

**LSU Faculty Senate Resolution 17-06:  
Consultation with faculty before any change in IT policies**

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*Whereas* computing resources are essential for faculty to conduct their teaching, research and service, so that significant changes must be discussed and voted on by appropriate faculty bodies, including the Faculty Senate and the faculty of affected departments, and

*Whereas* Policy Statements PS 107 (Computer User Responsibilities) and PS 114 (Security of Computing Resources) were revised in 2016 without input from faculty, and

*Whereas* in January 2017 a committee of 17 members, of whom only two were faculty members, was convened to rewrite multiple policy statements, including PS 6.15 (Use of Electronic Mail) and PS 6.20 (Security of Data), and

*Whereas* the proposed new PS 6.15 would require the central retention of every faculty mail message, and would forbid the operation of departmental mail servers, even over the objections of the limited faculty representation on the committee, and

*Whereas* many departments operate their own electronic services with features not provided by the central system but which are needed for the smooth operation of their units,<sup>1</sup> and

*Whereas* the original, 2007 version of PS 6.15, which is still in effect, explicitly allows for such flexibility, including departmental naming conventions for mail addresses and use of departmental servers, and

*Whereas* the current (2007) PS 6.15 further states, correctly, that not all faculty mails are public records, and that the archiving of any mail that is the sole copy of a public record is the responsibility of the individual employee, and

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<sup>1</sup> Examples of features missing from central mail: long-term mail forwarding for early career researchers who are moving between institutions; long-term backups for recovering deleted mail; administrative mailing lists for department use with efficient membership updating; full support for standards-compliant mail protocols used by researchers on Unix-style systems; support for the mail clients chosen by many science researchers; business continuity, in that department-level addresses and associated mail is not lost because an employee changes jobs; address auto-completion with results limited to one department; and, ability to send and receive mail using addresses that fit the culture of the discipline (e.g., across the United States, mathematics departments have a fairly standardized naming convention of name@math.institution.edu).

LSU's participation in the recently acclaimed international collaboration LIGO, researching gravitational waves, involves over 1000 researchers from several dozen institutions across the world who exchange data and discussion across a wide variety of electronic platforms, students and faculty often switching between institutions while remaining in a collaboration that stretches across decades. Imposing proprietary protocol and software choices upon users, taking away forwarding, backups, nimble mailing lists, and address conventions serves only to hinder and impede researchers' participation in such collaboration. For example, this collaboration led to a Nobel Prize for LSU Adjunct Professor Rainer Weiss, whose mail address at MIT (weiss@ligo.mit.edu) is of a style that, were it at LSU, would be discontinued by ITS.

*Whereas* on November 22, 2016 LSU's Office of Internal Audit issued a report entitled "E-mail security & retention," with no input from faculty, which recommended a forced migration of users from departmental mail to central mail, and

*Whereas* the audit based its recommendation on vague citation of various laws,<sup>2</sup> unsupported speculation on the likelihood of legal consequences of deleting mail, and a limited questionnaire that it had sent to the IT staff of the targeted departments in 2015, and

*Whereas* in April 2017, the Chief Information Security Officer commanded those departments operating independent mail servers to begin a forced migration of their users to the central system, and communicated his intent to disable network access to departmental mail and list servers by December 15, 2017, and

*Whereas* overtures by the College of Engineering, the Law School, and the Center for Computation and Technology to make their servers retain mail have simply been brushed aside, and

*Whereas* many researchers in academia use a variety of systems other than Windows that are not supported by the Microsoft Office 365 platform chosen to meet the internal meeting and calendaring needs of administrative offices,

*Therefore be it resolved* that the Faculty Senate recommends that LSU cease and desist its ongoing forced migration of users to central mail and its dismantling of departmental mail servers, and allow for the reversal of all such actions that have already been carried out, and

*Therefore be it further resolved* that the Faculty Senate recommends that PS 107 and PS 114 be restored to their pre-2016 versions, and any modification of University IT policies be preceded by consultation with the Faculty Senate and with faculty from affected departments, and that any committee discussing ITS policies include ample elected representation of faculty, including faculty knowledgeable in both IT and legal fields, and faculty from affected departments.

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<sup>2</sup> Laws that have not changed in any relevant way since 2007, when LSU's General Counsel reviewed the current PS 6.15.