

1. I am disgusted with the selective enforcement of policies within the library -- especially the personal use of telephones during the work day. The lady at her desk nearby me has been on her University telephone now for fifteen minutes talking about what to make for dinner. Frankly, I am not interested unless I get an invite. The gentleman across the floor receives 8 to 10 personal phone calls a day on his University line. Many of these calls, I answer as part of my daily duty. Wait, now, I am YOUR secretary? When I go to upstairs, I have to wait until one of the ladies on the floor hangs up on her personal call before I am helped. Perhaps attending to your job, while not holding a conversation, may reduce the glaring number of errors coming out of your unit. Others chatter throughout the day while sometimes bustling-past the desk for an impromptu break out front in order to complete a call. Supervisors remain ignorant or take no action. For heavens sakes people, send an email. At least that way, you are not disturbing your coworkers! Thanks, *BusinessUseOnly*. 8/3/2006 9:25:11 AM.

Occasionally, we must all use work phones and/or computers to tend to personal business (see University policies on phone use, for example). But use of the equipment—as well as our work time—should be judicious, that is, used with good judgment. When such use gets out of hand and interferes with customer service or with others getting their work done, then our mission as a library is threatened.

When this is the case, then it is appropriate for the concern to be taken to a supervisor. The difficulty here is not wanting to be seen as vindictive, a whistle blower or a complainer; or, in the described situation, fear retaliation. A well-thought out complaint (perhaps developed with the guidance of the Employee Assistance Program—a good resource for difficult work situations), one that is not accusatory or blaming, might bring something that needs to be taken care of to the attention of those who can do something about them.

It is unfortunate that some do not feel comfortable—for what ever reason—to go to those who should be able to listen to a complaint and act accordingly. Such an environment of mistrust does not make anyone's job easy. For those cases, please keep in mind that the anonymous comments solicited here do reach the highest in command, namely Mary Case.

Jacqueline Leskovec

[Editor's Note -- University Policy recognizes the need to use telephones "when necessary . . . [and] from time to time."

<https://nessie.uihr.uillinois.edu/pdf/policy/rules/pr16r04.pdf>

Library Work Regulations also acknowledge the need for emergency calls which are kept brief and to a minimum. Jay Jurek, 09/14/2006.]

2. Hello Support Staff Advisory Committee. I'm a library employee at Urbana, Rockford, Chicago, Peoria, or Springfield. I wish to remain anonymous, so I'm not disclosing which location that I work at. The way I see it library work resources such as computers are owned by the library and not by the individual user(s). The following situation actually occurred in one of our fine libraries: In order to protect the innocent and the guilty, I won't drop names. In a particular department, other library employees who don't have their own work computer began checking their e-mail on a library specific-task computer. The e-mail readers knew that priority was given to the specific task of that computer. However, when that computer was not in use, we others read our work related e-mail. This was going on for a few months, that is, until a certain someone had a problem with it. What angers me is that the certain someone did not tell the e-mail readers s/he had a problem, but rather went to his or her boss to complain about us readers of e-mail.

Supposedly, we e-mailers may be getting our own computer in the future so there won't be friction. I'll believe that one when I see it. We been promised our own computer for over five years, but we are still waiting. This kind of problem is bigger than just this incident. Please explore the following for the betterment of the whole support staff: (1) Why can't people check their e-mail on certain computers when they are available? (2) I am offended by people, who get a kick out of making trouble for others. They do this so that they will look better in their supervisor's eyes. I call these people backstabbers. The thing is that, unless you work directly or kind of directly with these people, you think they are nice people since they always have a professional friendly face in meetings. I always say at anger management and customer service meetings that, if someone has a problem with me, they should come to me first. Everyone in the meeting always agrees with me, but when push comes to shove, they never follow this protocol. If we are going to enhance a stronger staff development and create a sense of community, we must address these important issues. Thanks for taking the time to hear me out, *An Anonymous Employee.* 7/27/2006 2:19:26 PM.

It is often a problem that different people hold varying views on how best to manage limited resources as in the situation you describe. Even when not *playing favorites*, this means that some staff members are subject to the strict interpretation of rules; whereas, others, particularly those in different departments, are far less bound by the same restrictions. This disparity understandably gives rise to resentment when discovered.

The important issue you raise is the appropriateness of reporting staff or other personnel problems up the chain of command. In some cases, there may well be *backstabbing* and *toadying* to supervisors involved, but there are also incidents that legitimately need to be shared with supervisors. At these times, the persons directly involved may not have the authority to effect needed changes; and, at other times, the disruptive activity may be more broadly spread than is immediately obvious. For these reasons, a broader communication of the problem and its solution is needed. In all such cases, it is appropriate to seek input and guidance from those in supervisory roles, in some cases all the way up to the University Librarian.

On the other hand, if the situation is really between two or a very few individuals with no ramifications for others in the unit or other departments, I see no reason to turn to supervisors, that is unless the persons involved cannot come to agreement on their own. If for whatever reason you are not comfortable making a formal complaint, the Suggestion Box remains a viable alternative to voice your concerns anonymously. Please note, however, that when complaints or suggestions do not provide sufficient information -- such as department, campus, unit, etc -- it is obviously much more difficult for an administrator to take remedial action beyond a kind of innocuous general statement that rules should be applied evenly and equitably across the library.

John Cullars