

## **CELL PHONE USAGE POLICY**

### **Preamble**

Recognizing that mobile phones, personal digital assistants, and other electronic devices enhance increase communications among the University staff and students;

Noting that internet communications enhance effective and efficient service delivery;

Noting further that it is desirable for staff and students to communicate with their families, and that cell phone usage in this regard helps to reduce staff and students' anxieties while at work and in school.

Realizing however, that the use of cell phones and other communication devices and social media platforms, such as Facebook, Hangout, Skype, Instagram, WhatsApp have the potential to create and increase staff distractions at work and students at lectures, lower staff productivity, engender mischief making by students during lectures, undermine the lecture room integrity and commitment to excellence in learning and character, and has become instruments by which students may violate fundamental rights of other students, commit crimes, induce crime commission, and is sometimes used by students to unjustifiably slander University's officers and lecturers.

The University hereby formulates for implementation a policy on the use of Cell Phones and other electronic devices as stated below.

### **1. Purpose of the Policy**

This policy outlines the University's expectations regarding the use of cell phones and other electronic communications by staff and students at work and at lectures in general and on campus in inter-personal relationships among students, among staff and between staff and students.

### **2. Scope**

This policy applies to the use by staff and students of cellphones, smart or otherwise, and other electronic devices and the use of social media platforms during work-hours and at lectures and the misuse of those devices by students and staff outside of work-hours and classroom in their respective inter-personal relationships and the use of cell phones at official meetings in the university.

### **3. Use of Cell Phones During Meetings**

- (a) The meetings contemplated in this section includes management meeting, senate meetings, Faculty Board meeting or its equivalent, Departmental meeting and its equivalent or Committee meetings, and other like meeting of boards or Committees set up by the Senate;
- (b) Member of the above meetings who take cell phones into the meeting shall ensure that the phones are in silent mode to avoid distractions of other members and to engender peaceful conduct of meetings;

- (c) Members shall not make or answer calls in the course of a meeting. A member may however leave the venue of the meeting to answer or make a call if s/he considers it necessary to do so;
- (d) Members shall not record or video-tape the proceedings of a meeting or any part of it except the rules of the meeting permit it or a request to do so is made to the chairman of the meeting who shall put the request to members for approval or otherwise;
- (e) It is misconduct for any member of a meeting to post a record or video of any meeting on any social media platform, except the rules governing such meeting permit the posting. A member found guilty of this misconduct ranging from warning to dismissal, depending on the severity of the conduct under consideration and its impact on the image of the university, the confidentiality of the matter posted and the status of the member in the university;
- (f) In recognition that it may be necessary for the chairperson of a meeting or his or her support staff present at the meeting to receive or make calls that will help advance the meeting or keep line of communications open for information purposes, the chairperson or his or her support staff may make or receive calls for purposes incidental to the proper administration of meeting. Even in this regard, the telephones shall be used in such a manner that will not distract or interfere with the proper conduct of the meeting;
  - (i) It shall be the responsibility of the chairperson to monitor and call to order his or her support staff in the use of cell phones for calls or messaging;
  - (ii) In the case of a Senate, the Chairperson's monitoring shall extend to the principal officers of the University on the Chairperson's table and other administrative staff that attend meeting with them;
  - (iii) For faculty or board or department or unit meeting, support staff include key administrative staff allowed into the meeting by the chairperson to help in the proper conduction of the meeting.
  - (iv) For the meeting of a panel or other like committee constituted by the university or faculty or department, support staff is the secretary of the panel or committee.

**4. Use of Cell Phones by Staff during Work-Hours**

- (a) A staff may use cell-phones at work for legitimate communications with other staff in relation to work or for personal reasons and with families. In this regard, the use of cell phone by staff may involve in calls, text messaging and emailing, so long as recourse to any of the foregoing activities is associated with discharge of responsibilities at work or with the welfare of members of the staff's family;

- (b) Cell phone use in paragraph (a) above must be moderate, reasonable and related to the purposes identified above and must be such nature that it does not constitute distraction from or interfere with the discharge of the staff's official responsibility;
- (c) It is expected that, in use of cell phone as indicated above, every staff shall exercise self-restraint and maturity in realization that such use may interfere with the concentration of colleagues in the discharge of their own responsibilities or that excessive use of cell phone by a particular staff may induce others staff to do the same;
- (d) Where a staff has not exercised self-restraint in the use of cell phones, it shall be the responsibility of any supervisor or head of department or unit to call staff to order and it is expected that the staff shall respond positively to such caution in order to maintain work place discipline. Where staff has repeatedly failed to exercise caution after s/he has been cautioned, s/he may be subjected to further disciplinary action in case of subsequent abuse of the privilege to use the phone;
- (e) A staff is permitted to use cell phones to the extent permissible by his or her official duties where the use of cell phones to make and receive calls or to engage in other forms of communications is required in the ordinary discharge of the staff's official duties,
- (f) Lecturers should endeavor to keep their phones away from lectures in order to show leadership however, where phones are, for one reason or another, taken to lectures, they should be silent mode, and should not be used to make or receive calls in the course of lectures,
- (g) The use of telephones by lecturers in the course of lecture is a misconduct and shall attract appropriate disciplinary action, varying from caution, warning, to querying and to such other penalty that a disciplinary panel may consider appropriate depending on the frequency of violation by the lecturer in question;

