

Discussion List Guide for List Administrators

Discussion lists provide a convenient way to communicate with a group of people via e-mail. Each list has one or more administrator responsible for the list's operation. This handout contains instructions for administering St. Norbert College discussion lists.

St. Norbert College discussion lists are for St. Norbert College-related activities only. All use of discussion lists must adhere to the ***St. Norbert College Computing and Networking Appropriate Use Policy***, available at <http://www.snc.edu/techsupport>. In particular, messages posted to discussion lists must not violate the College's behavioral policies nor be considered harmful or harassing to another or violate human dignity as described in the College's core values. Discussion list administrators are ultimately responsible for the content of messages posted to the list, and may, at their discretion, prevent messages from being posted and/or remove individuals from the list who violate the standards for conduct.

Names for discussion lists

There are several different programs used for managing discussion lists, and sometimes the names of those programs, particularly the term "listserv," are used in a generic sense to refer to discussion lists, the same way the term "Kleenex™" is used generically to mean facial tissue. We use the term *discussion lists* to refer to the lists themselves, and ***Mailman*** to refer to the program that we use to manage the lists.

Creating a discussion list

To apply for a new discussion list, go to <http://www.snc.edu/go/listapp>. When we create your list, we set it up with the most appropriate settings for the type of list you requested. As list administrator, you can change some of these settings, but you usually will not need to. Do not change anything without being sure that you understand the implications of the change. If you have questions about anything not addressed in this document, please contact the Help Desk *before* changing anything. When you apply for a discussion list, there are a few things you need to decide:

Who can post to the list/Type of list

Announcement: An Announcement list is a one-way list, where only the list administrator(s) may send messages to the list. Postings from non-administrators are rejected.

Moderated Discussion: In a moderated discussion list, members may contribute, but a list administrator or moderator must approve each message before it is distributed to all list members. In this way, the moderator controls the list, ensuring that all messages are relevant to the purpose of the list. Moderated lists require ongoing maintenance since each message must be approved or rejected. For details, see pg. 4.

Open Discussion: In an open discussion list, all members may post to the list freely without approval. All messages posted to the list are distributed directly to the list members. These lists require less management time since messages do not need approval, but also offer less control over the discussion content.

Who can subscribe to the list

If subscription requests do not require administrator approval, then anyone may subscribe to the list without approval. If subscription requests *do* require administrator approval, then a list administrator must approve each subscription request.

Where replies go

When a member replies to a list message, the reply can go to the entire list or to the message's author only.

List administrators and moderators

Each discussion list must be administered by at least one current St. Norbert College student, staff, or faculty member. A discussion list may have more than one administrator and, in the case of a moderated discussion list, more than one moderator as well. These people are responsible for the operation of the list. List administrators and list moderators do not have to be the same person/people, nor do they have to be subscribed to the list.

List administrators can alter list settings and add/remove list members, as well as approve or reject messages waiting to be moderated. List moderators only approve or reject messages waiting to be moderated. List administrators have the ability to add other administrators or moderators. For details, see pg. 4.

Accessing Mailman

Member interface

To access Mailman, go to <http://www.snc.edu/lists>, where you will find a list of all advertised St. Norbert College discussion lists (those where subscription requests do not require approval). Once you choose a list, you can subscribe to it, log in as a list member to change your subscription options, or log in as the list administrator to view the subscribers list. If you don't know your member password, you can request that Mailman send it to you.

Admin interface

When a new discussion list is created, the administrator receives an e-mail message with information about the list, including the list admin password and links for going directly to the list's member and admin web pages. That message should be saved for future reference. To access the Mailman list administration functions:

- click the link in the welcome e-mail message, or
- go to mySNC and click on the list under "Mailing List Admin:" on the User Menu (right side), then click the "Log in as List Administrator" link, or
- go to <http://www.snc.edu/lists>, click on the "the list admin overview page" link, and select your list (only lists that allow people to subscribe without administrator approval will be listed there).

You will need the list admin password to log in to the list administration page. If you've lost your list administrator password, go to mySNC, click on the list under "Mailing List Admin:" on the User Menu, click the "Forgot <listname> Admin Password?" link, and click the Submit button.

List passwords

Important: In Mailman, the list administrator password and the list member password are **not** the same.

