

## **Guidelines for Alumni Email List Editors of Association Mailing Lists**

### **PURPOSE OF ASSOCIATION E-MAIL MAILING LISTS**

Alumni Association mailing lists support the work of volunteers in carrying out volunteer responsibilities. Common uses of Association mailing lists will be notification of club meetings, events, solicitation of class notes, reunion updates, and other purposes for which the volunteer and staff have agreed.

Group web sites are the appropriate place for job listings, newsletters, etc. As more and more alumni have web access, we expect that groups will begin to publish more information on the web and use e-mail to refer alumni to the site.

*note: Association lists do not include list alumni create themselves within the Alumni Network Services web site. However, alumni can view available Association lists and manage Association list subscriptions from within ANS.*

### **HOW LISTS ARE CREATED**

A programmer creates a program to select all alumni who meet a pre-defined set of criteria to populate the list. The list could include all members of a particular alumni group, such as a class, club or affinity group, or all members of a particular geographic region. The list will be "refreshed" on a weekly basis. When the list is refreshed, the program runs and re-evaluates who in the alumni database meets the criteria for being included on the list.

Alumni can make changes to their subscriptions (i.e. subscribing and unsubscribing) directly through the Alumni Association web site at <http://alum.mit.edu/>. When an alumnus logs into the site using his/her Infinite Connection Account, his/her personal profile will be shown. Located on the lower part of the profile screen, the alum will see the header Mailing Lists followed by links to the lists to which the alum is subscribed. By following the links to the lists, an alum can unsubscribe, or, change his/her list settings to complete such tasks as temporarily suspend receipt of email from the list. In addition, each message sent by the listserv automatically includes unsubscribe email instructions: To unsubscribe from this mailing list, send a blank email to [list\\_unsubscribe@alum.mit.edu](mailto:list_unsubscribe@alum.mit.edu) and put the list name in the subject line. Changes alumni make within the Association web site or by contacting the Alumni Association will take effect within two hours and will not be affected by the weekly refreshing process.

Each list can have one or several alumni Editors who can post to the list. All List Editors must have Infinite Connection accounts and an active Email Forwarding for Life address. Association staff members can also serve as List Editors. For all Association lists, an Alumni Association staff person will serve as List Manager. The List Manager maintains all list settings and can also subscribe and unsubscribe alumni from the list as necessary.

List Editors can post to the list from any active Email Forwarding for Life (EFL) forwarding address. Editors can update their forwarding addresses within the Association Website. If postings are made from an address that is not an active EFL address of a List

Editor, those postings will be forwarded to the list Moderator(s).

List Editors can also serve as Moderators. List Moderators receive messages sent to the list by non-Editors and can then decide if the message should be sent on to the entire list. Lists can also be configured so that postings made by non-Editors are held on the Listserv server pending approval by the list Moderator. List Editors should contact the List Manager if they would like to serve as List Moderators.

Some Association lists allow all list members to post messages to the list. Such lists usually have fewer members and act more as 'discussion-type' list rather than as an 'announcement-type' list. In this case there is no need for List Editors and Moderators. However, such lists will still have an Association staff member serve as List Manager.

### **REPLY-TO**

One of the headers that often appear in email messages (along with 'From:', 'To:', 'Subject:', etc) is the *Reply-To* address. The email application addresses a new message to this address when the user chooses the 'Reply' command. When Listserv distributes messages to a list, it sets the *Reply-To* address that is included in the message.

Generally, for Association lists, the *Reply-To* address for a message to the list should be set to the address of the sender. It is possible for the List Manager (an Association staff member) to change the *Reply-To* address so that all messages to the list contain an alternative specified *Reply-To* address. However, this approach should be taken only if such changes are made very infrequently.

Some lists allow all members to post messages to the list. In this case, the *Reply-To* address should be set to the address of the list.

### **NOTIFICATION**

The e-mail list volunteer and/or the staff editor will bi-annually send a message to the entire list to describe the purpose of the list and the expected frequency of messages. If e-mail lists are to continue to be an effective means of communication, and not another source of junk mail, it is imperative that the number of messages sent be limited and reasonable. Suggested text for such an email will be provided to you by an Alumni Association staff member.

### **FREQUENCY**

The frequency of messages will be determined by the purpose of the list. Monthly messages will be sufficient for most lists; indeed, some lists will be active only 4-6 times a year. Most alumni who request removal from Alumni Association e-mail lists do so because they feel they are being sent too much e-mail from a list, and refer to this as being spammed. It is important to continually evaluate how much mail you are sending and to consider that any given alumnus may be on a club list, a list for their class, department, affinity group, sports team, etc. We have seen some lists sending messages as often as daily, this is probably inappropriate and is likely to anger some recipients.

**MESSAGES TO THE LIST**

Authorized volunteers (Editors) and Association staff List Managers are the only people who can send messages to an Association list. The Association should not initiate messages to a groups list without first contacting a List Editor for that list. (This procedure will prevent unauthorized users from posting to the list.) Other messages will be forwarded to the List Moderator(s) who will review it to determine if it should be sent. Where there are questions or concerns, staff and volunteers will determine together if a message should be sent to the entire list.

**BOUNCES**

Bounced messages will be received by the List Manager (an Association staff member). Addresses that bounce multiple times will be removed from mailing lists.