

# Gretna Career College

## Electronic Communications Policy

### Introduction

Gretna Career College (hereinafter “GCC” or “the school”) is committed to the use of advanced technologies in its business operations. These powerful tools, provided for business and educational purposes, expand the information available to us and enhance our ability to communicate with each other, our business partners, vendors, and customers. For purposes of this policy, GCC Electronic Communications Assets include electronic mail (E-mail), LANs, WANs, telecommunications, faxes, on-line services, the Internal Web, and the Internet. There are some serious risks associated with misuse of GCC’s Electronic Communications Assets. This information will help you understand the rules that apply to electronic communications at GCC. It is required that everyone comply with these policies.

### Basic Rules for Electronic Communications

Some basic rules will help you understand GCC’s Electronic Communications Policy.

As a GCC employee or student:

- Never disclose confidential or proprietary information of GCC, its employees, customers, suppliers, or consultants without proper authorization.
- Do not download computer games, shareware, or freeware (unauthorized use could subject GCC to liability for copyright infringement).
- ***Never distribute unauthorized copyright material including downloaded material acquired outside of GCC. In doing so, the student or employee may be subject to civil and criminal liabilities.***
- Many legitimate vendors distribute both shareware and freeware. However, using the appropriate procurement channels will protect GCC’s assets.
- Do not connect to Internet radio sites. These sites cause unnecessary burden on the networks, causing performance issues for all other systems connected to the network.
- Never use profanity or send jokes.
- Do not display, transmit, distribute, access, or make available information that could offend others based on race, religion, sexual orientation, age, political belief, gender, disability, or national origin.
- Never display, transmit, distribute, or make available information that could be abusive, obscene, defamatory, harassing, discriminatory, derogatory, offensive, or threatening.
- Do not interfere with or disrupt the normal operation of any GCC computer-based system or connecting network.
- Never use GCC Electronic Communications Assets to pursue personal profit or advancement of a non-GCC business interest.
- Do not engage in communications that are not directly related to your GCC responsibilities.
- ***Do not network or participate in peer-to-peer file sharing.***
- Do not solicit persons on behalf of any organization, including soliciting money for any purpose (other than a GCC-approved solicitation).
- Do not engage in any activity otherwise prohibited by any GCC policy, rule, or guideline.

## Peer-to-Peer File Sharing Network

*According to the U.S. Copyright Office, a peer-to-peer file sharing network is “a type of network where computers communicate directly with each other, rather than through a central server. Often referred to simply as peer-to-peer, or abbreviated P2P, a type of network in which each workstation has equivalent capabilities and responsibilities in contrast to client/server architectures, in which some computers are dedicated to serving the other computers. A "network" is a group of two or more computer systems linked together by various methods. In recent usage, peer-to-peer has come to describe applications in which users can use the Internet to exchange files with each other directly or through a mediating server.” Examples of P2P file sharing include but are not limited to eDonkey2000, Limewire, Gnutella2, KaZaA and Napster. GCC explicitly does not allow peer-to-peer file sharing.*

## How do I Protect GCC Electronic Communications Assets?

To meet your responsibility to protect GCC Electronic Communications Assets, including confidential and proprietary information, you should do the following:

- Protect system passwords.
- Do not reveal your passwords or user identification (ID) to others. In the event security is breached on any account, ID, or password, contact the local network administrator to have the password changed or the ID revoked.
- Prevent viruses. Do not open E-mail messages from unknown senders or download and install programs from unapproved sources. It is your responsibility to take all appropriate measures to prevent viruses.
- Protect GCC Confidential Information.
- Do not use GCC Electronic Communications Assets to improperly disclose proprietary or confidential information of GCC, our employees, students, customers, suppliers, or consultants.
- Sensitive, proprietary, and confidential information should not be transmitted over the Internet or voice-mail outside of GCC unless proper precautions are taken to ensure confidentiality, including approved encryption techniques. GCC personnel may not use personal hardware or software to encrypt electronic information or any data that is in contact with GCC Electronic Communications Assets, except in accordance with prior permission from the local network administrator.
- Protect GCC intellectual property. Examples of GCC intellectual property include price lists, marketing plans, software programs, advertising copy, or other materials that could be the subject of a patent, copyright, trademark, service-mark, or similar protection.
- Do not distribute other, non-confidential forms of intellectual property to large numbers of persons or on internal or external web pages. Unless authorized by the school administrator and local network administrator, you may not create any web page that uses the GCC name, graphics, logos, or trademarks, or would cause the viewer to believe that the web page is sponsored by GCC or reflects the views of GCC.