List administrator & moderator passwords

Each list has a list administrator (admin) password that is used to access the list administration interface. When a new list is created, Mailman assigns a random list admin password. There is only one admin password for each list; all list administrators share the same admin password. As a list administrator, your list admin password is not the same as your list member password. If a list has separate moderators and administrators, you may also assign a separate moderator password, which would be shared by all list moderators.

List member passwords

Each list member, including the list administrator, has his or her own member password for each list to which they are subscribed. This password is used by members to change their personal subscription options.

When someone subscribes to a list via the web interface, they will be asked to create a password. If they do not, a random password will be assigned by Mailman.

When a list administrator subscribes someone to a list, Mailman will assign the new member a random password. The subscriber will be notified of the password in the welcome message they receive.

Mailman allows you to change your member password, but Mailman passwords are not secure, so you should **never** make your Mailman password the same as your password for the College network, e-mail, KnightLine, Banner, or any other system, as doing so could endanger the security of both the College's data and your personal information.

Changing the list password

To change a list's administrator or list moderator password:

1. Go to the admin page for your list and log in with the list admin password (see "Admin interface" above).
2. Click on the "Passwords" link at the top.
3. Enter the new password in the boxes provided. Again, **never** make your Mailman password the same as your password for the College network, e-mail, KnightLine, Banner, or any other system, as doing so could endanger the security of both the College's data and your personal information.
4. Click the Submit Your Changes button at the bottom. Be sure to notify any other list administrators and moderators of the new admin password.

Posting to a list

To post (send) a message to a Mailman mailing list, send it as you normally would from your e-mail program to *listname@lists.snc.edu*, where “listname” is replaced by the name of the list.

Note that Mailman is sensitive to messages that are sent to more than 50 addresses at once. It considers them spam and will hold them until a list administrator approves them. If that happens, all list administrators and moderators will receive a message indicating that there is a pending request awaiting consideration. To avoid this issue, if you need to send a message to more than 50 addresses, send it to Mailman separately.

Replies

When you request a new discussion list, you can specify whether replies to list messages go to the list or to the original sender. To change the default setting for your list:

1. Go to the admin page for your list and log in with the list admin password (see pg. 2).
2. Scroll down to “Where are replies to list messages directed?” and choose the desired setting.
3. Click the Submit Your Changes button at the bottom.

Archives

St. Norbert College discussion list messages are automatically archived in Mailman for at least 6 months. To view the archives, go to the Mailman page at <http://www.snc.edu/lists>, click on the list name, then click on the “*listname* Archives” link. Only list members and administrators can view the list archives.

Managing list membership

List administrator subscribes members

1. Go to the admin page for your list and log in with the list admin password (see pg. 2).
2. Click on the “Membership Management...” link at the top.
3. Click on the “Mass Subscription” link under the “Membership Management...” link at the top.
4. For “Subscribe these users now or invite them?”, if you choose “Subscribe,” the person will not need to confirm their subscription. If you choose “Invite,” they will be required to confirm their subscription.
5. In the large box under “*Enter one address per line below...*”, enter the e-mail addresses of the people you wish to subscribe, one per line. To include their names (recommended for non-SNC addresses), use the format:

Firstname Lastname <emailaddress> (including the brackets)
e.g., Donald Duck <donald.duck@snc.edu>
or "Donald Duck" <donald.duck@snc.edu>

You can copy them from the To line of an e-mail message, but it will not work with commas or semicolons between them; you must erase those and insert a line break instead, so that each one is on its own line.

6. It is recommended that you leave “Send welcome messages to new subscribers?” set to Yes. If you’d like to add additional text to the welcome message the subscribers receive, enter it in the second large box under “*Below, enter additional text to be added to the top of your invitation or the subscription notification. Include at least one blank line at the end...*”
7. Click the Submit Your Changes button at the bottom.

Members subscribe themselves

Anyone can attempt to subscribe themselves to lists do not require administrator approval, via the Mailman web page, <http://www.snc.edu/lists>, or via e-mail. The person will receive an e-mail message asking them to confirm their subscription; once they follow the instructions in that message to confirm their subscription, they will be subscribed. (This is to prevent someone from subscribing someone else to a list without their approval.)

If the list requires an administrator to approve subscriptions (this is a setting that was selected by the person who initially created/requested the list), then the list administrator should subscribe members.

