

# MARSHALL UNIVERSITY BOARD OF GOVERNORS

## Policy No. IT-3

### EMAIL POLICY

#### **1 General Information:**

**1.1. Scope:** This policy set expectations and describes inappropriate use of email within the Marshall University information technology environment

**1.2 Authority:** W. Va. Code §18B-1-6

**1.3 Passage Date:** March 8, 2006

**1.4 Effective Date:** Upon passage

**1.5 Controlling over:** Marshall University and/or Marshall Community and Technical College

#### **1.6 History:**

1.6.1 This policy was previously approved by the Information Technology Committee on 11/05/99 and revised 01/07/00

#### **2 Policy:**

**2.1** This policy clarifies the applicability of law and other University policies relating to electronic mail. The University recognizes that principles of academic freedom and shared governance, freedom of speech, and privacy of information hold important implications for electronic mail and electronic mail services. The University affords electronic mail privacy protections comparable to that which it traditionally affords paper mail and telephone communications.

**2.2** The University encourages the use of electronic mail and respects the privacy of users. It does not routinely inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic mail without the holder's consent. Nonetheless, subject to the requirements for authorization, notification, and other conditions specified in this policy, the University may deny access to its electronic mail services and may inspect, monitor, or disclose electronic mail when required by and consistent with the law. The University will not attempt to regulate the content of your electronic mail and accepts no responsibility for the content of electronic mail. If you receive a piece of electronic mail that you consider offensive, you may direct your problem to the "University Computer Services Help Desk".

**2.3** Although it is impossible to ensure the confidentiality of any electronic message stored or communicated through the computing facilities, this policy articulates the procedures adopted to provide users with a secure mail environment. Electronic mail is a privileged communication between the parties involved and will be subjected to the same protection afforded traditional paper mail.

### **3 Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to describe (1) Qualifications for Email, (2) Postmaster Responsibilities, (3) Undelivered Email, (4) Email Violations, (5) Username Dissemination, (6) Discovery of Illegal Activity, (7) File Backup, (8) Email Custodian, (9) Email Violations Procedure, and (10) General Information and Definitions.

#### **3.1 Qualification for Email:**

All Marshall University faculty, staff, students, and affiliated persons qualify to receive an email account. Email accounts will be automatically created for any person who has an MUNET account. Information about these accounts is attainable through the University Computing Services department on the fourth floor of the Drinko Library. Accounts are issued to persons having a valid Marshall ID and/or driver license.

#### **3.2 Postmaster Responsibilities:**

The postmaster is the person assigned responsibility for dealing with email related issues at Marshall University. It may be necessary at times for the postmaster to read an electronic mail header which has failed to reach its destination to determine, if possible, the intended addressee and redirect the message to the correct address. However, it is not the practice of the postmaster to read or to discuss the content of any message.

The postmaster is a staff member of University Computing Services department. The postmaster will read the mail only to the extent necessary to assist in proper mail delivery. Copies of the messages will not be retained after successful redirection, nor will the postmaster discuss the contents of the messages with others.

#### **3.3 Undeliverable Mail:**

The computer system automatically forwards all undeliverable mail to the designated postmaster and/or returns it to the sender. This is a standard feature of many mail systems. Typically, the postmaster checks the address and, where appropriate, re-sends the message to the correct address. In general, incorrectly addressed outgoing mail is ignored, while incoming email is redirected to its intended recipient.

#### **3.4 Email Violations:**

In general, policies and restrictions outlined in state (Electronic Mail Protection Act, West Virginia Statute, House Bill 2627) and federal laws and the Faculty, Classified Staff or Student Handbooks are applicable when using electronic mail. Specific examples include, but are not limited to the following:

- Forged Mail - It is a violation of this policy to forge an electronic mail signature or to make it appear as though it originated from a different person
- Intimidation - It is a violation of this policy to send electronic mail that is abusive or threatens an individual's safety. The use of electronic mail for sexual, ethnic, religious, or other minority harassment is also prohibited. Known threats to personal safety will be reported to Public Safety.

- Harassment - It is a violation of this policy to use electronic mail to harass an individual. This includes sending or forwarding chain letters, deliberately flooding a user's mailbox with automatically generated mail, inappropriate e-mail messages, and sending mail that is deliberately designed to interfere with proper mail delivery or access.
- Unauthorized Access - It is a violation of this policy to attempt to gain access to another person's mail files regardless of whether the access was successful or whether or not the messages accessed involved personal information.
- Illegal Use of Mail Services - It is not only a violation of this policy to send copyrighted materials electronically - it is a federal offense. All violations will be dealt with severely. Any other illegal use of electronic mail will also be dealt with severely and/or reported to the proper authorities.
- Chain Letters/Junk Email – It is a violation of University policy to send chain letters and junk email. A chain letter is a letter sent originally through national and international mail services and now through networks such as the Internet. The original intent was for young people, mostly students, to meet peers of the world. Writers shared such things as their community environment, their schools, their friends, and many times about their family life. Junk email is email sent as commercial transactions, personal business, and other non-university activities. The negative side to chain letters and junk email on the Internet, or any other network, is that it fills the net and the mail servers with useless junk at the expense of the subscribers that uses the Internet mail legitimately.
- Spam – It is a violation of University policy for anyone to “Spam” from University mail servers. Spam is exploiting servers or similar broadcast systems for the purposes beyond their intended scope to amplify the widespread distribution of unsolicited email.
- Unauthorized Mass Mailing – It is a violation of the Marshall University Acceptable Use Policy (<http://web.marshall.edu/itc/IT1AcceptableUse.asp>) for unauthorized persons to distribute email in mass. "Mass Mailings" are excessive, unauthorized, and frivolous mailings of two hundred or more identical or nearly identical pieces of email sent by a user or users to other email recipients. Such mailings, consisting of substantially identical letters, attachments, pictures or other written material, are distinct from 1) mailings made in direct response to communications from persons or groups to whom the matter is emailed; 2) emailing to federal, state, or local government officials; and 3) news releases to the communications media all of which are exempt from this definition. Mass emailing distributed must adhere to the document “Outlook Mass Mailing.doc” found within Outlook in the “Public Folders” under the “MUNet Office Environment”.
- Hoaxes – It is a violation of University policy to distribute an email hoax with the intention to mislead or trick other into believing or accepting or doing something, so as to bring about the belief in or acceptance of what is actually false.

