Email and your Online Course

E-mail is the most widely used form of communication. It is expected that all faculty members and students use their college e-mail systems. Each student has a VCCS e-mail account. Both accounts are web-based e-mail accounts, meaning that you may access your e-mail at ANY Internet accessible machine. For students who already have an e-mail address that they wish to continue using, the VCCS e-mail system has a forwarding feature that allows all e-mail sent to the VCCS account to be automatically forwarded to another e-mail account. However, students are required to use the official VCCS email for communicating with you in your online course. Student email addresses are automatically loaded into your Blackboard course when students are loaded. There is no need for faculty to create their own distribution lists for email if they use a Blackboard course shell with their classes.

From your Blackboard course, email can be sent to all students enrolled in your course, to a few who need reminders, to a group of students or to an individual. You as the instructor will also get a copy of all email communications sent out from your course. These emails should be kept in a folder along with all communications sent to you by your students for documentation, future reference or resending as needed.

Use email to contact and re-contact non-participating students repeatedly during the first few weeks of the course. Save these emails as documentation that you have tried to contact the non-participating student.

Another way to communicate with students is by Voice-Enabled E-Mail. The VCCS has enabled Wimba Voice Tools for use in your Blackboard courses. With Wimba Voice-Enable Email, students and instructors can send vocal email messages to anyone, and recipients simply reply by sending their own voice email. Voice emails are particularly useful for role-playing activities and question and answer sessions. To ensure security, instructors have full control of the distribution of every email.

Caution: Your students must have speakers or a headset to hear voice email. If you are not sure they will be able to hear the email you must also provide a text version of the email.