Operating Policy and Procedure

SON OP: 10.017 Electronic Communication

PURPOSE The Board of Nursing recognizes the importance of establishing clear lines of communication which can be achieved through the inclusion of electronic communication methodologies. The purpose of this policy is to promote communication through a variety of methods.

REVIEW This section of the handbook shall be reviewed by the Coordinating Council by September 1st of odd numbered years. Final approval of the Administrative Handbook is by the Dean.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

Electronic mail (e-mail) serves as a major means of official communication for students and faculty to support the teaching, research, and service mission of the School of Nursing. This policy provides guidelines for student and faculty use of and responsibilities associated with electronic mail.

1. Official Communication
   E-mail is an official means of communication to students and faculty. Therefore, the School of Nursing (SON) has the right to send communications to students and faculty via e-mail and the right to expect that those communications will be received and read in a timely fashion. Faculty members will determine how communication will be used in their classes and should specify e-mail requirements and expectations in course syllabi.

2. Assignment of TTUHSC E-mail Addresses
   Each student and faculty member is provided a TTUHSC e-mail address, which serves as the official e-mail address of record for communications with students and faculty. Students and faculty members will be deemed to have read e-mails sent to that address. Individuals are also responsible for reading any official announcements and e-mails delivered through the student forum and course(s) on the online platform if enrolled in or assigned teaching responsibility for the course(s).

3. Text messages to or from SON students, faculty and/or staff are not authorized as an official form of communication and may not be relied upon by either faculty, staff or students as an official communication.

4. Expectations Regarding Use of E-mail
   Students and faculty are expected to check course and TTUHSC e-mail daily. Students and faculty should recognize that certain communications may be time-critical. Generally, acknowledgement of receipt of correspondence should occur within 36 hours during the work week. For communication over weekends and university holidays a receipt of correspondence should occur by the next business day, or as specified by faculty or student.

5. Responsible Use of IT Resources
   Standards of academic freedom and professional conduct for faculty, as well as the rights and responsibilities of students, govern conduct online just as they do in the classroom. Unauthorized access to and sharing of confidential student information violates state and federal law. Illegal activity, such as copyright infringement, fraud, distribution of pornography and forms of criminal harassment, will be referred to the programmatic administrator, as well as to law enforcement in accordance with TTUHSC OP 76.08 “Violence and Workplace Threats.”
6. **FERPA**
   E-mails pertaining to identified students are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). E-mails in the absence of the student's written permission to disclose the information to others should be sent only to the subject student, or to college employees who need to see the e-mail to do their jobs.

7. **Other Forms of Communication**
   Whenever the law or TTUHSC/SON procedure requires a different form of communication, that form will be used even though e-mail may also be sent. For example, formal notices in hard copy may be required under procedures relating to academic actions, such as course failure or dismissal from the program.