

**University Senate**

**University at Albany  
State University of New York**

Introduced by the Council on Libraries, Information Systems and Computing

Date: 12/26/2018

**Forward:** The following policy language was originally developed by the Office of the CIO. The original statement is provided in Appendix 1.

**Proposal to establish electronic mail as an official means of  
communication with students**

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT :

1. The following policy relating to the establishment of Electronic mail (email) as **an** official means of communication with students be adopted
2. The policy be forwarded by the University Senate to the President for approval.

**Policy Statement:**

Effective fall 2007, email will be used as **an** official method for communicating with students on *non-confidential* matters. This policy stipulates that the University can convey relevant academic and administrative information to targeted student populations by mass or bulk mailing via their official UAlbany email account. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the content of messages delivered to them in this format.

**Scope:**

This policy pertains to all graduate, undergraduate and non-degree students. UAlbany email accounts are assigned to students when they become eligible to enroll for courses, and will be designated as the student's official email address for the purposes of University email communications.

**Responsibility:**

Students are responsible for checking their University email accounts frequently and consistently, and for familiarizing themselves with the content of official University messages. Because correspondence may be time-sensitive, students are encouraged to check their accounts daily. Use of the official UAlbany email account provided by the University is strongly encouraged. Students may opt to redirect email to an account of their own choosing, but do so at their own risk. The University does not guarantee delivery to forwarded addresses. Improper maintenance of email accounts, errors in

forwarding, and failure to check email are not acceptable excuses for missing official University communications.

The University is responsible for exercising discretion regarding the use, timing, and content of email messages and to adequately communicate to students about the existence of their official UAlbany email account and its use as **an** official means of communication. Student information should only be shared with employees of the University or its agents with a legitimate educational interest in that information. All faculty/staff must be familiar with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to ensure the content of email messages is compliant with those guidelines. For more information, see the section on FERPA in the University's Undergraduate Bulletin. Additionally, all bulk (mass) or listserv messages should be compliant with the University Policy on Responsible Use of Information Technology available at [http://www.albany.edu/policies/computer\\_usage/](http://www.albany.edu/policies/computer_usage/).

**Privacy:**

The University cannot guarantee confidentiality in electronic communications to students, therefore no personally identifiable information should be sent electronically. No department or administrative unit shall request personally identifiable information from students, faculty or staff such as social security numbers by email. Confidential information such as grade reports, notices of academic status changes, legal, or medical information should be disseminated through the secure MyUAlbany portal and/or by post.

**Rationale**

Senate Bill No. 0102-17 approved on April 2, 2002 states that “Electronic mail (e-mail) is an important resource for academic, administrative, and extra-curricular communications at the University at Albany and is an essential element of the University’s day-to-day operations.”

Email has been a routine, economical, and effective form of communication at the University at Albany for several years. The proposed policy is designed to formalize and limit the circumstances under which email is used officially, so that we can assure it remains routine, economical, and effective. All registered students at the University at Albany have official UAlbany email accounts that can be accessed from any Internet-connected computer. Using email to provide information about academic deadlines, registration information, important safety information and other non-confidential messages is a valuable tool for academic departments and administrative offices. Encouraging students to use their UAlbany official email accounts provides a **supplementary** tool for faculty, staff, and administrators to communicate with students in a timely fashion.

Additionally, an official policy for governing email communication with students is a common practice in many of our peer and aspirational peer institutions (see Appendix 2)

This policy was developed with the aid of previously adopted policies at the institutions listed in Appendix 2. We would like to acknowledge and thank these institutions for making their policies available on the Internet.

## Appendix 1

### Email as an Official Means of Communication with Students

**Policy Statement:**

Effective fall 2005, email will be used as an official method for communicating with students. This policy stipulates that the University can convey relevant academic and administrative information to targeted student populations via their UAlbany email account. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the content of messages delivered to them in this format.

**Scope:**

This policy pertains to all graduate, undergraduate and non-degree students. UAlbany email accounts are assigned to students when they become eligible to enroll for courses, and will be designated as the student's official email address for the purposes of University email communications.

**Responsibility:**

Students are responsible for checking their University email accounts frequently and consistently, and for familiarizing themselves with the content of University messages. Because correspondence may be time-sensitive, students are encouraged to check their accounts daily. Use of the official UAlbany email account provided by the University is strongly encouraged. Students may opt to redirect email to an account of their own choosing, but do so at their own risk. The University does not guarantee delivery to forwarded addresses. Errors in forwarding, messages returned 'Mailbox Full' or 'User Unknown', or failing to check email are not acceptable excuses for missing official University communications.

The University is responsible for exercising discretion regarding the use and content of email messages. Student information should only be shared with employees of the University or its agents with a legitimate educational interest in that information. All faculty/staff must be familiar with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) to ensure the content of email messages is consistent with those guidelines. For more information, see the section on FERPA in the University's Undergraduate Bulletin. Additionally, all messages should be compliant with the ITS guidelines established in the companion to this document, Student Email Policy Guidelines for Use.

**Privacy:**

The University cannot guarantee confidentiality in electronic communications to students.

**Procedure:**

The Office of the Chief Information Officer shall establish guidelines and procedures as may be appropriate for the implementation of this policy. Please refer to these guidelines for more information.

## Appendix 2

### Institutions with Official Email Communications Policies

Binghamton University - <http://computing.binghamton.edu/email>

Columbia University - <http://www.columbia.edu/acis/history/cu-email.html>

Indiana University Purdue - <http://registrar.iupui.edu/iu-email.html>

Indiana University Southeast - <http://it.ius.edu/Policies.cfm>

Northwestern University - [http://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/student\\_info/email.html](http://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/student_info/email.html)

University of Arizona - <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/emailpolicy.htm>

University at Buffalo - <http://www.itpolicies.buffalo.edu/mass-email/>

University of Colorado at Boulder - <http://www.colorado.edu/policies/email.html>

University of Connecticut - <http://listserv.uconn.edu/announce/policy.html>

University of Massachusetts Amherst -

[http://www.oit.umass.edu/policies/email\\_comm/policy.html](http://www.oit.umass.edu/policies/email_comm/policy.html)

University of Michigan Dearborn - <http://www.its.umd.umich.edu/1543/>

University of Minnesota -

[http://www.fpd.finop.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/Email\\_Pol.cfm](http://www.fpd.finop.umn.edu/groups/ppd/documents/policy/Email_Pol.cfm)

University of Texas Austin - <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>

University of Washington Tacoma -

[http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/policies\\_procedures/E-mail\\_Policy.pdf](http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/policies_procedures/E-mail_Policy.pdf)