

# ITS Resource Center Home

## Electronic Mail (E-mail) & Listserv (Mass E-mail lists)

### Contact Information

Help Desk & Training Services  
315-859-4181  
helpdesk@hamilton.edu

M-F 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.  
Sa-Su 10 a.m. - 10 p.m.

### Purpose

This policy describes the appropriate use of email and the mass emailing lists.

### Scope

This policy applies to all users of the Hamilton College email service.

### Policy Revision History

Last revised, December 2014.

### Table of Contents

- [Department or Group Accounts](#)
- [Appropriate Use of E-mail](#)
- [ListServ Lists](#)
  - [ListServ Mass Mailing Lists](#)
    - [Events](#)
    - [Notices](#)
  - [Inappropriate Listserv Use](#)
  - [Exceptions to the Guidelines](#)
  - [Penalties for Violations](#)

### Department or Group Accounts

By special permission, college departments and student groups will be granted a single account to facilitate connections between the department or group and interested parties. The department or group must identify one person to be responsible for the account and to act as the contact person. In addition, student organizations must be registered with the Office of Student Activities before an account will be granted.

### Appropriate Use of E-mail

Hamilton strongly recommends that e-mail not be used for confidential communication. E-mail is

now considered a formal written record that carries the same legal weight as a formal memorandum. Users of e-mail should remember that e-mail messages become the possession of the receiver and can be easily duplicated and redistributed by recipients. Messages that have been deleted can unintentionally be retained on system backup files. In addition, even secure passwords are not completely confidential. When a private message needs to be conveyed between two individuals, a conversation is the best way to accomplish it, and messages that should not be preserved should be deleted immediately.

College policy prohibits certain types of e-mail. These include mail that may be perceived as harassment, political campaigning, chain mail or commercial solicitation. Violators will be subject to loss of computer access privileges, as well as additional disciplinary action as determined by the Hamilton judiciary procedures. Certain types of e-mail, including but not limited to harassing e-mail, may also subject the sender to civil or criminal penalties. In spite of College policy, e-mail can be abused by malicious users who know the owner's computing ID and password. Users are responsible for protecting their own passwords.

## **ListServ Lists**

*ListServ* is a commercial software product in use at Hamilton. It is designed to provide an easy way to create and maintain large E-mail mailing lists. These lists can be used for the one-way distribution of information, for E-mail based discussion, questions and answers, etc. Lists are created and "owned" by an E-mail user who manages the list's behavior.

Any faculty, staff, or student member of the Hamilton College community is entitled to become a ListServ list owner. Campus-based organizations and departments are also entitled to own lists, but an *individual* within the group must be designated as the list owner. Students must be in good standing with the Dean of Students office and student organizations must be registered with the Office of Student Activities.

All lists must be approved by the LITS ListServ administrator prior to creation, but the following general guidelines apply:

1. The purpose of the list must pertain to Hamilton College business.
2. Lists are not open to off-campus subscribers unless special permission is obtained. However, Hamilton College students or employees who use off-campus E-mail addresses are allowed to own and belong to lists.
3. It is the list owner's responsibility to learn how to manage the list's subscribers.
4. Under no circumstances can a list be used to participate in or promote activities that are illegal, violate the Hamilton College code of conduct, or the Hamilton College Honor code.

To apply for list ownership or find documentation that will help you send a mass message or manage your listserv list, please visit our [Listserv Resources](#) web page.

## **ListServ Mass Mailing Lists**

As a service to the Hamilton College community, several e-mail based mass mailing lists have been created. These are designed to facilitate the timely and cost-effective distribution of information to the campus community. E-mail now reaches all faculty, administration and staff and students. Participation in the mass mailing lists is voluntary.

In order that these lists remain a reliable means of communication, it is important that members of the Hamilton community abide by a few guidelines. These guidelines are not designed to limit free speech but are intended to keep your mail volume at a reasonable level.

Most importantly, anonymous mailings are prohibited. The sender's real name must be identified (in full) within the body of the message - not just at the top in the "from" line.

There are two sets of mass mailing lists, one for announcement of **events** and the other for general **campus notices**. The guidelines for use of these lists are explained below.

