

FAYETTEVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ELECTRONIC MAIL ACCOUNTS

Authority:	Information Technology and Telecommunication Services
Category:	University-wide
Applies to:	Faculty, Staff, and Students
History:	Approved on...April 15, 2005. First Issued on June 2 nd , 2003.
Related Policies:	Copyright Ownership and Use Policy - [1.20] Information Security Policy Acceptable Use Policy of Computer Resources Data Ownership Network Use Policy
Contact for Info:	Chief Information Officer – (672-1477)

I. Purpose

Fayetteville State university (FSU) electronic mail accounts are provided and supported by the State of North Carolina in furtherance of the missions of FSU.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the appropriate use of the university's e-mail systems by its students, faculty, and staff. Electronic mail is a tool provided by the university to complement traditional methods of communication and to improve education and administrative efficiency. Users have the responsibility to use this resource in an efficient, effective, ethical and lawful manner. Use of the university's e-mail system evidences the user's agreement to be bound by this policy. Violations of the policy may result in restriction of access to the university e-mail system and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

II. FSU's official Communication Medium

The Fayetteville State University regards e-mail as an official method of communication with student, staff and faculty. Further, Outlook and Outlook for Web Access (OWA) are viewed as the current official e-mail clients, and ITTS is charged with maintaining these clients. FSU e-mail address is the official e-mail address for faculty, staff and student when e-mail is used as the communication medium. Faculty, staff and students assume full responsibility for the decision to forward e-mail and any failure to receive e-mail communications due to an alternative e-mail service does not necessarily constitute a defense for failure to respond. While e-mail is an official method of communication, it is not the only official method of communication and does not exclude alternate methods such as written or oral

communications. All members of the university community must maintain good e-mail management habits and adhere to the standards of responsible use.

III. Privacy of the University's E-Mail System

Privacy of personal electronic mail communications residing on or transmitted through university equipment is not assured. Electronic mail in its present form cannot be secured and is, therefore, vulnerable to unauthorized access and modification by third parties. Receivers of electronic mail documents should check with the purported sender if there is any doubt about the identity of the sender or the authenticity of the contents, as they would with print documents. Also, even though the sender and recipient may have discarded their copies of an electronic mail record, there may be back-up copies of such electronic mail that can be retrieved on university systems or any other electronic systems through which the mail has traveled.

Data transmitted or stored on or through university equipment are subject to the requirements of [North Carolina's Public Records Act](#). The Act gives the public the right to inspect public records at reasonable times and the custodian of the records may not demand the motive or purpose behind the request. Thus, e-mail messages of faculty and staff may be subject to inspection should a member of the public request such.

Additionally, the university may access and monitor e-mail at any time for any reason without notice. Courts may order the production of university records, including electronic mail records, in connection with litigation. Appropriate law enforcement and other officials may, consistent with law, have access to documents for purposes of investigating allegations of violations of law or of university policy. Given such considerations, no university faculty member, staff member, or student should use a university electronic mail account with the expectation that any particular electronic mail communication, whether personal or university-related, will be private.

It is important to note that student and personnel records, medical records, and trade secrets, should not be sent over e-mail unless the recipient is clearly authorized to receive that material. The sender should also be careful to advise the recipient of the confidential nature of the material.

IV. Limitations on the Use of E-mail

The legal and regulatory environment surrounding university electronic mail creates a number of other limitations on the use of university electronic mail accounts. Most apply uniformly to the use of all State-provided resources. They may be briefly summarized:

- A.** Electronic mail accounts are for the exclusive use of the individual to whom they are assigned.
- B.** No use is permitted that conflicts with the requirements of civil or criminal law, including but not limited to laws relating to pornography, defamation, intellectual property infringement, and illegal discrimination, or conflicts with any applicable policy of the Board of Governors or of Fayetteville State University, such as use in support of partisan political activities.

- C. No use is permitted that constitutes the unauthorized exchange of proprietary information or any other privileged, confidential, or sensitive information.
- D. The knowing transmission of a message containing a computer virus or that misrepresents the identity of the sender is prohibited.
- E. The use of or attempt to use the accounts of others without their permission is prohibited.
- F. Personal use cannot interfere with a university employee's obligation to carry out university duties in a timely and effective manner.
- G. The personal use cannot involve sending or soliciting chain letters or sending unsolicited bulk mail messages (e.g., "junk mail," "spam," or "MLM"), or otherwise overloading the university's electronic mail system or negatively interfering with system performance.
- H. Uses that result in commercial gain or personal profit are not permitted.
- I. No personal use may state or imply university sponsorship or endorsement of its message.

V. Retention of E-mail (Faculty/Staff Only)

- A. As stated previously, the content of an e-mail message is considered a public record and thus such a record cannot be disposed of, erased or destroyed except in accordance with the university's record retention plan and the [guidelines established by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, Office of Archives and History, Division of Historical Resources, Archives and Records Section.](#)
- B. Employees are responsible for saving or archiving e-mail messages that constitute university records. E-mail should be retained or destroyed in accordance with the university's records retention schedule (available through the university's legal counsel). E-mail messages that are of an ephemeral or transient nature and have only reference or administrative value may be deleted when the user has determined that their reference value has ended.
- C. E-mail that must be retained for longer periods of time may be retained in electronic or paper form (the latter may in some cases be the only means of providing for archival retention, for example through microfilming of paper copies), but must be retained for as long as the period specified in the university's records schedule. If retained in paper form, the copies must retain transmission and receipt information.

VI. Broadcast E-mail

Those wishing to transmit broadcast e-mail containing essential university announcements to students, faculty, and/or staff must obtain approval from the appropriate administrative authority. Within the scope of their authority, only the Office of the Provost may authorize the transmission of broadcast messages to a wide audience of students, faculty, and staff.

Appropriate broadcast e-mail may include, but is not limited to, the following types of announcements:

- A. Emergency or unforeseen campus-wide events notification (e.g., cancellation of classes or closing of the university due to inclement weather or emergency);
- B. Important campus deadline notification (e.g., last day of drop/add for students); or
- C. Improved services to students, faculty, or staff that directly impact all members of the affected group.

By contrast, broadcast e-mail messages should not be used for non-essential matters such as publicizing campus events. Broadcast e-mail messages should be sent only to the affected group (students, faculty, or staff, or a subgroup of one of those groups) and should be of critical importance to that group.

VII. User Responsibilities

ITTS maintains the university's official e-mail system; faculty, staff, and students are expected to read their e-mail on a regular basis. Faculty, staff, or students who choose to use another e-mail system are responsible for receiving university-wide broadcast messages, notices, and personal mail by checking the university's official e-mail system. An e-mail message regarding university matters sent from an administrative office, faculty, or staff member is considered to be an official notice.

VIII. Enforcement and Violations

- A. Any person who violates any provision of this policy, or the above mentioned rules interpreting this policy, or other relevant Fayetteville State University, Board of Trustees, or the UNC Board of Governors' policies or any local, state or federal laws may face sanctions up to and including termination or expulsion. Depending on the nature and severity of the offense, violations can be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Disciplinary System or disciplinary procedures applicable to faculty and staff.
- B. Violations of university policies governing the use of university electronic resources, including mail services, may result in restriction of access to university information technology resources in addition to any disciplinary action that may be applicable under other university policies, guidelines or implementing procedures, up to and including dismissal.
- C. Suspected violations of this or other associated policies regarding e-mail use must be reported to the Chief Information Officer.