MASS EMAIL POLICY

Purpose and Definitions

The College uses email as the primary means for communicating important information to students, employees, parents, and alumni. Mass email messages are a useful and convenient way of getting information to the campus and College communities. Given that it does not allow for the immediate exchange of ideas, this channel is best used for one-way dissemination of information. Acknowledging the potential for unnecessarily consuming resources, cluttering campus inboxes, and broadcasting disrespectful or discriminatory messages, College policy requires that senders of such messages adhere to a set of standard guidelines, as outlined below.

A mass emailing is an unsolicited email message sent to a group of otherwise unrelated campus email addresses. For example, sending a message to all faculty or all students would be considered a mass emailing. The main internal distribution lists are for students, faculty, and staff. Important external lists include parents, alumni, and the Board of Visitors and Governors. Whether such messages are sent by using a personally constructed list of addresses or a system-generated list makes no difference in the effect or applicability of this policy.

Sending a message to members of a club or a group of friends that have agreed to receive communications does not constitute a mass emailing. Sending messages to groups, committees, or divisions also does not constitute a mass emailing, so long as the messages are relevant to the work, project, or initiative that is the subject of the email.

Moderation and Appeal

College-managed email distribution lists are moderated to ensure appropriate use. By allowing only moderated access to distribution lists, we limit the risk of distribution of inappropriate or excessive email messages. This allows for a stream of quality information used in connection with the operations of the College, reduces recipient complaints and confusion, and reinforces network security best practice.

As noted above, mass emails to personally constructed lists that violate the acceptable use cases are prohibited. Attempts to bypass the moderation process with a personally constructed list will be considered a violation of the student or employee code of conduct.

Each list will have a primary moderator. The head of the College Communications office will be able to moderate all lists.

List moderators

- **Faculty:** Provost's Office
- **Staff:** President's Office, HR
- **Students:** Student Affairs. This includes the following lists: Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, Senior, FirstYear, SecondYear, ThirdYear, FourthYear
- **Parents:** College Communications, Enrollment Management
- **Alumni:** Alumni Relations
- **BVG:** Chief of Staff/Assistant Secretary to the Board

The list moderator will make an initial evaluation of appropriateness of the message, based on the criteria set forth in this document. If the message meets with approval, it will be approved and released to the recipient list(s) within 24 hours or if sent on a Friday, by the following business day.

Standard emails that are sent weekly can be considered for pre-emptive approval to all recipient lists. For example, the weekly CPG Update, SGA minutes, etc. Requests for approval for a regular correspondence can be submitted to the head of College Communications. This will be reviewed at the beginning of each semester.

If the moderator judges a message to be in violation of the email policy, the intended sender will be notified via email of the decision within 24 hours. This notification will indicate the reason that the email is not approved. If the sender wishes to appeal, they have one business day to do so. Appeals can be made by replying to the original notification email. The sender may also choose to modify the original message based on the feedback, and request a review of the revised communication. If a decision is appealed by the sender, the moderator will consult with College Communications, and they will make a final decision based on the guidelines below. Final decisions will be communicated to the sender via email within one business day.

List moderators are required to have basic training in how to spot spoofed emails, phishing emails or other cybersecurity risks.

All messages to these lists will be moderated, with only these named exceptions, given the potential for messages from these senders to contain time-sensitive or emergency information critical to operations or safety:

- Messages from The Department of Public Safety
- Messages from WC Response

- Messages from Office of Information Technology (OIT)

Guidelines and Criteria

Respect for persons, as described in **College policies**, is central to mass email policy. Community members are expected to treat one another and the general public in a cordial and respectful manner, and there is no toleration of harassment or discrimination.

Generally speaking, use of the mass email lists is appropriate for:

- Messages that are relevant to all members of the distribution list and directly relate to carrying out the business and operations of the College.
- Messages that relate to changes in College policy or time sensitive issues.
- Messages containing urgent announcements related to safety or other critical issues.
- Messages that promote or publicize events, activities or opportunities available to members of the campus community. It should be noted that senders of this type of information are strongly encouraged to use other channels to promote their activities, but emails of this nature will be permitted.[1]

Announcements that do not meet criteria noted above should seek other methods of relaying their information, such as social media or other campus communication tools such as CampusGroups, Teams, Canvas or others.

Inappropriate use of mass email lists includes, but is not limited to:

- Messages that are not in line with the mission of the College
- Messages that are not in line with the statement of community standards
- Messages that are personal in nature
- Messages that are commercial in nature with the exception of those messages that are in support of College business
- Messages of limited interest to the College community at large
- Use of “Reply All” in response to a message that was approved. Those follow-up communications should be limited to only the original sender.
- Any message where conversation—as opposed to the dissemination of information—is the goal

Examples of Acceptable Use

- Announcements from the President or Provost
- Emergency notices, including College facilities outages, weather-related notices and other information updates
- Human resource policy or benefits announcements and staffing updates
- Expected street, traffic and parking interruptions
- College special events such as observances for holidays
- Other announcements or news reports affecting the College
- Messages that relate to changes in College policy
- Messages promoting opportunities or events offered to the Washington College community, including employment, internships, club and organization news and activities, workshops or other events hosted by academic departments.[1]

Examples of Inappropriate Use

- Any information relating to business services or commercial solicitation such as house sale listings, reselling of tickets to events or any other activity for profit
- Messages of limited interest, which may include individual class cancellations, personal opinions, or holiday greetings
- Using “reply all” to send a note of congratulations or thanks or to ask a follow-up question in response to a message
- Any message that violates College conduct policy with regard to disrespect, harassment, or discrimination
- Any message that includes an accusation or an accounting of alleged events that have not yet been verified through an impartial review with the named parties.

[1]While emails related to these types of non-urgent activities are permitted, we strongly encourage anyone wishing to use one or more of the email lists to send this type of communication to consider other avenues of distribution as well. Social media, CampusGroups, and Teams are viable alternatives.