**Please note:** When composing your announcement, please be considerate of those who are visually impaired. People of all ages may struggle to read small text. In addition, it is strongly recommended that you avoid using images (such as posters) as the sole content of your announcement. Software designed to read text aloud cannot interpret words contained in an image. If you must include an image that contains the important details of your event or notice, *please repeat the details* as normal text somewhere else in your message.

## Events

The mass e-mail lists for posting **events** are:

- a. [Events-students@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-students@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to all current students)
- b. [Events-20xx@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-20xx@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to students in a particular class year, where xx is the last two digits of the class year)
- c. [Events-faculty@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-faculty@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of the faculty)
- d. [Events-staff@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-staff@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of the staff)
- e. [Events-admin@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-admin@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of the administration)
- f. [Events-maintop@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-maintop@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of Maintenance and Operations)
- g. [Events-employees@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-employees@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to all current employees - faculty and non-faculty)
- h. [Events-all@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Events-all@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to both students and employees)

By an "event" we mean an activity (meeting, performance, lecture, etc.) that takes place on- or off-campus **at a specific date, time and place** and is **sponsored, or co-sponsored** by either an **academic or administrative department/program** or a **student organization recognized by Student Activities**. Sponsorship means that the chair of a College department, program or organization indicates that the organization supports the event and that members of the College are actively involved in organizing the event (e.g., as speakers). If someone other than the organizer(s) makes the event announcement, they share in the responsibility for adhering to the guidelines.

- Posting to the lists will be limited to all employees, **two\*** student representatives of the e-mail account assigned to each student organization recognized by Student Activities.
- Violations by the student representatives will accrue to the organization they represent regardless of whether the violator acted alone.
- An event will be limited to *no more than two* posts to the mass mailing lists regardless of who sends the message. Corrections count as one of the two messages.

- *Essentially identical events (same content, different date, time or place)*
  - If an essentially identical event occurs 7 days (or more) after the original event (e.g. a second blood drive) it is considered a separate event and is subject to the same restrictions as a new event. However, since the guidelines are meant, in part, to keep mass mail to a minimum, it is recommended that a single announcement be sent each week for events that occur weekly (e.g. club meetings).
  - If an essentially identical event occurs *up to and including* 6 days from the original event (e.g. performances, meetings, sales, etc.) all of them should be announced *collectively* in one message that is sent no more than 2 times during the 6 day period. For example, if the original event occurs on Wednesday and subsequent identical events occur on Saturday and Tuesday, only two messages are allowed in total.
- If an event is cancelled or postponed, two additional notices are allowed.
- Each message must have a subject line that is descriptive of the event
- The message body must contain:

Date and time of the event  
 Sponsor of the event  
 Name of the event  
 Location of the event

The remainder of the message should be a short description of the event. [Note that if your message includes large graphics you may exceed the Listserv "line limit". Such messages will be rejected. Contact the LITS Help Desk for assistance at 859-4181.]

**Clarification:** Posting a message to an inappropriate list is a violation (e.g., posting a message to events-all that is intended only for students or posting an event to one of the notices lists)

## Notices

The mass e-mail lists for posting **notices** are:

- a. [Notices-students@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-students@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to all current students)
- b. [Notices-20xx@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-20xx@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to students in a particular class year, where xx is the last two digits of the class year)
- c. [Notices-faculty@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-faculty@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of the faculty)
- d. [Notices-staff@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-staff@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of the staff)
- e. [Notices-admin@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-admin@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of the administration)
- f. [Notices-maintop@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-maintop@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent only to members of Maintenance and Operations)
- g. [Notices-employees@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-employees@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to all current employees - faculty and non-faculty)
- h. [Notices-all@listserv.hamilton.edu](mailto:Notices-all@listserv.hamilton.edu) (sent to both students and employees)

By a "notice" we mean information that is meant to inform the campus of details not related to an

event. A notice will be limited to no more than two posts to the mass mailing lists regardless of who sends the message. Corrections count as one of the two messages.

As a general rule, notices will *not* reference a place to which readers are encouraged to go, whereas an *event* will almost always include a time, date and a place. The **notices** mass e-mail lists will be used only for the following general categories. A non-comprehensive bulleted list of examples is provided for each category.

