

OFFICIAL STUDENT COMMUNICATION & APPROPRIATE USE OF COLLEGE EMAIL

POLICYPurpose

This policy is established to define the business use of email and define the Ridgewater College email system as the official form of communication for the college.

College Use of Email

Students have a right to accurate and timely communication about matters affecting them. To disseminate critical and official college communications to students in a timely and cost-efficient manner, Ridgewater College has designated the College's email system to be the official method of communication with students regarding topics of an academic, student service, or administrative nature. Ridgewater College retains the right to disseminate official notes and other communications via traditional methods (i.e., USPS mail).

Assignment of College-Issued Email Accounts

All students registered for credit coursework shall be assigned an official Ridgewater College email account upon admission or registration. The student email account will remain active for 365 days after the student's end date.

College Obligations

- Faculty shall use college-issued email addresses to communicate with students.
- Ridgewater College shall provide access to computers with internet capabilities on campus.
- Ridgewater College shall not lease or sell student email addresses.
Ridgewater College shall take a pro-active approach to block unsolicited spam or junk email messages from reaching college-issued email accounts.

Student Obligations

- Students bear the responsibility to read and respond to official college notices and other college email messages.
- Students are expected to check their email on a frequent and consistent basis in order to stay current with college-related communications.
- Students have the responsibility to recognize that certain communications may be time sensitive.
- Students bear the responsibility to comply with appropriate use of email in accordance with Minnesota State Board policy 5.22.1 "Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources" and Ridgewater College Student Code of Conduct.

Redirecting Email

Students may redirect or forward their Ridgewater College assigned email address to a personal email address, but students do so at their own risk. If a student chooses to forward their College email account, they are responsible for all information, including attachments, sent to any other email account. Ridgewater College is not responsible for the delivery or delay of delivery into an alternate forwarded account. Students will retain all responsibility associated with official communications sent to their student email account.

Privacy

Messages and notices sent via the student email system are subject to applicable privacy laws and policies, including, but not limited to the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) and the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and applicable Ridgewater College policies. Users of the student email system should exercise caution when communicating confidential or sensitive information. Students who choose to suppress any data fields will not be included in the student email directory.

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Appropriate Use

Official email communications are intended to meet the academic and administrative needs of the college community. Appropriate use of email addresses is essential to the success of this mode of contacting students. Ridgewater College is committed to using it as efficiently and effectively as possible keeping the following guidelines in mind:

Examples of Appropriate Student-Wide Distribution

- Deadline notices (registration, tuition payment, financial aid, graduation, etc.)
- Class or registration cancellation notices
- Ridgewater College sanctioned events/invitations/announcements
- Campus crime and security notices
- New policy, policy change or service notices
- Surveys sanctioned by Ridgewater College
- Recruitment communications
- Student Senate participation notices

Examples of Inappropriate Student-Wide Distribution

- Information unrelated to Ridgewater College business
- Solicitations or fundraising efforts not sanctioned by Ridgewater College
- Promotion of political viewpoints
- Personal information
- Surveys not sanctioned by Ridgewater College
- Messages containing confidential information such as course grades, financial aid award amounts, or tuition/fee payments amounts
- Messages that violate Board Policy, Ridgewater College Policy or state or federal laws

Mass and Unsolicited Email

Ridgewater College uses email as the primary means for communicating important information to students. Mass email messages are a useful and convenient way of informing the campus and college communities. However, their potential for unnecessarily consuming resources and cluttering campus inboxes require that senders of such messages adhere to some guidelines. As such, mass emails must be approved or sent by authorized users only. A mass emailing is an unsolicited email message sent to a group of otherwise unrelated campus email addresses. Sending a message to members of a club or a group of friends does not constitute a mass emailing. Sending messages to groups, committees, or divisions also does not constitute a mass emailing.

There are four basic types of college-wide and campus email distribution lists:

- All Faculty and All Staff, college-wide
- All Students, college-wide
- All Faculty and All Staff at a particular campus
- All Students taking courses at a particular campus

Students and employees may maintain personal group lists; those lists should not be used to send unsolicited email that violates any of Ridgewater College's policies.

Use of College-wide and Campus Email Distribution Lists

College email is only for official college business. Use of College-wide and campus-wide email distribution lists should be solely used for information important to all members of the college community.

- Email primarily of interest to a particular campus should use the individual campus distribution list.

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- Announcements of cafeteria menus, fitness center schedules, art shows, music performances, bookstore sales, etc. should not be sent to email distribution lists individually; it would be more appropriate to post the information on a table tent, poster, or campus monitor.
- Faculty, staff, and student email distribution lists are not made available to outside organizations other than as specified by legal or policy requirements.
- Individual faculty can send information about new courses and programs to students enrolled in their classes as they deem appropriate without prior approval.

Access to College-Wide and Individual Campus-Wide Email Distribution Lists

The following individuals have access to the use of College-wide and Individual Campus-Wide email distribution lists:

- College President
- Vice Presidents
- College Registrar
- Director of Communications and Marketing
- Deans
- Student Service Directors
- Information Technology Staff
- Administrative Assistants to the President, Vice Presidents, and Deans
- Student Life Coordinators

Sanctions

Willful or intentional violations of this policy are considered to be misconduct under applicable provisions of the Student Conduct Code. Students who violate this policy may be denied access to Information Technology (IT) resources and may be subject to other penalties and disciplinary action both within and outside Ridgewater College. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action that could result in student employment termination, suspension or expulsion from Ridgewater College.

History:

12.05.05 Adopted; Implemented Fall Semester 2006

06.15.18 Proposed; 09.14.18 Revised

08.24.21 Proposed; Reviewed for Equity Compliance

12.10.21 Revised