

## **Computer and Network Use: Rights and Responsibilities**

**3250**

Foothill-De Anza Community College District (“District”) owns and operates a variety of computer and communication systems, including voicemail, electronic mail (e-mail), telephone, and access to the Internet, which are provided for the use of District faculty, administrators, staff and students in support of the programs of the Colleges and District. Hereinafter, this system and all of its component parts shall be referred to as the “District Network.” This network establishes a communications platform that often substitutes for in-person meetings regarding District business.

The *Computer and Network Use: Rights and Responsibilities* Policy (“the Policy”) applies to all members of the District community using the District Network including faculty, administrators, staff, students, independent contractors, and authorized guests. The Policy covers use of computer equipment and communication systems at any District facility in computer labs, classrooms, offices, libraries and the use of the District servers and networks from any location. If any provision of this policy is found to be legally invalid it shall not affect other provisions of the policy as long as they can be effective without the invalid provision.

### **Ownership Rights**

The Policy is based upon and shall be interpreted according to the following fundamental principle: the entire District Network, and all hardware and software components within it, is the sole property of the District which sets the terms and conditions of its use consistent with the law. Except as provided in Board Policy or collective bargaining agreements pertaining to intellectual property rights, employees and students have no rights of ownership to these systems or to the information they contain by virtue of their use of all or any portion of the District Network.

### **Privacy Interests**

The District recognizes the privacy interests of faculty and staff and their rights to freedom of speech, participatory governance and academic freedom as well as their rights to engage in protected union and concerted activity. However, both the nature of electronic communication and the public character of District business make electronic communication less private than many users anticipate. In addition the District Network can be subject to authorized and unauthorized access by both internal and external users. For these reasons, there are virtually no online activities or services that guarantee an absolute right of privacy, and therefore the District Network is not to be relied upon as confidential or private. Nonetheless, the District seeks to afford email communications privacy protections comparable to those it traditionally affords paper mail and telephone communications.

### **District Rights**

System administrators may access user files or suspend services they manage without notice: 1) to protect the integrity of computer systems; 2) under time-dependent, critical operational circumstances; 3) as required by and consistent with the law; or 4) when it is

reasonable to believe that violations of law or District policy or procedures have occurred. For example, system administrators, following organizational guidelines, may access or examine individual files or accounts based on suspicion that they have been corrupted or damaged or subject to unauthorized use or misuse. In such cases of access without notice, data or information acquired may be used to initiate or extend an investigation related to the initial cause or as required by law or Board policy. Such data or information may also be used as grounds for appropriate personnel action.

### **User Rights**

While the District monitors electronic usage as part of its normal network operating procedures, the District does not routinely inspect or monitor users' computer hardware or files, email, and/or telephone message system, nor disclose information created or stored in such media without the user's consent. The District shall attempt to notify users before accessing computer hardware and files or prior to suspending service. In the event that the District acts without user consent, under its District Rights specified above, the District shall do so with the least perusal of contents and the least action necessary to resolve the immediate situation. When the District accesses files without user consent, it shall notify the user as soon as possible of its access and provide the reason for its action.

### **User Responsibilities**

The Board recognizes that computers and networks can provide access to resources on and off campus, as well as the ability to communicate with other users worldwide. Such open access is a privilege and requires that individual users act responsibly. Users must respect the rights of other users, respect the integrity of the systems and related physical resources and observe all relevant law, regulations and contractual obligations.

For District employees, the intended uses of the District Network are those which are reasonable and necessary for the pursuit of job duties; for students, the intended uses are those which are reasonable and necessary for the pursuit of instructional activities. Although personal use is not an intended use, the District recognizes that the Network will be used for incidental personal activities provided that such use is within reason and provided that such usage is ordinarily on an employee's own time, is occasional, and does not interfere with or burden the District's operation.

"Unauthorized uses" include prohibited uses and any other use for a prohibited purpose, including illegal activities, messages which may constitute discrimination or harassment under state or federal law, or anything that interferes with the intended use. These types of prohibited uses and purposes are further defined in *Administrative Procedure 3250*.

All users of the District Network must read, understand, and comply with this Policy as well as *Administrative Procedures 3250*, and any additional guidelines established by the District. Such guidelines will be reviewed by the District and may become subject to Board approval as a District policy or procedure. By using any part of the District Network, users agree that they will comply with this Policy.

*Foothill-De Anza Community College District  
Board of Trustees  
Board Policy Manual*

Copies of this Policy can be found in the policies section of the College Catalogues, Schedule of Classes, Student Handbooks, Faculty Handbooks, New Classified Employee Handbook, and the Handbook for New Administrators. Copies of this Policy are also available in the District Human Resources Office, the Office of the Dean of Student Development and EOPS (De Anza), the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs and Activities (Foothill), and on the District's Web site at <http://www.fhda.edu>.

**Enforcement of the Policy**

The Board directs the Chancellor or designee to enforce all existing federal and state laws and District and college policies, including not only those laws and regulations that are specific to computers and networks but also those that apply generally to personal conduct. Violations of this Policy will be dealt with in the same manner as violations of other District policies or standards of behavior and may result in disciplinary action, subject to applicable due process requirements.

Users who believe this policy has been misinterpreted or misapplied may file a complaint in accordance with the Complaint Procedures found in Administrative Procedures 3250.

Students who do not observe the requirements of this Policy may be in violation of the Student Code of Conduct and subject to student discipline.

This Policy and *Administrative Procedures 3250* shall be distributed to all new and existing employees. Nothing in this policy should be construed to interfere with First Amendment rights or with the academic freedom of faculty as outlined in Board Policy 4190.

*See Administrative Procedures 3250*

Approved 11/17/97  
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