November 8, 2011

**FELIX WU**
Chair, Campus Email Committee
Computer Science Department

**Re:  Campus Email Committee Report**

The Davis Division of the Academic Senate forwarded your request for review to all of the standing committees of the Division as well as Faculty Executive Committees within each college/professional school.  Responses were received from the Committees on Faculty Welfare, Information Technology, Planning and Budget and Research; as well as the Faculty Executive Committees from the School of Veterinary Medicine, College of Agricultural and Environmental Science and College of Letters and Sciences.

Generally, there is agreement that Geckomail is outdated and insufficient for use by UC Davis.   Many respondents found the recommendations were strategically sound for the campus.   However, a number questions and concerns were raised surrounding the recommendations, specifically:

- There is concerning regarding the level of confidentiality of the "cloud" environment for a research I university.  This includes concern about giving these vendors this key role of control over important IT infrastructure and faculty emails and attachments off-campus.  Additionally, retaining the ability to store and easily access one's own e-mail.

  However, a minority viewed the move to the cloud as a positive development. The reduced cost for email services that Microsoft and Google offer is seen as an important benefit when the University must continue to adapt to declining state support. The feedback from the students and faculty who already use Gmail reveals high levels of satisfaction. Supporters of moving to the cloud, moreover, give less weight to privacy threats because email authors lack meaningful legal protections and should have no expectation of privacy. The anticipated hazard of Google warehousing emails would not alter the status quo.

- Concern was raised regarding the availability, adequacy and responsiveness of email technical support.

- What will induce individual units to switch to one of the new systems? Of the ~100 systems in existence currently, how many will transition to one of the proposed solutions? In essence, how much money will be saved?

- What is the implementation schedule or time line? Will there be user training and user feedback possibilities? Will there be regular user (faculty, staff, and students) oversight of the system?

- Any privacy features in the three proposed systems – based on the contractual obligations of the two providers - need to be clearly explained to campus users and compared with off-campus solutions (e.g., DavisMail compared to regular Gmail) so that users can make a fully informed choice.

- Will the University be receiving information from email and other computer service providers about the use of their services, and if so, what information will the University receive?

- What measures are taken to safeguard existing e-mail during the transition to the new e-mail systems to avoid losses of e-mails?

- The first is with regard to the stated storage capacity limit of 25 Gigabytes per individual. It is likely 25 Gb is certainly more than adequate for most users.   How will the campus manage accounts with greater capacity needs than 25 Gb during the time of transition?   Will there be an ability to seek an exception or allowance for storage capacity beyond 25 Gb?

- The UCD/Gmail currently in place is proving useful to some faculty members as a means of separating their professional from their personal email. Presumably the possibility of having both a UCD/Gmail account and a regular Google Apps/Gmail account would remain.  Would the 25 Gb limit apply to each of these Gmail accounts separately?

- After migration to the new system, there won't be direct access to a mail server, implying that pine/alpine/mutt won't work for uConnect. Is this an important issue? We know of a few people who do use pine for such access.

- The campus keeps the 'ucdavis.edu' identity.

- The School of Veterinary Medicine Faculty Executive Committee raised the following concerns:  "The School of Veterinary Medicine may have a larger number of faculty and staff computers than almost any other academic unit on campus. The campus cyber-safety policy requires our IT personnel to push out any security patches and/or vendor updates available which require the School's network and systems administrators to have the appropriate system privileges. It is not clear to us how the same operation efficiency can or will be accomplished under this proposal. Furthermore, our IT personnel have written programs for the current system to facilitate the scheduling of classes. There is doubt as to how this capability and capacity would be affected with the new proposed system. In the aggregate, the School of Veterinary Medicine supports the proposal strategically, but tactically has significant concerns about how potential technical difficulties would be overcome without a serious disruption to the School's existing operations.

There was significant support for further review of the issues surrounding transition and implementation by forming a steering committee to ensure academic needs and administrative priorities are met.

Sincerely,

Linda F. Bisson, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor:  Viticulture and Enology