- Attachments – Attachments are any items added in addition to the original email being created. Attachments must adhere to the section on illegal use of the mail services above. Attachments have a direct affect on all mail servers and recipients, so an attachment should not exceed 2 MB. Large attachments should never be sent in mass mailing

### **3.5 Username Dissemination:**

A person's username and email address are considered public information that can be given out to other individuals unless the user has indicated confidentiality through the Registrar Office. The University also maintains an “Electronic Phonebook” of all MUNT users on the Web. All users are included in the Web phonebook, unless the user has indicated confidentiality through the Registrar Office. No one may knowingly permit unauthorized release of directory information for the purpose of advertising, mass mailings, or other commercial uses.

### **3.6 Discovery of Illegal Activity:**

Any messages whose content is clearly illegal should be reported to the “University Computing Services Help Desk”, appropriate campus official(s) or to the Public Safety Office. Such items might be discovered as part of normal Postmaster activity, dead letter processing, contact from local/state/government agencies or other tasks. Examples might include messages containing illegally obtained credit card numbers, telephone authorization codes, grade reports, criminal conspiracy, illegal transmission of copyrighted materials, or similar items.

### **3.7 File Backup:**

Mail files are copied as a routine aspect of system backups. This is an automatic process that does not involve any human reading of the files copied. Such practices are not considered a violation of privacy.

### **3.8 Email Custodian:**

Accumulating old email is the similar to saving your old letters in order to re-read them in the future. Storage of electronic email requires disk storage on a server or the user’s computer. The user controls storing email on their computer, but email stored on the University server is subjected to the “Email Custodian”. The “Email Custodian” deletes items from the inbox, newmail, mail, deadletter, wastebasket, and trash older than 90 days every Saturday. This does not effect Microsoft Outlook users.

### **3.9 Email Violations Procedure:**

Guidelines for handling violations to this policy are the same as those outlined in the “Computing Use and Abuse” policy.

The University reserves the right to authorize disconnecting a user's account if the user represents a threat to system or mail integrity. As part of an investigation, the University may examine mail files, logs, and any other appropriate documents or testimony. The appropriate Faculty, Staff or Student Handbook, local, state or federal law, shall determine any necessary disciplinary action.

If any provision of this policy is ruled invalid under law, it shall be deemed modified or omitted to the extent necessary, and the remainder of the policy shall continue in full force and effect.

### **3.10 General Information and Definitions:**

**3.10.1 What Is Electronic Mail?** Electronic mail (email) is a computer-based system for exchange of messages and other information, which may include textual and numeric data, computer programs, and graphics. Email is one of the most common applications of time-shared computers, mainframe computer networks, and local area networks of microcomputers. Email also fulfills a widespread need for rapid, easy, inexpensive communication with individuals and groups.

**3.10.2 How Does Electronic Mail Work?** Electronic mail applications vary across many software and hardware environments, but in essence, is a computer-enhanced memorandum that usually includes the following:

- To – The “To” is the email address of the person or person(s) receiving the email. This is normally in the form of a user account, the “@” sign, and the machine name of the email server (e.g. username@marshall.edu). The email address is similar to a number and street address used for sending a letter via the U. S. Post Office.
- From – The “From” is the email address of the sending the email. Similar to the “To” address above.
- Date - The “Date” is automatically included by the system.
- Subject - The “Subject” line is usually a few key words typed by the sender.
- Body – The “Body” is the content of the memorandum is entered either from the keyboard or by including a previously composed file (such as from a word processor). The completed memorandum is sent to the recipient(s), who at some later time can issue a command to read, reply, delete, print, forward, or file.

### **3.10.3 Email Uses:**

- Day-to-day communication traditionally accomplished by phone, postal service, and overnight courier is probably the most common use of email. Electronic mail is timely and convenient, and provides inexpensive access to colleagues.
- Data exchanges, including committee work, program planning, making data requests, conducting surveys of colleagues, exchanging program information and policies are another common use of electronic mail and are increasing across and between campuses and associations. Use of electronic mail to conduct surveys does not negate the requirement to obtain the appropriate approvals to send mass mailings.

- List serves - subscribing to interest-group lists is yet another email application.

**3.10.4 Email Access:** To use electronic mail at Marshall University, it is necessary to have an email account, which is unique for each user. This prevents anonymous email and establishes the electronic address for each email user to which electronic mail can be received from other email users on or off campus. Each email account is protected, in part, from unauthorized access by requiring the use of a unique password to identify the legitimate user. Administrators, faculty, and staff may request an email account. While Marshall University does not prohibit the use of email for personal reasons, users should be aware that the primary intention of providing email service is to support the educational mission and conduct daily business.