Making STUDENT Communications Easier and Faster

Student e-mail at NLU
Every student registered for a course has a National-Louis University “@my.nl.edu” email account as of March 8, 2004.

Here are some answers to questions about student e-mail at NLU.

Why bother?
- Part of NLU’s mission is to prepare people for success in their careers. Providing and using the email system helps assure our students can utilize this basic and essential tool of today’s workplace.
- Students change email accounts periodically, so tracking email addresses is very difficult.
- If you want to communicate with a group of students you now have to obtain the email address from each student, and then manually build a distribution list. Using the “@my.nl.edu” accounts, you can just pick the students from the global address book to make your distribution list. Additionally, pre-built lists will be available for major groups such as College, Grad or Undergrad and location.
- Our system creates accounts automatically, so every student is included as soon as they register.
- There are still a few students who do not have a personal email account.
- In order for NLU to utilize email as an official means of communication we have to assure that it is available to all students and that we can maintain an accurate list of addresses.
- We want to make it as easy as possible for students to work with faculty and to handle the “business” part of their academic experience. Email is one of the key enabling technologies that facilitate those goals.
- We are continually working to deliver more services to students online, many of these require an email address. We want to be certain that all students have equal access to these online services.

Will they use it?
- NLU adopted a policy that all communications sent via the “@my.nl.edu” email system are official communications and that NLU will not send paper (duplicate) copies. In order for students to be aware of NLU deadlines and requirements, they will have to use the system.
- We are including a phase in period of almost four months to assure that all current students have time to hear about the system and learn to use it. This also provides time for Enrollment Management to incorporate the information into their materials and to include the policy in the catalog.
- A key to the success of the system is providing students with meaningful and useful communications without overloading the system with material that students view as trivia or “junk mail”.
- Another key to success is the participation of all faculty and staff in a two way communication channel.
- NLU adopted a policy that states that NLU faculty and staff will utilize NLU email in all their NLU academic and business email communications. This will make it easier for students to determine the email addresses of their faculty and of NLU staff, and reinforce the “NLU email is how we communicate” message.

NLU policy is that faculty must use official NLU email for NLU academic and business communications. If I contact students via their official email and get no response, am I forbidden to use their outside email addresses if I have them?
- We prefer you to use the NLU endorsed email. Full faculty support will help tremendously in the student adoption rate of the new email system.
- Suggested approach: Send students the “real message” to their NLU account. If you get no response, send them a message like this to their “non-nlu” account: “NLU wants to assure communications with all of our students. I sent you a message about XXXX to your NLU email address. Please log on at http://my.nl.edu to retrieve this important information”.
- Since the student can forward their NL email to whatever system they like, there really is no substantial reason for not using NLU email.

Can a student forward NLU email to another account and/or use another mail client?
- Yes, the NLU email system (Luminis) includes a forwarding feature. However, we strongly recommend you do not use it as external email systems regularly classify forwarded mail as spam in their attempts to protect your email mailbox. Additionally, if a student REPLIES or FORWARDS an NLU email received via forwarding, the address of the outgoing mail will be the address of their non-NLU account. This may be confusing for faculty and fellow students.
• Students can use any client they choose (Outlook Express, Eudora, etc.), but the HelpDesk will only support Luminis web mail reader.

I use Blackboard in my course and I have my students use the “Course Mail” feature. Can I still do this?
• Blackboard mail is “course mail” – it only works within the Blackboard system. It is an easy and effective way for faculty and students to communicate within the Blackboard environment, so by all means, use it.
• However, that does NOT excuse a student from checking his or her NLU email on a regular basis, as faculty and staff not part of that Blackboard environment cannot email to a Blackboard address.

What if they don’t know how?
• Email and the internet are the most widely used of computer technologies. Very few people have not used email.
• The email system the students will use is a web-mail based system (Luminis) designed to be very simple to use. The students do not have to install any software on their machines to use it.
• “How to” information will be available in print form, on the web, and via narrated online visual tutorials.
• Help will be available on a 24 hr/day x 7 day/week basis as we expand HelpDesk services to meet the student need.
• Focusing on one mail system assures us that we can support students’ needs.

What if they do not have a computer?
• Few of our students lack access to a computer. Many have machines in their homes. Many have machines at their place of work.
• The university is dedicated to providing student use computers at every center (including all non-Illinois sites)
• We also provide “email only” machines for student use at all centers.
• Public libraries view internet access as part of their mission. A student without a computer and far away from a campus can always visit their local library.

What if they cannot use a computer?
• Students whose ADA certified disability indicates that they cannot use a computer will receive critical communications via paper mail. Each such student has the responsibility to notify his/her instructors and administrative offices of their situation and arrange for communication in person, or by telephone, fax or paper mail.

How frequently must students check this email?
• As it is the official communication vehicle of NLU, it should be part of their daily routine. It is unlikely that a major event such as the deadline to register or pay your bill would be announced without a week’s notice – but other items like “Lisle is closed tonight due to snow” are of value only if people check daily or even multiple times a day.

How do the students know about this?
• The Student Finance office has sent multiple announcements (included on the student bill).
• Every new student will receive a letter at a point in the admissions/registration process.
• We will encourage all offices that want to communicate with students to include a short paragraph with key information about the system in their brochures and other literature.
• We will work with Enrollment Management and the Colleges to identify opportunities for email orientation during field group start up process.

What if they simply do not like to use email?
• Any student may opt to continue receiving information by paper mail.
• Students choosing paper mail will pay a fee of $100/term to cover the added costs of a operating a duplicate paper mailing system.
• Forms to sign up for paper-based mail will be available on each campus at locations such as the Registrar’s offices, Student Affairs and other offices.
• We will not charge a fee to Students with ADA-certified disabilities that prevent them from using a computer.

Will they keep their account after graduation?
• We will offer that option to graduates.