5. **Recording of Conversation and Videoing of Event in the Office**

- (a) A staff shall not record official conversation with senior staff or colleagues without the knowledge of the staff being recorded;
- (b) A staff shall not video any other staff without his or her consent, whether or not the videoing is aimed at causing mischief;
- (c) Where there is need to create evidence against unlawful conduct of another staff, such as harassment, a staff who is personally involved or may be implicated in the unlawful or unethical conduct may record any relevant conversations in order to lodge a complaint about the occurrence of the conduct complaining about as corroborative evidence;
- (d) Where a staff has recorded or videoed another staff in a justified circumstances is stated in paragraph (c) above, such recording shall only be used to make official complaint against the misbehaving staff or for

the purpose of taking legal action against the staff recorded or videoed. The recording shall not be posted on any social media platform especially where such posting may incidentally smear the image of the University without necessarily resolving one way or another predicate complaint against the staff recorded.

- (e) For the avoidance of doubt, no staff is allowed to use a cell phone to capture and store thereon confidential information which the staff is not entitled or permitted to capture.
- (f) It is a misconduct for any staff seeking audience with any senior staff of the University or with any of the Officers of the University in relation to official matters to secretly record conversations with such senior staff or Officer and to use such recording to cause mischief or to embarrass the staff or officer in relation to official communications. Provided that such recording is allowed to protect the interest of the recording staff in case of harassment, threat, intimidation or other unethical conduct toward the recording staff.

#### **6. Use of Cell Phones by Students at Lectures**

- (a) Students who take cell phones to classes shall ensure that the phones are always in the silent mode from commencement to the end of lectures to avoid unnecessary distractions. A student's cell phone may be taken away by the lecturer who shall report the seizure to the Head of Department.
- (b) It is a misconduct for any student, in the course of lecture, to receive or make calls or to engage in chatting on the phone;
- (c) No student shall record a lecture with a cell phone or other electronic device without the permission of the lecturer conducting the class;
- (d) It is a misconduct for a student to take any picture of a lecturer or of any member of the class or make a video of any activity in class and post the picture or video on any social media platform;
- (e) Any student who violates the provisions of this section may face disciplinary action and the punishment shall depend on the act in question.
- (f) Where a cell phone is taken from a student by a lecturer, the seizure shall be reported to the Head of Department. The Head of Department shall register the phone and ensure that it is kept in safe custody for a period not exceeding two weeks, after which the phone shall be returned to the student, who shall sign for its return.
- (g) A student whose phone is taken for more than three times may forfeit the phone permanently, and it is immaterial that the phone actually forfeited is not the one seized and returned on earlier occasions.

#### **7. Use of Cell Phones at Examinations**

- (a) No student shall take into examination hall any cell phone or other electronic device on which information may be stored. However, an

electronic device may be taken into an examination hall where it is required and allowed for the examination;

- (b) It is a misconduct for any student to take into examination hall any such cell phones or electronic device;
- (c) Cell phones or an electronic devices seized at examinations shall form part of the evidence at examinational malpractice panels.

#### 8. **Use of Cell Phones on Campus but Outside of Lectures**

While students and staff are at liberty to use cell phones or other electronic devices, it is a misconduct on the part of any student or group of students or staff to deploy the devices, in any of the following situations, namely,

- (a) Take nude or other compromising pictures of other student(s) and post same on any of the social media platforms;
- (b) Coerce any student whose nude or compromising pictures had been taken to accept a request made by the student who took the picture, which request the student would not have accepted, in order to avert a threat to upload the said pictures on social media;
- (c) Blackmail the student whose picture was taken into paying any sum of money, failing which the pictures would be uploaded onto any of the social media platforms;
- (d) Taking nude or compromising pictures of a students after the latter had been sedated by the administrated of a sedating substance.
- (e) Record or video another student who is engaging in sexual activity with another person without the knowledge of those engaging in such activity and to blackmail one or both of them in whatever form. Where the recording or videoing was known to and with the consent of one of the students involved in the sexual activity, the colluding student shall also be guilty of misconduct.
- (f) Use cell phones while driving on campus or while at the petrol filling station on campus.

#### 9. **Sanctions**

- (a) Any staff or student who violates this policy in any respect shall be guilty of misconduct and shall face disciplinary panel or board as the case may be.
- (b) Depending on its nature, a violation of this Policy shall attract the following penalties, namely,
  - (i) Expulsion;
  - (ii) Rustication for two semesters;
  - (iii) Warning in writing which shall be placed in the staff or student's file. A student or a staff who violates the Policy after having been warned, shall receive a higher penalty in subsequent

- violation(s);
- (iv) Dismissal or termination of employment;
- (v) Forfeiture of the cell phone or electronic device used in violation.

*Senate Approved Date: November 29, 2017*