



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR

24870

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

SPONSOR: Ms Karel Swift, University Registrar

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DATE: January 6, 2003 for the meeting of January 15, 2003

AGENDA ITEM: 6

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

Policy on Student Email

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Terms of Reference for the Committee include the approval, or recommendation to the Academic Board of the Governing Council for consideration, policy on academic services (such as the Library, information and computing services). The Committee also has authority for approval of changes to academic regulations and other matters affecting divisional calendars.

HIGHLIGHTS:

The Policy on Student Email was developed under the auspices of the ROSI Steering Committee, which is chaired by the Vice-Provost, Students. The University has invested significant resources in an efficient and reliable email system (UTORmail). Under the proposed Policy, all University of Toronto students must sign up for a UTORmail account and will be responsible for information sent to that account. The principal advantage of UTORmail as a means of communication is that email messages can be addressed to students, or selected groups of students, using only the ROSI Person ID (student number). This capability will greatly improve the efficiency of communication with students.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Committee on Academic Policy and Programs recommend to the Academic Board

THAT the Policy on Student Email be approved, to be effective September, 2003.

December 11, 2002

Professor J.J. Berry Smith
Chair
Committee on Academic Policies and Programs
c/o Office of the Governing Council
Simcoe Hall

Dear Professor Smith:

RE: Policy on Student Email

I am enclosing the University's proposed Policy on Student Email for the Committee's approval. This Policy has the support of the ROSI Steering Committee and of the academic divisions. Once approved, it would appear in all divisional calendars.

Although this is a short and simple policy, its adoption would greatly assist academic divisions in communicating with their students. We are currently developing the process through which students would receive their UTORid, in order to facilitate setting up their UTORmail accounts.

Representatives of Student Information Systems and Computing, Networking and Communications will be present at the meeting to assist me in responding to questions.

Sincerely

Karel Swift
University Registrar

cc. S. Girard
Professor D. Farrar
Dr. S. Levy
R. Hayward
A. Nishri

encl.
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POLICY ON STUDENT EMAIL

POLICY STATEMENT

The University considers students' University of Toronto email accounts (UTORmail) to be an official means of communication with all students. Students are required to open their UTORmail accounts and are responsible for all information, including any attachments, sent to their UTORmail addresses.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September, 2003

DISCUSSION

The University has invested significant resources in an efficient and reliable email system (UTORmail). Under the proposed Policy, all University of Toronto students must sign up for a UTORmail account. This account is free of charge and is currently active as long as the student remains active. All students have access to their email from a variety of public workstations in many campus buildings, as well as from any computer with access to the World Wide Web. Students may choose to forward their UTORmail messages to any other email address.

The principal advantage of UTORmail is that the UTORmail office has developed a process that allows an email to be addressed to a student using only the ROSI Person ID (student number). It also allows emailing to groups of students with the use of a file of Person ID's. Under the Policy on Access to Student Academic Records, faculty members, academic and administrative offices, course coordinators, and teaching assistants, all have legitimate access to a student's Person ID. The adoption of the UTORmail address as an official means of communication will allow staff members to contact students quickly and reliably. The process allows for the efficient handling of email that cannot be delivered.

Email addressed to students' Person ID's can be generated only within the UTORmail system. This constraint will provide students with protection from unwanted emails from external sources.

Many divisions of the University have email systems for their students. Each of them requires a unique id and password. Many students now have 3 or 4 "official" University email addresses to check for important information from the University. Students would be better served if they received all official University information at one electronic address.

As an example of an application of UTORmail as a communication mechanism for students, Student Information Systems (SIS) and the School of Graduate Studies have recently implemented a process whereby award funds are deposited directly in students' bank accounts. SIS has developed an application which will automatically send an email to students' UTORmail addresses when funds are deposited. SIS will be developing more applications that use this functionality; for example, if a student's access to ROSI is suspended, the student will be informed by email.

The Coordinator of AccessAbility Services has confirmed that, with adaptive technology, email is an appropriate means of communication for students with visual and learning disabilities. It will be important for the University and divisions to ensure that email attachments are sent in a format compatible with adaptive technology.

IMPLEMENTATION

In order to implement this Policy, the University will need to do the following:

1. Ensure that the new Policy is printed in all divisional calendars and take other opportunities, both divisionally and centrally, to ensure that students are aware of the Policy.
2. Establish a process to ensure that all students receive a UTORid which will enable them to obtain a UTORmail address. The development of this process is currently underway, and will most probably be administered through the TCard Office.
3. Encourage all divisions to use UTORmail for official communication.
4. Develop "aliasing" facilities by the UTORmail office and SIS so that faculty/departments can mail all students in a class/academic program using the standard course/program abbreviation
5. Provide instructions to divisions to ensure that email messages and attachments use formats compatible with adaptive technology.

December, 2002