

Scholars Task Force Recommends Email Guidelines

One of the most difficult issues we all face in the area of personal productivity is dealing with an ever-increasing onslaught of email. It seems the more time we allocate to processing our email, the more new emails stuff our inboxes. With this in mind, the HVC2 Scholars Task Force recommended that we establish email guidelines to assist all of us in utilizing electronic communications in the most productive way, so that we may maintain (or regain) control of our email and therefore keep it in its place.

— Marilu Goodyear
Vice Provost for
Information Services

*In the next
issue ...*

More on Collaborative
Learning Spaces

Email: Maintaining (or regaining) control of it, so that it doesn't control you

There are three actions involved with attempting to efficiently process email:

- sorting email traffic in order to best process it
- dealing with SPAM
- understanding what email should not be used for

This column is the first of a three-part series that will address how we might set guidelines for email communication that could help us all. Probably the most essential aspect of efficient email processing is a clear subject line that concisely describes the topic of the message and the actions that are requested. We suggest that each individual try to follow these guidelines when sending email within the University.

1 Always utilize the subject line to list the group/committee or topic. Provide the recipient one of the following actions in the subject line:

- *Agenda for Meeting + (date) + (time)*
- *FYI*: used for items that inform but do not require action.
- *Meeting Request*: used for scheduling meetings.
- *Meeting Arrangement/Change*: used when or informing participants of times and locations or changing a meeting time or location.
- *Meeting Cancelled*: self-explanatory
- *Response Needed by (date)*: used when a time-sensitive response is required. It should always include a deadline.
- *Feedback Requested by (date)*: used when feedback is sought but optional. It should always include a deadline.
- *Review*: used when the recipient should review the material (normally an article or web site) but where no specific response is needed.

2 Use the “!” flag for items that have relevance within 24 hours. This includes urgent FYI information (such as system down), last-minute meeting changes, and very short time frames for responses.

Try these techniques out and see if they help. More helpful tips to come in future issue of *HVC2 Outcomes*.