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Policy Name: Electronic Messaging Acceptable Use

Policy Number: J-5

Functional Area(s) Responsible: Information Technology

Owner(s) of Policy: Information Technology

Most Recent BOT Approval Date: March 2011

Most Recent Review Date: Spring 2025

Most Recent Review/Revision Type: ☐ none ☒ minor/non-substantive ☐ substantive/extensive

Policy Statement:

Electronic communications on behalf of the Finger Lakes Community College (FLCC) should be used to support education, research, scholarly communication, administration and other FLCC business. FLCC provides significant technology resources to Board members, employees, and students that, among other things, facilitate electronic communications. Electronic communication is not different from any other form of communication. It is subject to a wide range of applicable federal and state laws and regulations, including public records disclosure/retention requirements and copyright mandates.

This policy enumerates standards for electronic communications through which FLCC business is conducted. It applies whether the electronic communication uses FLCC technology resources or not. FLCC Governing Board members and employees have an obligation under the law to conduct FLCC business through electronic communications in a manner that permits the communication to be captured for public records and retention requirements.

1. **Specifically Acceptable Uses.** Examples of acceptable uses of electronic communications are but not limited to:
 - A. Communications with local and foreign educators, students, administrators, researchers and colleagues in connection with instruction or research
 - B. Communication and exchange for scholarly development, to maintain currency, or to debate issues in a field of knowledge
 - C. Use in applying for or administering grants or contracts for research or instruction, but not for non-FLCC public relations activities
 - D. Announcements of new products or services for use in research, college administration, student services, or instruction but not commercial advertising of any kind
 - E. Factual vendor communication relevant to official FLCCFLCC business
 - F. Communication incidental to otherwise acceptable use, except for illegal or specifically unacceptable use
 - G. Marketing by FLCC regarding its educational opportunities, programs and non-commercial radio and television stations
 - H. FLCC communications from FLCC-related entities with which FLCC has an agreement that exists solely to raise funds for FLCC programs about the manner in which employees may support those entities, so long as the message to employees does not focus on specific third-party products or services

2. **Specifically Unacceptable Uses.** The following is a list of some unacceptable uses, but unacceptable uses is not limited to this list:
- A. Using electronic communications for illegal activities
 - B. Use for for-profit activities (sales, consulting for pay, and so on) or use by for-profit institutions unless covered by the general principle, or as one of the specifically acceptable uses
 - C. Use for private or personal business
 - D. Chain letter, or any illegal schemes or activities
 - E. Mailings to large numbers of people that contain unwanted solicitations or information, such as “spam” or “letter bomb”
 - F. Communication that constitutes harassment
 - G. Anonymous communications, or communications that impersonate another individual
 - H. Allowing anyone else to use your account
 - I. Any communication which adversely impacts the communications of FLCC by over-loading the network
 - J. Violations of open meeting law requirements
 - K. Use of technology resources to market or conduct other activities on behalf of a third party regarding the “hosting” of an event that is prohibited under FLCC’s Use of College Facilities administrative regulation
 - L. Replying to entire distribution lists when a reply to one or a few individuals would suffice

3. **Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of electronic communications cannot be assured. Under certain conditions, selected FLCC employees may have access to them consistent with applicable law or policy including this policy. Any confidentiality may also be compromised by unintended redistribution or the inadequacy of current technologies. Employees, therefore, should exercise extreme caution in using electronic communications to communicate confidential or sensitive matters, and should not assume that their electronic communication is private or confidential. Additionally, employees should not use electronic communications to transmit information that applicable law requires be confidential, such as student education records under the [Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974](#).

Reason(s) for Policy:

To inform users of FLCC electronic messaging resources on expectations for acceptable use as well as User responsibilities.

Applicability of Policy:

This policy applies to all individuals with access to College-provided electronic messaging capabilities.

Definitions:

Electronic Messaging

Any electronic resources used to deliver text and/or video messages through e-mail or web-based technologies (including web sites, blogs, wikis, etc.).

Related Documents:

- FLCC Network Usage policy
- FLCC Sexual Harassment Policy
- FLCC Workplace Violence Policy
- FLCC Non-Discrimination Non-Harassment Policy

Procedures:

Those individuals who apply for and are granted a computer account for access to FLCC network computer resources are solely responsible for any misuse of that account. Passwords should never be given out to other users. Each user is responsible for the security of his/her own password. FLCC is not responsible for restoring lost data due to user

mismanagement.

FLCC electronic messaging facility users must comply with established rules and guidelines. No set of rules can cover every contingency, and these rules and guidelines will be periodically reviewed and updated.

E-mail Backups and Storage

Since e-mail is a communications system with finite storage, unneeded messages should not be kept for extended periods of time. Users should remove all unneeded e-mail communications in a timely fashion. E-mail system backups are maintained for 30 days for recovery of systems only. Backups are not intended, nor should they be relied upon, to restore data lost or deleted by users. If a user needs to store information in an e-mail message for an extended period, they should transfer it to an appropriate electronic, hardcopy, or other filing system.

User Responsibilities and Procedures

If FLCC IT personnel request that you cease an electronic messaging activity because of its negative impact on the network or other users, you are expected to cease that activity immediately. Users are responsible for maintaining the size of their mailbox to correspond to limits established by the IT division. The individual who applied for a computer account to access FLCC's electronic messaging facilities is responsible for any misuse of those facilities performed with that account. Users should change their passwords often in order to protect users and their data.

Content Disclaimer

FLCC is not responsible for material viewed or downloaded by users from the Internet using FLCC's electronic messaging facilities. The Internet is a worldwide network of computers that contains millions of pages of information. Users are cautioned that some of these pages may include offensive, sexually explicit, and inappropriate material.

Privacy

FLCC e-mail and electronic messaging resources are not personal and private. FLCC IT and other administrative staff may access user data for legitimate business purposes, to troubleshoot, diagnose and resolve technical problems, and to investigate possible misuse of FLCC computer systems and resources.

The confidentiality of electronic communications cannot be assured. Under certain conditions, selected FLCC employees may have access to them consistent with applicable law or policy including this policy. Any confidentiality may also be compromised by unintended redistribution or the inadequacy of current technologies. Employees, therefore, should exercise extreme caution in using electronic communications to communicate confidential or sensitive matters, and should not assume that their electronic communication is private or confidential. Additionally, employees should not use electronic communications to transmit information that applicable law requires be confidential, such as student education records under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

E-mail Distribution Lists

E-mail distribution lists appearing in the Global Address Book shall be protected by access permissions for posting rights in order to enhance policy compliance. The owner of each distribution list is responsible to maintain the list of those with posting access rights for their distribution list, as well as the membership of the list.

Forms/Online Processes:

None

Appendix:

None