The UAF Staff Council passed the following Motion (#2011/216/1) at Meeting 216 on April 20, 2011.

Staff have requested Google @alaska.edu accounts for departmental use, since the beginning of OIT's transition to Google Apps. The problem OIT presented with departmental accounts is their use of shared credentials. Repeatedly staff were informed that there was no current solution and that a decision had not yet been made about how to handle departmental account transition. In February 2011 SPAM filters were temporarily disabled on departmental accounts and an end time of June 2011 was set for those accounts. OIT has now presented and is essentially requiring the use of Google Groups for departmental accounts, but staff have encountered and presented several issues with this course of action.

WHEREAS, members of the staff have continually asked for Google Email accounts as a departmental account replacement since the deployment of Google Apps @alaska.edu,

WHEREAS, staff should not have to modify their business processes to fit a new product, when a requested solution already exists,

WHEREAS, group message management is cumbersome and lacks capabilities for organizing emails sufficiently in Google Groups,

WHEREAS, Google Groups provide no means for a shared contact list, auto responses, and centralized message storage for a department through a thick client, requiring extra management that makes the process of communicating less efficient for several departments,

WHEREAS, there is no way to transfer historical email, sufficient for compliance with business and legal processes to Google Groups,

WHEREAS, departments have already started to evaluate the use of external accounts at UAF, because no valid alternative has been presented,

Staff council moves that OIT should provide every departmental account holder the option to have a fully functional Google Email Account @alaska.edu, including the ability to utilize thick clients to access the account, instead of a Google Group.

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Signed: _____   4/21/11
       President, Staff Council   Date

__Fwd to President: _____   4/25/11
       Chancellor, University of Alaska Fairbanks   Date

__Approved:_____   _____
       President, University of Alaska   Date

X_Disapproved: _____   7 June 11
       President, University of Alaska   Date

Rationale for Disapproval:

See attached Addendum.

Addendum to President's disapproval of UAF Staff Council Motion #2011/216/1

Rationale:

I have a great appreciation for input from all staff regarding University policies, procedures and direction. The nature of this request is a technical one that does not immediately have a technical solution. Staff council's technical requests must be looked at in terms of functional needs required for business processes that fit within our IT environment. Staff must help IT understand their functional requirements, but should not dictate the technical solution.

Shared usernames and passwords are a security risk. OIT underwent a security audit and review. Shared accounts in which multiple users share a single account name and share a password were identified as a security risk and one that the University needed to remedy. Regardless of the University's move to Google Apps, it needed to stop this practice and no longer issue such shared accounts.

I understand that users feel there are solutions that already exist for providing such accounts. I believe OIT calls these resource accounts or blind departmental accounts in Google. However, if the solution behaves like a shared account with a shared password, it is not a viable solution. Likewise if a solution puts more hurdles and dependence on OIT to maintain those accounts (adding and removing members for example) in front of our staff, that is not viable either. Any solution provided should be improved upon from the previous solution, reduce hassles for accessing and maintaining and be supported by training. It is my understanding that OIT is exploring other solutions that will empower the staff and reduce the need for OIT interdependence.

Change is inevitable. As technologies, tools, resources change and evolve and best practices change over time, staff are expected to change and adapt with them. We all operate within a continual improvement process and change is simply part of that. OIT shall provide training and support in this transition.

Looking for Solutions. I understand staff concerns that they need a solution for transitioning their accounts and OIT will provide one. Independently seeking individual solutions outside of our current infrastructure is not a recommended solution or a wise use of University dollars. In order to operate as an organization, we need to all be singing from the same sheet of music. Departments will not be permitted to establish their own shadow systems in order to avoid change.

Legal and Business requirements. Current University of Alaska records retention policy requires that any email that falls into a defined category as "record" be printed and included in the appropriate hard copy file not maintained on an individual's computer or within an email server.

Current group/departmental accounts are not being deprecated on June 30. This was a target date to turn off old services and IT has not adequately provisioned alternatives that meet everyone's needs. I have directed OIT to maintain current departmental groups active until they have an adequate solution in place for transitioning off the shared accounts.

Since shared accounts are a security risk and no current business process or departmental account is being decommissioned at this time, I hereby, disapprove Staff Council's motion.

Bottom Line:
We will fix this problem!
PKG