

Mass E-mail Policy and Guidelines

I. Introduction

Electronic mail (e-mail) is an important resource for academic and administrative communications. This policy reflects the decision of Hellenic College / Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology to use institutional email accounts as the official means of communication with all the faculty, staff and students.

The general goals of the policy are to educate the campus community in the proper ways to use mass e-mailings, and to limit the exposure of faculty, staff and students to mail that is not important to the school's role.

The policy will provide:

- a definition for mass e-mail;
- clarification for who can send mass e-mail messages;
- guidelines and procedures for sending mass e-mails;

This policy provides the minimal guidelines on the approval and processing of mass e-mailings, though individual administrative areas may apply more restrictive rules on the frequency, acceptable purposes and recipients of any email communication. This policy is primarily for use by internal e-mail senders. It provides guidance to, but cannot eliminate mass email or spam generated by individuals or groups outside the HCHC community. Requests from external entities to use the HCHC e-mail system will be subject to the same approval procedures as internal mailers.

Any faculty, staff or student who initiates mass e-mailings from on-campus or off-campus computer systems will be accountable under this policy. No member of the community should engage in acts that waste or prevent others from using electronic resources.

II. Definition of Mass E-mail

For the purposes of this document, mass email shall be considered to be any electronic mailing in which the message is sent to more than 10 hchc.edu email accounts, using any email account (hchc.edu or non hchc.edu) and any software program.

Opt-in mailing lists are exceptions to this definition. However, the administrator of the list needs to have proof of opting-in from each and every member of the list, prior to sending any message to the members of the list.

Whenever there's an argument about the applicability of this mass email definition to a certain situation, the Information Technology Department shall make the final decision.

III. Who can send mass e-mail

The only authorized entities to send mass e-mail messages to the HCHC community are:

- The President's Office
- The Office of Operations
- The Office of Student Life
- The IT Department

Any other organization, office or individual (faculty, staff or student) are expressly forbidden to send any mass e-mail messages.

Whenever there's a justified need to send mass e-mail to members of the HCHC community, the IT Department will send it on behalf of the requestor, according to the procedures and guidelines set forth in this document.

IV. Mass E-mail Procedures

Anyone who needs to send a mass e-mail message shall contact the IT Department at least 24 hours in advance, in writing. Verbal or phone requests will not be taken into consideration. The written request needs to include the following:

- Name, department, position and signature of the person requesting the mass e-mailing.
- Name and signature of the department's head, approving the content and the sending of the message; if the requestor is a faculty member or a student, the signature of the Dean is required.
- The full content of the message. A message subject is mandatory.
- The complete list of names and email addresses of the recipients of the message. The following substitutes (and combinations) are acceptable: "All Hellenic College Students", "All Holy Cross Students", "All Hellenic College Faculty", "All Holy Cross Faculty", "All Department Heads", and "All Staff".

Failing to provide any of the above will result in delays and/or rejection of the request. ***Providing the above information is strictly required, but does not guarantee that the request will be approved.*** The final decision will be made by the Chief Information Officer on a case by case basis. The Chief Information Officer may ask for advisory opinions in order to make the final decision.

V. Mass E-mail Messages Guidelines

Message Must Comply with FERPA regulations

Hellenic College and Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology are educational institutions. As such, everybody must comply with the Family Education Records Privacy Act (FERPA) which specifically forbids releasing information about students. This means the message cannot contain personal information about individual students that others can read - including students' names, personal information, email addresses etc.

Example: putting student email addresses on a list of recipients that includes people who are off-campus, or who should not have that information for other reasons, is a violation of FERPA.

Message Must Provide a Valid Return Address

All email must include a way to correctly and accurately identify the sender, and allows the recipient to respond to the sender. In the case of unsolicited mass mailing, this is also a requirement under Anti-spam Law. It also provides a way for a recipient to inquire for further information.

Message Should Be Short/No MIME Encodings

Short email messages are always better than long emails. In general, it is a good idea to avoid sending complex document types (like large pictures, video, sound etc). HTML emails should be avoided. By sending complex documents, the number of people who are able to read the message will be limited to those who have the appropriate software to view them. Attachments larger than 1 MB are not permitted.

Recipient List Accuracy

The requestor of a mass e-mailing needs to provide the list of recipients, and guarantee its accuracy. The more people on the list who do not belong there, the more complaints will be received. Broad "shotgun" lists should be avoided (example: emailing a message to all members of a class, when it applies to only a well-defined subset).

Avoid Time-Limited Material

Email is not instantaneous. For a large mass mailing, it may take several hours for all of the messages to be delivered, longer if done during peak hours. Further, not everybody reads email constantly during the day. If the information is time-sensitive consider other methods such as phone mass messaging.