Northwest Mississippi Community College
Acceptable Use Policy for Computing
Revised 09/25/17

Definition of the Northwest Network

The computing facilities at Northwest Mississippi Community College consist of a network that encompasses all three campuses. The network provides connectivity for Northwest-owned computers, personal computers, and peripherals. Users consist of ALL students, faculty, staff, and guest users. These facilities are provided to users for educational and administrative activities. All users must utilize these systems in an efficient, ethical, and legal manner. Use of these facilities must be consistent with Northwest policies as well as all existing federal and state laws. Access to computing facilities is a privilege, not a right. Failure to abide by these guidelines may result in disciplinary action as described in the Northwest *Student Guide* or the Northwest *Policy Manual*.

Privacy

- Data files or messages being sent via the network are not private or secure communications.
- Northwest reserves its right, as owner of the network, to examine, capture, and archive any messages transmitted over the network and to review any data stored on Northwest-owned computers under the direction of the Network Administrator or Director of Management Information Systems.
- If the security of the network is threatened, Northwest's requirement to maintain the network's integrity and protect the rights of users may supersede the individual user's privacy.

Safety from Threats

While unwanted or unsolicited contact cannot be controlled within the network, users who receive threatening communications should notify Northwest Campus Police. Electronic threats are not tolerated. The college will respond to alleged threats consistent with policies in the *Student Guide* or the *Policy Manual*.

User Responsibilities

Responsibilities are a part of the privilege of network access. Users are expected to adhere to these responsibilities. Users who violate these regulations will be subject to disciplinary action as specified in the *Student Guide* or *Personnel Manual*. Violators may have their network access suspended, and depending on the seriousness of the violation, their actions may have further consequences. Furthermore, actions that violate federal or state laws may result in referral to the appropriate legal authority. Violations should be reported to the Help Desk Coordinator, the Director of Campus Life and Housing, or the Director of Management Information Systems.

- Users are responsible for the security of all logins/passwords and all assigned computer accounts. Access to logins, passwords or computer accounts may not be given to or obtained by any other party. Applications and services by unauthorized parties must be approved by the Network Administrator or by the Director of MIS.

- Users may not misrepresent themselves or their data on the network.

- Users may not use the Northwest networks resources to gain or attempt to gain unauthorized access to remote computers.

- Users may not install/uninstall any software/hardware/network devices on any Northwest-owned computer or on the Northwest network. Any software/hardware changes or requests should be submitted to the Help Desk Coordinator.

- Users may not deliberately perform an act which will seriously impair the operation of computers, terminals, peripherals, or networks. Such acts include but are not limited to: tampering with components of a local area network, blocking communication lines, or interfering with the operational readiness of any computer.

- Users may not run or install any unauthorized program on any component of the network, including but not limited to, the classes of programs known as computer viruses, Trojan horses, Malware, and worms.

- Personal equipment connected to the network in the residence halls must have proper virus prevention software installed.

- Users may not attempt to circumvent data protection or exploit security loopholes.

- Unauthorized wireless access points are prohibited on campus.

- Northwest is bound by *Title 17 of the United States Code on Copyright* and supports the provisions contained therein, therefore, users must abide by the terms of all software licensing agreements and copyright laws. Users do not have the right to receive or use unauthorized copies of software or make unauthorized copies of software for others. Users do not have the right to download materials subject to copyright laws using the Northwest campus wide network. Users may not duplicate or post another party's copyrighted material (such as music, movies, software, or written materials), unless permitted by a license or within the fair use doctrine.

- Users may not use the Northwest Network to send, print, request, view, display or store fraudulent, illegal, harassing, racial, obscene, pornographic, indecent, profane or inappropriate materials.

- Users may not deliberately perform acts that are wasteful of computing resources or that unfairly monopolize resources to the exclusion of others. Any person operating a network-intensive application or a defective computer that overloads the Northwest network will be notified, and steps will be taken to protect the overall network. This may include disconnecting the offending computer system from the network until the problem is resolved. If the condition is an imminent hazard to the network or disrupts the activities of others, the offending computer system or the subnet to which it is attached may be disconnected without advance notice.

- Users may not attempt to monitor another's data communications, nor may they read, copy, change, or delete another user's files or software without permission of the owner.

- Computing and networking resources are provided to support the mission of Northwest Mississippi Community College and may not be used for commercial purposes by any user.

- All network traffic exiting Northwest is subject to the policies of the network through which it flows, as well as to all Northwest policies.

- All Northwest computing and networking facilities are provided for use by the faculty, staff, and students for relevant academic, research, or administrative pursuits. Open Computer Labs in the Union may be reserved through the Help Desk Coordinator. Like all other Northwest facilities, private use must be approved in advance through the Student Affairs Office.

- The content of any information made available to others via the Northwest Network is the sole responsibility of the person who created that information. It is their responsibility to be aware of all applicable federal laws, state laws, and Northwest policies. That person is liable for any violations of federal laws, state laws, or Northwest policies.

- The Network Administrator and the relevant authorities should be notified about violations of computer laws and policies and potential loopholes in or breaches of the security of its computer systems and networks.

Regulations for Administrative Use

- Users must observe all provisions of the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)* when accessing student records and sending messages via the network. Northwest strives to maintain all sensitive and confidential data in a secure environment. Identifying information such as complete tax identification numbers or bank/credit card account numbers should not be included in email messages. The user of sensitive or confidential reports is responsible for ensuring policy compliance.
- All computer software written in-house, purchased by or licensed to Northwest, is college property and may only be used on college equipment and by employees or other authorized persons.
- Maintenance of the college's Web page on the Internet is the responsibility of the MIS Department. Approval for changes to the site must be obtained via the regulations set forth in the *Information Systems Web Site Policy*.