Development of an Employee Email Policy

Background

- Currently, employees are not assigned an @unlv.edu email address unless their supervisor requests one. Employees can use any email address, including those on personal accounts, as their preferred email address.

- Employees may not receive important university communications. The ability to maintain accurate and up-to-date email addresses depends on employees and their departments. When employees fail to provide updated contact information, or provide email accounts that they do not consistently check, effective communication is not possible.

- UNLV business is being conducted outside of university-managed systems. As a result, UNLV Office of General Counsel’s office is unable to comply with e-discovery requests.

Proposed Email Policy

Recommended Components of the Official Employee Email Policy

- All UNLV employees will be issued an @unlv.edu account. The new policy will be consistent with all students being issued a Rebelmail account (@unlv.nevada.edu).
- Employees must use their university-issued email account for university business conducted by email.
- Employees may not redirect email from their university-issued account (i.e., they cannot send all messages to a personal account and manage them from the personal account).

Exceptions

- Employees currently using Rebelmail as their official email may continue to do so if they choose. No new employees will be issued Rebelmail accounts.
- Email addresses in the Employee Query and Update System (EQUUS – the system employees use to: view their W-4 tax information, print out their W-2 tax forms and check stubs/advises, manage or initiate direct deposits, etc.) will be granted a permanent exception to the policy. Employees and former employees will be able to change the email account EQUUS uses for communication to accommodate their needs.

Benefits

Providing all employees an official UNLV email account will improve official university-to-employee and employee-to-employee communication. It will be possible to send official communications via email to all employees. The use of university-issued email accounts across the organization provides opportunities to set expectations for how information will be disseminated to individuals and groups. Providing university-issued email accounts to employees will also ensure the university is able to comply with state and federal requirements for e-discovery.
Relevant Related Policies

**Student Email Policy:** Established a precedent for requiring university-issued email accounts for a large university population.

**Acceptable Use Policy:** Defines how UNLV technology can be used, including the expectations for privacy, scope of legal discovery and limited personal or non-university use of UNLV computing and information technology resources.

Employee Email Policy Questions and Draft Answers

An ad hoc policy group has been formed to develop a draft of a new Employee Email Policy. Thus far the policy would include the following three components. (The final language for each component has not yet been determined.)

- All UNLV employees will be issued an @unlv.edu account, consistent with all students being issued a Rebelmail account (@unlv.nevada.edu).
- Employees must use their university-issued email account for university business conducted by email.
- Employees may not redirect email from their university-issued account (i.e., they cannot send all messages to a personal account).

Below are some questions that have arisen as the campus continues to discuss a new Employee Email Policy. Still in draft form, the answers will depend on the final policy language and appropriate vetting by campus experts.

1. **Is this new policy going to be for all employees or just full-time employees?**

Draft Response: The policy draft currently defines “university employees” as all “All individuals with a contract with the university who receive financial or other compensation from the university, excluding contractors and their representatives.” The policy will apply to part-time employees and employees that may not have been issued university email accounts in the past.

2. **Would visiting professors and post-docs be considered university employees for purposes of the policy? Given the short time at the institution would they be expected to use a university-issued e-mail account to conduct their work while they are under contract at UNLV?**

Draft Response: The policy draft currently defines “university employees” as all “All individuals with a contract with the university who receive financial or other compensation from the university, excluding contractors and their representatives.” Visiting professors and post docs would be considered university employees as long as they are on contract and would be expected to use their university-issued email account when conducting university business via email.
3. It has been our practice that adjuncts are not given UNLV email accounts. They use their own personal accounts for the short time they are here. If we maintain our current practice, are we in OIT violation?

Draft Response: NEED TO DEVELOP ANSWER policy may need to address length of engagement with the university

4. How would the policy apply to visitors to the campus who are being paid by the university but are only on campus for a short period of time?

Draft Response: NEED TO DEVELOP ANSWER policy may need to address length of engagement with the university

5. Does scholarship by faculty members fall under the category "university business"?

Draft Response: The policy draft currently defines "university business" as “Activities carried out in support of the teaching, learning, and research mission of the university and the administrative functions necessary to carry out that mission.” Scholarship is considered university business and any communication via email regarding that scholarship should be conducted using a university-issued email account.

6. How will the use of email services within databases software be affected by the new policy? For example, a faculty member may be using a library database service with an e-mail option to share the results from a search. The faculty member enters who should receive the email and attaches a note such as, "Please read this" and then the results of the database search are sent. Would this violate the policy? People want to be able to continue to do that because it is pedagogically sound and then you don’t have to cut and paste from a database into the university e-mail system.

Draft Response: Working on answer that would indicate that this is not a violation of the policy.

7. Despite best efforts to separate my personal email from my university email, there are occasions when accessing and responding to email using a smartphone, I inadvertently send a work message from my personal account. The recipient sometimes then replies to the email using my personal email address. It is likely that this will happen to others as well. How will situations like this be handled?

Draft Response: Will need to work on an answer, as we know this will happen.

8. There is a policy that prevents employees from using UNLV email for political purposes or lobbying, etc. Employees are sometimes encouraged to contact members of the Board of Regents, their legislators, or individuals campaigning for public office for political purposes or lobbying but are asked not to use their work email accounts for that purpose. Would using a non-university-issued email account to make such contacts be a violation of the Employee Email Policy?

Draft Response: If you are asked to do this you are being asked to do so as a citizen of Nevada. As such, using your personal email is appropriate. Further, the Partisan Political Activity Policy specifically states that "nonpartisanship and neutrality will govern the University at all times in its relationship with elected officials or persons campaigning for
public office.” It also states, “UNLV campus mail and email will not be used to distribute political materials in any form. This applies to both members and nonmembers of the University community.” Thus, university-issued email accounts should not be used for any communication that would be considered partisan political activity (see NAC 284.770 for a definition of political activity). For more information about these types of communications see the Partisan Political Activity Policy at http://www.unlv.edu/visit/visitingcampus/reserve-space/guidelines#partisan

9. Will there be exceptions to the Employee Email Policy?

Draft Response: The following exceptions are being discussed:

- Employees currently using Rebelmail as their official email may continue to do so if they choose. No new employees will be issued Rebelmail accounts.
- Email addresses in the Employee Query and Update System (EQUUS – the system employees use to: view their W-4 tax information, print out their W-2 tax forms and check stubs/advises, manage or initiate direct deposits, etc.) will be granted a permanent exception to the policy. Employees and former employees will be able to change the email account EQUUS uses for communication to accommodate their needs.