

## **Policies and Procedures Regarding Email Communication and Management of Email Lists (Listserve)**

### **3-27-2009**

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Email is one of the most commonly utilized media to transmit information among colleagues and from WSU personnel to clientele. Email lists (also known as listserves) can be created by faculty and staff on their individual computers or created through WSU's Lyris system. WSU Extension policies regarding the use and management of email and email lists follow.

- Email should be used in a professional and courteous manner. Proper grammar and professional conduct are expected.
- WSU Extension personnel are responsible for securing their email addresses and are therefore responsible for any content sent from their email accounts.
- Email list owners are responsible for the content transmitted to these lists regardless of the source. Misuse by list members should be dealt with in a timely and decisive manner.
- Use of email lists by non-WSU personnel is permitted, but it is the responsibility of the list owner to clearly define the policies that govern use of these lists by ALL users.
  - Non-WSU personnel using WSU email lists are subject to all of the same rules that govern WSU employees.
  - Failure to follow WSU policies will result in suspension of their access to WSU email lists.
- All WSU email list users must behave in a civil and appropriate manner. Failure to do so may result in suspension of access to the list.
- All information on presented in email communications must reflect the mission, values, goals and standards of WSU Extension and comply with all local, state and federal laws including, but not limited to, copyright, libel and indecency statutes.
- All WSU email list users must abide by local, state and federal law. Additionally, users should never recommend or advocate for a position or practice that violates any such law.
- Email lists must never be used by either WSU employees or guests to advocate for a specific political point of view or support for candidates for political office.
- Email lists should never be used to distribute non-science based information unless the information is put into context by including a 'preamble' indicating the limitations of the information.
- If a person uses a WSU email list to voice a personal opinion, this should also follow a context statement (preamble) explaining that the following is the opinion of the person and does not necessarily reflect the policies or institutional viewpoints of WSU or WSU Extension.
- WSU email lists should never be used to broadcast an advertisement for a non-WSU event without a context statement explaining that the event is not a WSU or

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WSU Extension event. Blindly forwarding an advertisement may be seen by others as endorsement of the event.

- WSU email lists should never be used to advertise ANY commercial product, service or political viewpoint. Any language that may be construed as an endorsement should be avoided.
- WSU Extension email users should not provide links to .com (dot com), .net (dot net), or .org (dot org) web sites including links embedded in attached documents unless the following conditions are met.
  - The information provided on the site is appropriate, unbiased, science-based and is of high quality.
  - The site does not promote a specific political belief or support specific political candidates.
  - The site does not advocate for any action that is in opposition to existing local, state, or federal laws and/or regulations.
  - The site provides a solution to a software or computer problem whereby the manufacturer is providing a specific service to those with software licenses or those who possess specific hardware.
  - The link to the site is an appropriate citation. In these situations, it must be clear that this is a citation and not an endorsement of products, services or views expressed on the .com, .net, or .org site.
- When external web sites are referenced, the following disclaimer must be displayed clearly on all pages containing external links.

*Some WSU Extension web sites provide links to external sites for the convenience of users. These external sites are not managed by the WSU Extension. Furthermore, WSU Extension does not review, control or take responsibility for the content of these sites, nor do these sites implicitly or explicitly represent official positions and policies of WSU Extension.*
- Under no circumstances should WSU personnel use email or email lists to recommend products or services of companies when clear competitive options exist. No preference should be shown to lenders, equipment dealers and manufacturers, consulting services, or any other product or service providers. Endorsement of products or services is implied when links to .org, .com or .net sites are provided without a disclaimer or context statement.

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the Associate Dean for WSU Extension.