E-MAIL ETIQUETTE: A SHORT GUIDE TO PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

The use of e-mail as a medium for communication has steadily increased over the past few years. Consideration must be taken when sending e-mail messages. Health Services Management is a professional program and students are expected to present themselves as professionals in all communications with others.

Use this brief list of guidelines when developing and sending electronic communications. As with any written communication, the primary goal is to send a clear and concise message that the recipient will understand.

1.   Treat e-mail messages as any professional communication.
   - Keep messages short.
   - Write complete sentences using proper punctuation.
   - Spell words correctly – spell check does not catch words that are spelled correctly but used incorrectly (ex. there vs. their).
   - Along with spelling and punctuation follow grammar and capitalization rules.
   - Do not write in all CAPS – it appears that you are screaming at someone and it is also considered rude.

2.   Use your name.
   - Make sure the recipient of your message knows who you are
   - Such names as sweetcheeks@yahoo.com or hotmama@aol.com do not inform the recipient as to who the sender is. Due to the threat of viruses, etc. the message may be deleted without being read.

3.   Include a subject in the subject line.
   - Always state the reason for writing in the subject line.
   - Include both the course and section # if the message to an instructor is about a course.
   - Be specific and concise.

4.   Follow these key pointers when sending any message.
   - Begin by addressing the receiver and follow with a sentence on why you are writing.
     Dear Dr. Health Care,
     I have a question about the format of the 2nd exam in HSMA 3025, section 601 . . . or
     I am a student in HSMA 3025. I would like to schedule a time to meet with you.
   - Keep the message short and to the point.
   - Include your name at the end of the message.
   - Be courteous.
   - Avoid sending messages when angry – "flames". Cool off before starting a "flaming" war.
   - Avoid the "itchy finger" syndrome. Read the message carefully before you hit send.
   - Avoid the use of Emoticons (Smiley Faces). While their use may be appropriate in informal messages they are not commonly acceptable in professional communications.

5.   Consider confidentiality.
   - Never include any confidential information in an e-mail message.
   - E-mail is not confidential.
   - Deleted messages remain on the institution's server.
   - Retrieved messages have been used as evidence.

6.   Apply these general principles.
   - Check your ECU e-mail account daily for both program and university announcements.
   - Use only your ECU e-mail address when sending messages versus a personal account.
   - Notify ITCS (328-6866) and your program of any name changes.

- Above all, use every opportunity available to enhance your communication skills.