



University of
Central Arkansas™

DEPARTMENT OF
MATHEMATICS

TO: UCA Faculty Senate

VIA: Drs. Lori Isom, Rahul Mehata, and Jeff Padberg

FROM: The Department of Mathematics
(Communicated by Dr. Ramesh Garimella, Chair)

DATE: September 12, 2016

SUBJECT: Concerns about a proposed Active Directory conversion policy by IST

The Department of Mathematics has several concerns about the proposed conversion policy by IST. The Department does understand the need to replace the outdated Novell System to provide a more secure and manageable network. However, proposed restrictions mandated by such conversion pose some very serious issues and concerns. Even though some of our concerns are similar to the ones expressed by the our colleagues in the Department of Biology in a letter to the Faculty Senate dated on September 9th, 2016, we are compelled to speak out and express our own views on this issue.

First, having complete administrative control of all faculty/staff computers by IST places severe restrictions on installing softwares on a short notice. Most importantly, it creates a potential security breach of confidential information such as exams and assignments, student grades, research work in progress, reviews of manuscripts considered for publication, and personnel related files. Second, perhaps one of the most problematic concerns may be the IRB restrictions associated to human subjects. In particular, most research information about human subjects may only be viewed by those individuals related to the research project. Should anyone other than those related to the project have access to the information, it is a prosecutable offense for all including researchers. Because of the above reasons, many faculty members in the department feel uncomfortable about another person having admin access to their computers.

Also, installing programming tools such as python, java, c, and c++ , computational tool such as computer algebra systems or automatically running scheduling tasks and scripts would require admin access. Many faculty members make decision on using such tools based on their teaching and research needs. Should such a need arise over a weekend or holiday period, the faculty will have no recourse but to wait until the next business day for installation.

Several mathematics faculty members use Apple computers and tablets. Many have configured their personal iCloud account to install apps related to their research and teaching. If the proposed policy is implemented, installing such apps will require admin privilege. We understand that as of now IST does not have plans to handle installation of apps from personal iCloud accounts. Further, those faculty members who want to configure their home peripherals such as scanners and printers on their laptops will not able to do so.

Besides the above issues, we have not been able to locate any prior communications or solicitations from IST for feedback from faculty members with respect to the proposed policy. Also, there has been no compelling and convincing arguments put forward by IST to the university at large to have admin restrictions on faculty computers. Therefore, we suggest IST call a campus wide discussion on this issue before proceeding further with implementation of the proposed policy. Thank you.