**Communication Breakdown**

**Or: What does your email say about you?**

Your email address, and the content of your email, are often the first impression you make on faculty and staff at the University, as well as on professionals beyond college. An email address that seems cute or clever among your friends and social acquaintances may actually give the misleading impression that you are not an earnest student or professional in your own right, and could cost you valuable opportunities.

So what should you use as your professional email address? Quite simply, your name:

christine.szaraz@utk.edu

cszaraz@hotmail.com

szarazbrack@gmail.com

The email address you use for communicating with professionals should be concise and not contain extraneous information that could possibly create bias against you.

Below are some emails that are not appropriate for communicating with professionals, but which are used by students dealing with the faculty and staff at college. As you read them, think about the impression you are getting of the student before you’ve met them, or even read any correspondence from them:

WHIRLWINDFRENZY@

theguywiththehair@

computerscienceguy3000@

sacklunch55@

istoopidgook@

nitroragnarok@

snipersteve@

stylishassassin@

paranoidalchmst@

BONG8546@

TOXIN123@

CRZYSTEVEO@

BROOKLYN\_PRINCESSA@

beerleague02@

sexylexy@

## Email Etiquette

## Adapted from Purdue University Online Writing Lab (http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/636/01)

### How do I compose an email to a professional or someone I don't know?

There are a few important points to remember when composing email, particularly when the email's recipient is a superior and/or someone who does not know you.

* Be sure to include a meaningful subject line; this helps clarify what your message is about and may also help the recipient prioritize reading your email
* Just like a written letter, be sure to open your email with a greeting like Dear Dr. Jones, or Ms. Smith:
* Use standard spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN AN EMAIL SCREAMING A MESSAGE IN ALL CAPS.
* Write clear, short paragraphs and be direct and to the point; professionals and academics alike see their email accounts as business. Don't write unnecessarily long emails or otherwise waste the recipient's time
* Be friendly and cordial, but don't try to joke around (jokes and witty remarks may be inappropriate and, more commonly, may not come off appropriately in email)

**Do’s and Don’t’s**

**Example 1:**

Ms. Christine Szaraz  
  
Hi, My name is XXXX (ID#xxxx) and I am an undergrad student for Biology. I met you in the orientation and wanted to discuss more about bioengineering. I guess you would have remembered that I was waitlisted for EF 105. I needed to discuss a bit more about my intended major i.e. Biomedical Engineering.  
  
I would really appreciate if you tell me more about the prospects of becoming a bioengineer as I am unable to retrieve any valuable information from various websites. I am concerned about the job outlook and whether I'll be able to sustain a living with B.S. in Biomedical engineering. Also, I wanted to tell you in the orientation that I have taken Physics but I did not take any Calculus class in High School. I am taking it this year as a freshman and I was wondering if Physics would be too hard for me at this level. I am also taking CHEM 120.   
  
I am very concerned about my schedule and I feel like I wouldn't be able to sustain my GPA. Please advise me on this matter. Many of my friends and family members gave their opinion about having a math and a science course with lot of Gen Ed courses however, I would rather take your opinion before taking any actions.

Sorry for the inconvenience as I understand you might be preoccupied with other significant work.  
  
Sincerely,

XXX XXXXX  
ID # xxxxxxxx

**Example 2:**

I would like to know the job placement rate of engineering graduates of each engineering major (ex.What percent of electrical engineering graduates find a job right after graduation). Are engineering seniors offered any jobs before graduation? If so, how many job offers? Is it easy for SB engineering graduates to find a job in NYC? What companies do SB engineering graduates usually work for? What are the requirements for admission into a combined degree program? How many years does it take to finish the combined degree program? Do you recommend that an incoming freshman with calculus 1 and calculus 2 credit take multivariable calculus or linear algebra freshman year?

**Example 3:**

Hi Ms. Szaraz,  
  
I unfortunately will not be able to attend the Wednesday 4:00 pm Art History advising workshop. I am taking ENGL 102-02 which starts at 3:40 pm and ends at 4:55 pm. Is there anyway I can set up an individual advising session?   
  
Thanks  
XXX XXXX

**Example 4:**

well I was considering dropping my Sociology class. Ever since I entered college I basically was given so much freedom and didn't take my classes as seriously as I should have. Too much staying out late at night which resulted in the "not attending class" mindset. Now in my  sociology class, 50% of the grade is quizzes/ attendance. I have only taken about 1 out of the 5 quizzes given and barley signed the attendance sheet. I am worried that even if I did attend every class from now on till the end of the semester I still would not be able to pass or passing with a atrocious grade that would kill my GPA.  I am considering taking a W for the class and retaking it during the Spring semester. Is this a feasible idea or do you think I should just stay in the course?  
  
thanks, brandon