## **Respect for the Rights of Others**

As with other GCC policies and guidelines, we must always respect the rights of parties other than GCC when using GCC Electronic Communications Assets. These are powerful tools, and if used carelessly or wrongfully, may disclose confidential information or damage the assets of others, infringe on their intellectual property, harass people, or violate laws. At a minimum, we must all keep the following issues in mind when using GCC Electronic Communications Assets:

- Copyright infringement
- Unauthorized copying of software
- Do not download any copyrighted material including software programs from the Internet or other Bulletin Board Systems without authorization from the local network administrator.
- Harassment or intimidation of other persons
- Do not view, send, upload, download, or store sexually explicit or pornographic materials, ethnic, or racially derogatory materials, or any other material that could be construed to be harassing or disparaging of others based on their gender, race, disabilities, sexual orientation, age, national origin, religious, or political beliefs.
- Export law
- Do not transfer computer software or technical documents by electronic mail or upload software onto the Internet in violation of the export laws of the United States or other countries. The local network administrator must approve the uploading of any software or technical documents on the Internet.
- Unauthorized access. You should not attempt to gain access to the computers, networks, passwords, accounts, files, or data of others, except when it is for legitimate GCC business purposes and in compliance with our legal and ethical responsibilities.
- Unwelcome transmissions. Do not use GCC Electronic Communications Assets to send uninvited transmissions, communications, software programs, or computer instructions that could delete, damage, harm, destroy, or in any way affect the data, software, computers, or electronic assets of others (such as computer viruses).

## **Electronic Communications Monitoring**

GCC reserves the right to monitor the Electronic Communications of any person utilizing GCC Electronic Communications Assets and access those communications and other files existing on GCC Electronic Communications Assets for the purpose of ensuring compliance with this policy at GCC's sole discretion. Additionally, government agencies and other outside persons or entities may have the legal right to access GCC records or information, including information that is stored electronically. It is important to understand that no one utilizing GCC Electronic Communications Assets has any reasonable expectation of privacy in any Electronic Communications generated or stored on GCC Electronic Communications Assets. We must all be sensitive to potential violations of GCC's Electronic Communications Policy and make every effort to avoid them. Failure to adhere to the standards explained in this policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If you become aware of a situation in which you believe our legal or ethical responsibilities are being violated or you feel that you are being pressured to violate the law or our ethical responsibilities, it is your personal responsibility to communicate this concern to the school. There are a number of people to whom you can go to ask questions or voice concerns. GCC has always

encouraged an open door policy. Therefore, your best resource is your supervisor (employees) or instructors (students), and we encourage you to use this avenue whenever possible. For situations that involve a violation of our ethical or legal responsibilities, you can notify the school administrator or the local network administrator. GCC reserves the right to amend, alter, or terminate any or all sections of this policy at any time for any reason.

*To ensure proper usage of GCC's Electronic Communications, random periodic reviews conducted by the Network Administrator and reviewed by the Campus Director will take place, at a minimum, every 3 months or as otherwise indicated.*

## **Disciplinary Actions**

*Violation of the U.S. Copyright Act, as per the U.S. Copyright Office, "occurs when a copyrighted work is reproduced, distributed, performed, publicly displayed, or made into a derivative work without the permission of the copyright owner." GCC is alerted by copyright owners and is obligated to inform and assist state and federal authorities in the investigation of alleged crime behaviors.*

*In addition to GCC reporting the alleged offender it is also GCC's policy to take the following disciplinary actions.*

*For the student:*

*A first offense will result in a loss of privilege in using any GCC computer for six months.*

*A second offense will result in expulsion of the student from GCC.*

*For the employee (which includes work study students):*

*A first offense will result in a three day suspension without pay.*

*A second offense will result in termination of employment with GCC.*

## **Questions and answers**

*What are "shareware" and "freeware"?*

Shareware and freeware describe methods of marketing software. They are distributed on disk or through the Internet. Shareware usually requires a registration fee while freeware does not. Some examples of shareware would be games downloaded from the Internet that include only a sample of the entire game with the ability to "unlock" the rest by paying a fee. An example of freeware would be Yahoo Messenger or AOL Instant Messenger.

*If I think a virus has been downloaded, who do I contact?*

Contact the local network administrator.

*If I go to an Internet site that seems to be adverse to GCC's interests, whom do I contact?*

Contact the school administrator

*The policy says that I shouldn't download copyrighted material, what is copyrighted material?*

Copyrighted material on the Internet includes, but is not limited to, all software, graphics, and text.

