

Niagara County Community College Student E-mail Policy

Purpose:

In an effort to facilitate internal & external communication in an effective and efficient manner, Niagara County Community College (“College”) has adopted an electronic format as an official means of communication. The College understands the increasing reliance and acceptance of electronic communication among students, faculty, staff and administration. Because of this, the College is adopting e-mail as an official means of communication between the College and its students, either part-time or full-time, in credit-bearing classes.

Background:

The student e-mail system is independent of the College’s e-mail system and will be hosted by a third party independent of the College. Therefore, only student accounts will be created (except as otherwise noted below). To the extent reasonably possible, the College will use all features available in this system to limit the potential abuse of the system, the potential extraction of personally-identifiable student information from the system, and the marketing of products or services to students through the system. The College is intending to only implement e-mail functionality at this time. Additional features will be reviewed at a later date.

Scope:

1. Official Means of Communication:

E-mail is considered an official method for communication between students and the College. Official communications are intended to meet the academic and administrative needs of the College community. Examples of such communications may include, but are not limited to: registration information, academic standing, financial aid information, disciplinary action, and school closure/class cancelation. Students have the responsibility to recognize that communications may contain time-critical information and the College has the right to expect that communications will be received and read by students in a timely fashion. The student e-mail system is considered part of the College’s network of information systems. Accordingly, all who use it must adhere to and not violate the guidelines set forth in the NCCC Net Policy.

E-mail can be accessed by any computer or smart phone that is connected to the internet, including personal and college-provided computers. Students who do not own a computer are not absolved from accessing their account on a regular basis.

Until a College Identity System has been established and such system addresses the use of the College's logo, seal and other marks in digital communications with students, no such marks are to be used in conjunction with the student e-mail system.

2. Creation and notification of e-mail account information:

- a. The College will create an account for a matriculated student when the student is accepted by the College. An account for a non-matriculated student will be created when the non-matriculated application process has been completed. If the student does not attend the College for a period of six months following the creation of the account, the e-mail account will be deactivated.
- b. With two exceptions, the College will deactivate a student account if the student does not continue attending the College for a term of nine months. If the student has a financial responsibility to the College, the account will remain active. If the student is expelled from the College for disciplinary reasons, his or her account will be deactivated immediately.
- c. The student will be notified of his or her account and credentials via the United States Postal system to the student's legal mailing address. The notification will consist of the student's username, randomly generated password, and directions on how to properly log into the system the first time. The student will be required to change his or her password upon first login and register for the account password reminder utility. At first login, the student will receive an introductory e-mail notifying him or her of all rights and responsibilities associated with use of the account.
- d. The assigned e-mail address will be considered directory information under FERPA regulations unless the student completes a request for non-disclosure.
- e. Accounts will only be created for students. Faculty, staff and administration are to use the College email system.

3. Administrative use of student e-mail

- a. The College will use student e-mail for official administrative correspondence and the student is expected to read and respond as necessary in a timely manner. The following list contains examples of what the students are expected to receive:
 - Financial Aid award letters
 - Registration Information
 - School Closures
 - Students Billing Statements
 - Students Holds Information
 - Payment Information
 - Academic Standing

- Change of Curriculum
- b. Each department will meet with its respective Vice President to create an approved list of correspondences that will be sent to either the entire student body or a list larger than 500 students (referred to as a mass mailing). Each department will document its approved correspondences and meet with the responsible Vice President and update its list as needed.
 - c. The Office of Information Technology Services will create a generic email account for each department (at its request) to send out mass mailings. The department is to choose if the account is to receive return e-mail.
 - d. Each Division Chair will be provided the ability to download from the student information system (Banner) a complete list of students registered in courses offered out of their respective Division. This list will be used for communicating important business-related information such as class cancelations and other non-course related information. This list is to not be shared with individuals outside of the Division office.
 - e. The above policies apply to time sensitive or critical correspondences. For mass mailings containing general announcements or information that is not time-sensitive, Public Relations will send a weekly (biweekly if needed) mass mailing to students containing such information.

4. Faculty use of student e-mail

- a. The College strongly encourages faculty to utilize the College's Learning Management System for all course-related communication with students.

5. Student responsibilities and proper use of student e-mail

- a. Students are responsible for accessing their account on a regular basis and understand that some of the correspondences may be time sensitive. Failure to read e-mail does not absolve a student from the responsibility associated with communication sent to his or her official e-mail address. "I did not check my email" or an error in processing messages forwarded from the College's e-mail system to a student's personal e-mail account (initiated by the student) are not excuses for missing official College communications.
- b. Student e-mail is not intended to send harassing or offensive messages. The provided account should only be used for appropriate correspondence required by College-related activities (e.g., responding to messages received from College departments, corresponding with other students or organizations to complete course work or academic research, etc.). The College's system should not be used for the following:
 - Chain Letters
 - Messages that are for personal gain

- Solicitations for non-College activities
- Mass Mailings
- Any message that is in violation of any state or federal law
- Any offensive or disruptive message, such as harassing or bullying
- Other inappropriate uses

6. Forwarding and access to student e-mail

- a. The College will maintain responsibility to ensure that students e-mail service operates in a reliable and secure environment.
- b. If students wish to have e-mail redirected from their official College address to another e-mail address, they may do so - but at their own risk. The College will not be responsible for the handling of e-mail by outside vendors. Forwarding does not absolve students of their responsibilities associated with communications sent to their official e-mail address.

7. Security and Privacy

- a. Communications that occur through the use of e-mail are subject to local, state, and federal law, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). All use of e-mail, including use for sensitive or confidential information, will be consistent with such laws. Users are to exercise caution in using e-mail to communicate confidential or sensitive matters. The recipients may not follow proper security procedures and could inadvertently allow such content to be divulged to someone other than the intended recipient(s).
- b. Students are responsible for maintaining the privacy of their log in and password. When using a public computer on campus or otherwise, students should not leave the computer logged on or unattended.
- c. Students are expected to routinely change their password.
- d. Students are not to share their username and password with anyone.