- **Announcement of Hamilton deadlines, policies and procedures**

These announcements must come from individuals representing the administrative or academic departments responsible for the deadline, policy or procedure being addressed (e.g. drop-add, parking permits, library books due)

- **Reports from Hamilton organizations or departments**

These reports must come from individuals representing the academic or administrative offices, or student organizations recognized by Student Activities who generated the reports (e.g. Minutes of Student Assembly, Agendas, reports from faculty meetings, Honor Court decisions, results of campus-wide initiatives or community events such as United Way, Heart Walk & Run, announcement of appointments).

- **Notification of the availability of, or changes in, Hamilton College services or facilities**

These notices must come from individuals representing the academic or administrative departments, or student organizations recognized by Student Activities who are responsible for the services or facilities being addressed. Examples include but are not limited to: dining and fitness center schedules, availability of Hamilton housing, IT and library services, department newsletters, availability of Hamilton-sponsored publications, Campus Safety announcements, sales in the College Store, Physical Plant notices, hours of operation, contact information, fund raising activities that are approved by the Office of the President or by Student Activities and are NOT associated with an event. For example, a message urging employees to participate in the United Way campaign is allowed as a notice but a message regarding a bake sale table in Beinecke on Wednesday is an event.

- **Surveys**

Student-initiated surveys must be related to the academic program and endorsed by a faculty mentor. The request for such surveys must be submitted by the faculty mentor. These surveys must be sent to [exception@hamilton.edu](mailto:exception@hamilton.edu) for prior approval.

Student organizations recognized by Student Activities can submit surveys directly to the student lists. These must be surveys that will only be given to students.

Surveys related to college business or faculty research may be submitted directly to the lists.

- **Notices from members of the senior staff directly related to their areas of responsibility**

## **Inappropriate Listserv Use**

Please consider your audience carefully (e.g., do not send a mailing to "all" if you only need to reach students). Examples of **inappropriate** uses include, *but are not limited to*:

- **Personal opinion, public debate, or campaigning**

Announcements should not attempt to sell the reader on a point of view. The information provided should be as factual as possible and sufficient enough to explain the purpose of the

announcement. If additional background information is necessary, a web link may be included.

A message that contains no actual announcement (e.g. does not meet the criteria listed above for an event or a non-event) is a violation.

- Give-aways (personal property such as furniture, tickets, equipment, books, etc.). College-owned property that is being given away must be announced by individuals representing the academic or administrative department responsible for the property.
- Surveys other than those specified above
- Chain mail
- Lost and found (except when it is Hamilton College property, or involves animals) there is a Lost and Found channel in My Hamilton.
- Requests for rides (there is a Rides channel in My Hamilton)
- Items for sale - or items desired (including houses, tickets, books, services, etc.) There is a marketplace channel in My Hamilton that can be used for this purpose.

### **Exceptions to the Guidelines**

Messages that fall outside the guidelines, or from senders not approved for mass mail: Any individual wanting to post a message to the mass e-mail lists that falls outside of the guidelines, can request that the message be posted by sending a request for an exception to: [exception@hamilton.edu](mailto:exception@hamilton.edu). The request will be directed to the appropriate member of the senior staff for approval. Approval or denial will be communicated to the person making the request. Requests for exceptions should be sent at least two business days in advance of the time the posting is to take place.

### **Penalties for Violations**

A violation consists of any message that fails to meet the guidelines published above.

- Penalties may be assessed any time within 2 weeks of the violation.
- Violations that are not penalized are still considered to be violations.
- Loss of privileges applies to all the mass lists.

Penalties:

- A first time violation will result in the removal of posting (sending) privileges to the mass lists for a period of one month (not including breaks).
- A second violation will result in the removal of both posting and receiving messages to/from the mass lists for a period of one month (not including breaks).
- A third violation will result in the loss of posting and receiving privileges for the equivalent of a full semester.
- A fourth violation will result in the individual being referred to the appropriate judicial body dealing with employees or students. **Violations are cumulative for as long as you are at Hamilton (or four years for employees).**

Violators may appeal their penalty by submitting their reasons in writing to the chair of the

Committee on Libraries and Information Technology. The Committee will review the appeal and generally return a decision within 5 business days. During the appeal process the penalty will be suspended.

[Return to Policies](#)

*Last Updated: January 16, 2015*