

Advisory Committee Input on Email Policy

IRMPPC

- keeping the policy statement brief
- making the sections on responsibilities standards and practices
- clarifying what is meant by timely
- clarifying when email may or may not be secure
- providing a means for students to easily identify and differentiate official communications from other email
- addressing who is responsible for retaining official emails and in what form (as part of the record retention effort cited above)
- reiterating that email is an official means but not the only one form of communication (i.e., it may be inappropriate to use email to send some types of official communications)
- defining processes to ensure the policy is not abused by members of the university (i.e., used indiscriminately to “spam” students) similar to the controls for sending mass emails
- providing guidelines for forwarding email to an off-campus account (i.e., minimal requirements)
- ensuring that departments follow through on undelivered messages
- developing a plan to inform the campus about the policy and related practices

AACC

- Minimum requirements for students who redirect email to an off-campus email account
- How best to communicate the policy to students needs to be addressed.
- Need to clarify comment about departmental email servers.

IACC

- How to validate that email was sent by who it claims to be from
- Action taken by the University if a student fails to respond, i.e., alternate methods of contact and how often
- Identifying official email vs. other email
- Need to document attempts to contact – who retains the official record
- Students who forward messages or don't use the campus email system
- Suggested retaining comment about being ADA compliant in the policy itself.

SC3 (see separate document for additional recommendations)

- Need to clarify what kinds of communications are to be considered official vs. general information (e.g., administrative vs. educational vs. informational) from the campus, college/department, instructors, clubs, etc.
- Students are concerned about being “spammed” by the university, i.e., getting so many “official” emails that critical messages are deleted or missed. Need an approval process or means to ensure the policy is not being abused.
- Suggested using a specific marker (e.g., in the subject line) to make it easier for students to identify and filter “official” emails to a designated folder. Consistent subject lines will make it easier to search for official emails.
- If action is required, notices should be sent at least one week in advance.
- Need to clarify what constitutes “timely” in terms of students reading email, e.g., once a week, multiple times a day, periodically, etc., which could vary based on time of year, e.g., academic quarter, quarter break, summer, etc.
- Students know they are responsible for their @calpoly.edu account, but need to provide a mechanism for verifying that their preferred email address works, e.g., replying to a message, checking and resolving bounced messages, etc.
- Guidelines should be provided for students who forward and read campus emails using an off-campus account.
- To avoid problems with off-campus accounts, University departments should be required to follow specific guidelines for formatting and sending messages, e.g., plain text, no attachments, use bcc and distribution lists, provide contact or reply information for verification/follow up, etc.
- Students prefer a link in the message to any attachments so as to minimize the impact on quotas, and prefer the PDF format to make it easier to read documents (e.g., free reader, version control less problematic, etc.)
- Attachments need to be available for a specified amount of time to ensure students have time to read the message and retrieve the document
- Need process to communicate the policy, standards and guidelines to faculty and students. Suggested methods: first official email announces the policy with links to guidelines; send mail to permanent address; announcements on Cal Poly portal and websites and in labs and other campus locations where students access email; Mustang Daily; student orientation, freshmen dorms.