

Mass Communication Policy and Guidelines

Introduction

Mass communication with students and employees of IPFW can be accomplished in a number of ways. IPFW has established a policy that e-mail is an official method of communicating with students, faculty, and staff. However, as described below, the university has also established restrictions on the use of mass e-mail messages.

This policy also identifies various options for campus communications and for other forms of electronic communication. Information about the procedures and the “pro’s and con’s” of other forms of electronic communication is available on the IT Services (ITS) web site.

Policy for Establishing E-Mail Addresses

All students will be assigned an @ipfw.edu e-mail address based on their IPFW network ID. This address will be maintained in the central electronic directory and populated in the student information system. Students may, and will be encouraged to, provide a forwarding address to their personal e-mail account of choice. Reminders about each student’s preferred e-mail address, and about the need to keep this address current, will be provided regularly.

The central electronic directory will also contain an indicator of the student’s role based on the student’s status, and this indicator will define what services the student should receive through various systems across campus. Roles include visitor/prospect, applicant, admittee, admitted but never enrolled, enrolled, stop out, and alumnus/alumna/graduate.

All employees also are assigned an @ipfw.edu e-mail address based on their IPFW network ID. The address is maintained in the central electronic directory.

Policy for Sending Mass E-Mail Messages to Students

IPFW provides opportunities for sending mass e-mail messages in order to facilitate communication with students. IPFW also restricts the use of these tools to topics which are clearly “normal university business” in the context of the person responsible for sending the message. Unless specifically authorized through procedures described below, IPFW specifically prohibits the use of mass e-mail addressed to students in more than one school or division. This prohibition recognizes the importance of maintaining the recipient’s recognition of the importance of university e-mail communications. It also recognizes the risk that mass e-mail messages can lead to the university being designated as a “spammer” and being blocked by outside e-mail providers like AOL, Yahoo and MSN.

The university has established a *context authorization* policy for generating mass e-mail messages. The following kinds of mass e-mail messages can be authorized by the individuals

who are described:

- Deans may authorize program-related mailings to their majors;
- Chairs may authorize program-related mailings to their majors;
- Faculty may send course-related e-mail to students in their classes;
- Administrative offices may send business-related e-mail to students they serve.

Mass e-mail messages to students that cross these population boundaries or content restrictions must be authorized by the E-Mail Usage Oversight Committee. Patrick McLaughlin, Registrar, serves as chair of the committee, and the committee has established an on-line Request to Send Mass E-Mail form that is available on the Registrar's Web site.

E-mail composers are also reminded that mailings to lists of addresses must **ALWAYS** be addressed as a blind carbon copy (BCC) and not in the "To:" field. Failure to follow this procedure supplies each recipient with a full list of all recipients, which facilitates the generation of "spam" mailing lists and compromises the privacy of the message.

ITS provides training on the use of these tools.

Policy for Sending Mass E-Mail Messages to Faculty and Staff

Mass e-mail to faculty and staff is restricted in similar ways. Supervisors, chairs, deans, and directors may use e-mail to reach employees reporting to them.

All-campus e-mails are limited to Police and Safety, and other areas as designated by the Chancellor. In rare instances, other offices may be permitted to send campus-wide e-mail messages. Permission must be obtained from the Vice Chancellor for Financial Affairs and will be given only when the message is determined to be of utmost importance.

E-mail composers are also reminded that mailings to lists of addresses must **ALWAYS** be addressed as a blind carbon copy (BCC) and not in the "To:" field. Failure to follow this procedure supplies each recipient with a full list of all recipients, which facilitates the generation of "spam" lists and compromises the privacy of the message.

Options for Digital Mass Communication

The university provides several options for mass communication using digital means, including the following:

- Listserve mailing lists
- Forums (e.g., *Ceilidh*)
- Electronic Bulletin Boards linked to GroupWise and Netmail
- GroupWise E-Mail Groups
- Student Campus Calendar entries on the my.IPFW portal
- "This Week at IPFW" calendar entries for faculty and staff

- WebCT lists of students enrolled in a class

Training in the use of these services is provided by ITS. Information about the “pro’s and con’s” of using these services is available on the ITS web site.

Other Options for Mass Campus Communication

Other alternatives for disseminating information include:

- Telephone Operations can post information on the electronic bulletin board near the library.
- Flyers can be prepared and distributed through campus mail.
- Flyers can be posted on campus bulletin boards, if done in accordance with the IPFW Posting Policy
- Newsletters can be prepared and distributed through campus or regular mail.