

ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY

Electronic Communications Policy

The University's electronic communication systems such as voice mail, e-mail, Web site, computers, network and Internet access systems, both internal and external, are to be used primarily to advance the University mission of education, research, and public service.

The University recognizes that academic freedom is an essential aspect of the University mission and will interpret and carry out this policy so as to respect that principle. The University will also endeavor to interpret and carry this policy in a manner consistent with its various obligations to employees under existing collective bargaining agreements.

Communications transmitted through these systems should have a legitimate University-related business purpose. These electronic communications resources may only be used for legal purposes and may not be used in any manner or for any purpose which is illegal, dishonest, disruptive, threatening, damaging to the reputation of the University, inconsistent with the mission of the University, or likely to subject the University to liability. The use of University electronic communications systems or facilities for private or personal commercial purposes is strictly prohibited, including any sort of non-University related solicitation.

The University acknowledges that occasionally employees, faculty, student-employees, and other end-users use University electronic communications systems assigned to them for non-commercial, personal use. Such occasional noncommercial uses are permitted if they are not excessive, do not interfere with the performance of the employee or faculty member's duties, do not interfere with the efficient operation of the University or its electronic communications resources, and are not otherwise prohibited by this policy or any other University policy or directive.

The University's existing policies prohibiting harassment apply to the use of all University electronic communications systems. Therefore, the electronic communications systems are not to be used in any way which has the effect of unreasonably interfering with anyone else's educational or work performance or which creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or work environment (whether or not based upon race, color, gender, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or age). Sending unwanted and/or offensive e-mail messages may constitute harassment if they are persistent enough to create an intimidating or hostile environment. Impermissible harassment also includes making unwelcome sexual advances and requests for sexual favors which might be perceived as explicitly or implicitly affecting educational or employment decisions concerning an individual.

Electronic communications systems also shall not be used to post or send obscene, pornographic, sexually explicit, or offensive material unconnected to an employee's job responsibilities, academic performance, or scholarly pursuits. Nor shall the electronic communications systems be used to commit fraud or misrepresentation, to libel or slander anyone, or to facilitate any unauthorized copying or transmission of copyright protected materials.

In addition, employees should not attempt to disrupt electronic communications, to violate computer system security, or to gain access to another employee's personal electronic files or e-mail messages without the latter's expressed permission. System administrators perform periodic security and

maintenance checks of the University electronic communications systems, facilities, and other computing resources that may include random examination of individual files or messages.

As a matter of routine system maintenance, the University may store electronic communications on magnetic media for a period of time after the communication is created. With reasonable cause or whenever there is a business need to do so, University management reserves the right to inspect and examine any University owned or operated communications system, electronic resource, and/or files or information contained therein without prior notice. No inspection or examination of files or information contained therein will be conducted in violation of applicable medical or psychological confidentiality statutes.

The contents of any electronic resource, message, and/or files or information which has been inspected under this policy will not be used or disseminated more widely than is necessary.

Violation of any portion of this electronic communications policy may result in disciplinary action. In cases of willful, flagrant, or repeated violation of this policy, the disciplinary action may include termination.