list could be generated automatically, but individuals can request that their e-mail address be removed from the list at any time.

All e-mail sent to an involuntary list will be considered unsolicited e-mail, in that the recipient(s) has not requested the communication.

Unsolicited e-mail messages broadcast to faculty, staff, and students may be sent only with the approval of the appropriate Data Steward or designate. Refer to Appendix 1, *Approvals for Use of Involuntary E-Mail Lists (Examples)* for guidance.

The following steps should be followed when sending e-mail to involuntary lists:
1) The e-mail must clearly identify the sender (individual or unit).
2) The sender must ensure that recipients cannot determine the other recipients of the e-mail. This can be accomplished by blind carbon copying (bcc) each recipient in the e-mail message.

Compilers of duly approved e-mail lists (voluntary or involuntary) are considered to be the list owners and are expected to develop written operating procedures for the users of their lists and to monitor compliance. All list owners are encouraged to consider the benefits of moderating and controlling access to large lists. This applies whether the list has been created for one-time use or is maintained as a standing list compiled manually or from a central database.

Electronic mail and targeted announcements sent through PAWS, the University portal, and PAWS group studio interactions, are subject to this policy; further guidelines can be found in the *PAWS Communication and Content Guidelines.*

Contacts:

- Associate Vice-President, Information & Communications Technology, 966-8408
- Director, Information Technology Services Division, 966-6887
- PAWS Content Lead, 966-6754

Website:

Education and Awareness of the Policy:

This policy shall be made available to all e-mail account holders at the University at the time access to computing and communications facilities is given.

Non-compliance:

If there is reasonable evidence that laws or University policies have been, or are being violated, or that continued access poses a threat to the facility, other users, normal operations, or the reputation of the University, access privileges of any individual may be withdrawn or restricted.

The University may take one or more of the following actions against anyone whose activities are in violation of this policy:

- restrictions or loss of access to any or all of the computing facilities at the University.
- legal action that could result in criminal proceedings.
- In the case of students, academic or non-academic disciplinary actions.
- In the case of employees, disciplinary action under the relevant collective agreement(s).

Appendix 1:

Approvals for Use of Involuntary E-Mail Lists (Examples)

The following levels are established for the creation and use of involuntary e-mail lists. These are very broad categories and are intended as a guideline in making decisions regarding appropriate units and Data Stewards for approving unsolicited e-mail.

Audience Type	Approval	Usage Examples
All U of S employees, students, researchers	Associate Vice-President, Information and Communications Technology	• Information pertinent to all or a significant percentage of members of the campus community. • Emergency announcements.
Students	Associate Vice-President, Student & Enrolment Services	• Information specific to students.
Alumni	Director of Alumni Relations, University Advancement	• Notification of events • Notification of programs and services for alumni. • Advertisement of Green & White online issue
Employees (faculty, staff)	Associate Vice-President, Human Resources	• Information specific to employees or retired employees
All students of a college	Dean of the college	• Notification of events, programs, or services for students in the college.
All students of a class	Instructor of the class	• Class notes. • Notifications of class events.
Employees of a college or department	Dean or Department Head	- Notifications of special events.

Operationally, approval within a business unit may be delegated.

Appendix 2:

Best Practices

There is a wealth of information available in electronic and print form about using e-mail responsibly and courteously. The following web sites contain helpful tips on e-mail etiquette, or "netiquette."

- www.library.yale.edu/training/netiquette/

- owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/pw/p_emailett.html

- www.cs.queensu.ca/FAQs/email/etiquette.html

- www.cit.gu.edu.au/~davidt/email_etiquette.html

- www.writerswrite.com/journal/dec99/pirillo1.htm

- www.dtcc.edu/ca/rfc1855.html

Information about risks in using e-mail is given on the following web site.

- http://www.usask.ca/security/comsecintrisks.html