The new member(s) will normally receive a welcome message containing their list member password and basic information such as how to send messages to the list. Although the list administrator can choose not to send the welcome message, that is not recommended. The welcome message should be saved for future reference.

List administrator unsubscribes members

1. Go to the admin page for your list and log in with the list admin password (see pg. 2).
2. Click on the “Membership Management...” link at the top.
3. Check the “unsub” box next to the member(s) you want to unsubscribe.
4. Click the Submit Your Changes button at the bottom.
5. The user(s) will receive an e-mail message informing them that they have been unsubscribed.

Getting a list of subscribers via e-mail

1. Send a message to listname-request@lists.snc.edu, where listname is replaced with the actual list name. The body of the message should contain only this one line:

who password

where “password” is replaced with the list admin password.

Member settings

Members can control their own membership settings, so the list administrator usually doesn't need to do so for them. To access your list members' settings, go to the admin page, click on Membership Management, and click on the member's address. Scroll down for the options and explanations.

Adding a list administrator

Mailman allows you to have multiple administrators for a list. The list administrator does not have to be subscribed to the list, and making someone a list administrator does not subscribe them to the list. If you want them to be subscribed to the list, that must be done separately (see pg. 3). To make someone a list administrator:

1. Go to the admin page for your list and log in with the list admin password (see pg. 2).
2. On the “General Options” page (the first page you see after logging in), in the second box on the page, labeled “The list administrator email addresses. Multiple administrator addresses, each on separate line is okay,” enter the e-mail address of the person you wish to make a list administrator.
3. Click on the Submit Your Changes button at the bottom of the page.

Adding a list moderator

Mailman allows you to have multiple moderators for a list. The list moderator does have to be subscribed to the list, but does not have to be the same as the list administrator. In order to make someone a list moderator:

1. Go to the admin page for your list and log in with the list admin password (see pg. 2).
2. On the “General Options” page (the first page you see after logging in), in the third box on the page, labeled “The list moderator email addresses. Multiple moderator addresses, each on separate line is okay,” enter the e-mail address of the person you wish to make a list moderator.
3. Click the Submit Your Changes button at the bottom of the page.

Welcome message

When someone subscribes or is subscribed to a list, they receive a welcome message containing their list member password and providing basic information such as how to send messages to the list and change their subscription options. That message should be saved for future reference.

While it is possible for the list administrator to edit the list's welcome message, it must be done with caution because the message contains several field codes, such as “%(emailaddr)s”, which insert things into the message. If these codes are altered, the proper information will not be included in the message. If you want to add a special message to your list's welcome message, go to the admin page for your list and on the “General Options” screen, enter your text in the box labelled “List-specific text prepended to new-subscriber welcome message.”

Moderating a list

In Mailman, individual list members are moderated, rather than entire lists. That is, you can have a list where some of the members can post freely to the list and other members cannot post without moderator approval. Lists that were originally requested as moderated lists will be set so that new members are automatically moderated.

When a member is moderated, all messages he or she sends to the list must be approved by a list moderator or administrator before being distributed to the list.

When moderated members wish to send messages to the list, they do so as they would any other list, by sending their message to listname@lists.snc.edu, where “listname” is replaced by the name of the list. They will receive a message back indicating that it is being held until the list moderator can review it for approval. The list administrator(s) and moderator(s) then receive e-mail from Mailman saying that there is a message awaiting approval. To approve or reject the message:

1. When you receive the e-mail notification, click the link in the message. Alternately, you can go to the admin page for your list (<http://www.snc.edu/lists> – list admin overview page – list name), log in with the list admin password, and click on the “Tend to pending moderator requests” link in the top right.
2. Click on the message number (e.g., [1]) to read the message.
3. To approve the message, choose Approve, then click the Submit All Data button. The message will be distributed to the list.
4. To reject the message, choose Reject, then click the Submit All Data button. The message will not be distributed to the list. The user will receive an e-mail indicating that the posting was rejected. If desired, you can edit that message in the “If you reject this post, please explain (optional):” box.
5. To discard the message (if it’s junk), choose Discard, then click the Submit All Data button.
6. If there are no other pending messages, you will be returned to a screen saying “There are no pending requests.” To go back to the admin page, click the “*listname* administrative interface” link.

Assistance and questions

If you have any questions or need more information, contact the Help Desk at (920) 403-HELP (4357) or helpdesk@snc.edu. The Help Desk is for St. Norbert College students and employees only.