A USER GUIDE

A listserv is an e-mail-based mailing list that uses a single e-mail address to deliver information and to engage multiple subscribers in discussions on common concerns or associations. The School of Government sponsors and maintains more than 80 listservs using Lyris ListManager software.

TYPES OF LISTSERVs

The School of Government sponsors two types of listservs:

MAILING LIST
A mailing list delivers timely information directly to a subscriber’s e-mail inbox. Only the list administrator can post announcements. Subscribers can reply only to the list administrator and may not know the identities of the other list subscribers. Mailing lists are most effective in delivering information such as alerts, updates, or course and program announcements when no subscriber response is needed or when communication with only the list administrator is sufficient.

INTERACTIVE/SOCIAL LIST
Interactive or social lists also deliver information directly to a subscriber’s e-mail inbox. But these lists also enable subscribers to reply to the entire group without typing a lengthy list of e-mail addresses and to communicate with each other without maintaining a large address book. Interactive lists are ideal for enabling large e-mail-based communities to post questions to all list members, generate discussions, and engage in social networking on common interests and shared associations.

THE BASICS

WHO MAY REQUEST A NEW LIST?
Outside client groups must be sponsored by a School faculty member or teaching professional who will also serve as an administrator on the listserv.

IS THERE A LIMIT TO HOW MANY SUBSCRIBERS CAN BELONG TO A LIST?
New lists have a default maximum limit of 250 subscribers, but this ceiling can be increased upon request.

HOW MUCH LEAD TIME IS NEEDED?
Once a list request has been approved and the essential information received, three to five days are required to create and test a list before releasing it for public use.
WHAT ARE THE BASIC REQUIREMENTS OR POLICIES FOR OWNING A LIST?
All listservs affiliated with the School of Government are subject to the following requirements:

- The list topic must be related to state or local government issues and policies
- A faculty member must serve as a sponsor of the list
- In keeping with public records law, all School of Government-sponsored lists keep archives of list messages
- Organizations or individuals requesting a list must assume administrative responsibility for the list
- No spam or commercial advertisements for business are allowed

CAN ATTACHMENTS BE SENT THROUGH LISTSERV E-MAIL?
Yes. The current size limit for an attachment, including the e-mail message, is five megabytes.

HOW ARE SUBSCRIBERS ADDED TO A NEWLY CREATED LIST?
If you already have a list of members from your organization or association, the IT Division networking team can upload and populate your list. We require that this list be formatted in separate columns of full name and e-mail address in either Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel. If you have incomplete information on potential subscribers, you can provide those individuals with the web page address related to your list. On this web page, they may present their credentials via a web form for review by the list administrator. Visit the Subscribe web form for the County Clerks listserv to see an example:
http://lists.unc.edu/read/all_forums/subscribe?name=countyclerks.

DOES THE SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT SHARE ANY SUBSCRIBER LISTS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS?
No, the School of Government does not share or sell subscriber lists.

WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A LIST ADMINISTRATOR?
The primary responsibility of a list administrator is to approve or deny membership to potential subscribers based on the admissions criteria set for that list. List administrators will receive subscriber requests directly in their e-mail inbox and can respond directly to each request. The IT networking team will provide list administrators with short instructions and examples as needed. Please note that a subscriber may unsubscribe his/her e-mail address from the list at any time.

THE PROCESS
1. DECIDE ON A SHORT NAME OR ACRONYM FOR THE LIST TOPIC OR ORGANIZATION
2. WRITE A DESCRIPTION OF THE LIST AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE
3. DETERMINE WHETHER THE LIST WILL BE A MAILING LIST OR INTERACTIVE/SOCIAL LIST
4. SELECT THE LIST ADMINISTRATOR(S); THERE CAN BE MORE THAN ONE ADMINISTRATOR
5. DETERMINE WHETHER THE LIST WILL BE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL’S LISTSERV PAGE SO THAT ANYONE CAN REGISTER, OR WHETHER IT WILL REMAIN PRIVATE. FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE SCHOOL’S LISTSERV PAGE AT WWW.SOOG.UNC.EDU/NODE/265.

GETTING STARTED
To request a new listserv, contact the Helpdesk at helpdesk@sog.unc.edu.