TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER EL PASO

Operating Guidelines

Guidelines for Mass Email and Distribution Lists

This document provides practical guidance regarding the use of mass email and distribution lists at Texas Tech Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC EP). Pursuant to HSCEP IT Policy 56.10.02 and HSCEP OPs 56.01 and 56.04, the use of mass email is regulated to promote its safe and effective use in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.

Definitions:

- Mass email – although not explicitly defined in the controlling policies listed above, for the purposes of this guideline a mass email is defined as any message distributed to all or any major subgroup of the students and/or employees of TTUHSC El Paso or any of its offices, schools, programs, or campuses via an email application in a single operation (i.e., addressed and sent collectively – specifically including the use of a distribution list).

Use of Mass Email:

TTUHSC El Paso mass email messages must be approved by the Office of Institutional Advancement for distribution of suitable email to TTUHSC El Paso schools, campuses, and the institution. For student mass email communication, a designated representative of Student Services and Student Engagement (SSSE) may also distribute mass email to students with email content that is considered credible and informative that does not include commercial interest. Similarly, the academic officers (deans, associate deans, assistant deans, and their designees) may distribute mass email to student and employee groups within a school as directly pertinent to their roles and office. Suitable mass email material for approval includes, but is not limited to:

- Substantial changes in governance, policy, or practice
- Immediate threats to health, safety, property, research, or academic program integrity
- Infrastructure maintenance, computer, or telecommunication issues
- Official non-commercial survey material
- Institutional newsletter publications

Otherwise, the preferred method of communicating with all members of the TTUHSC El Paso community, or any of its component schools, campuses, and organizations is through announcement web pages, institutional news article releases, mailing material, leaflets, brochures and notice boards. For example, the TTUHSC El Paso Office of Student Services and Student Engagement has established a standardized platform for communication specifically geared toward the student population, thus TechEngage should be the primary means for providing students with announcements and reminders.

To facilitate official mass email communication, Information Technology maintains the resources for email address groups. The use of such address groups is restricted as outlined above, and any exceptions are subject to approval by senior executive management (defined for the purposes of this guideline as the officers of the Chancellor's and President's Offices, including the Vice Presidents and Deans).

Mass Email Guidelines:

1. Mass email distribution lists are the property of TTUHSC El Paso, and misuse or abuse of these lists may result in modification of a user's email permissions, IT system restrictions, and/or disciplinary action.

2. Sending an unauthorized mass email is a violation of TTUHSC El Paso policy (see the section on the use of mass email above).

3. Consistent with HSCEP OP 56.04, Mass email shall strictly comply with HIPAA, FERPA, and other relevant laws regarding the confidentiality of personally identifiable information, specifically including personal health information and other types of protected information. Due to the magnified risks of harm and penalties under law, this is especially important in the context of mass email. Inclusion of information protected under HIPAA or FERPA in a mass email is a violation of TTUHSC El Paso policy.

4. Best practices for efficient mass emails:
   a. All messages must align with Texas Tech Health Sciences Center El Paso identity guidelines.
   b. Avoid obscure acronyms and jargon.
   c. To promote compliance with message size limits and reduce mailbox storage demands, avoid including audio and video content in mass emails.
   d. Whenever possible, drafts of proposed mass emails should be sent to the relevant offices and officials for review and approval at least one week in advance.
   e. The email should be brief, self-explanatory, clear, and concise.
      i. When longer, more detailed content is involved, the Office of Institutional Advancement should be consulted (with consideration of distribution via SCOPE, TechView, TechEngage, or a webpage).
      ii. For messages directed exclusively to students (as for announcements and events), use of the TechEngage platform is recommended.
      iii. Collaborate with other departments and offices as necessary to avoid duplication of efforts in sending mass emails.
   f. Include a specific and purposeful subject line.
   g. Include contact information for additional details. This can include a link to an informational website.
   h. Include the name of the sender, their title, and their department, division, or office.
   i. Avoid sending mass emails at the end of the day, especially on Fridays.
   j. Avoid excessively repetitive messages and reminders.
   Whenever circumstances allow, IA and the Office of the President should be consulted before any mass emails are sent in response to an emergency (defined as the "immediate threats" outlined above), and all such communication should occur as part of a centrally coordinated effort. Regardless of the circumstances, IA and the Office of the President should be copied on and immediately notified of any mass emails sent in response to an emergency – and failure to do so is a violation of TTUHSC El Paso policy.

5. Use of mass email should is restricted to official business. Use of mass email for personal, commercial, or non-TTUHSC El Paso purposes is a violation of TTUHSC El Paso policy.

IT CyberSecurity Office reserves the right to limit access to email distribution lists and listservs to promote compliance with the mass email guidelines outlined in this document.

Review:

This guideline should be reviewed by academic council, institutional advancement, and information technology at least every other year and otherwise as needed to update recommendations and best practices.