DATE: April 14, 2022

TO: University Deans and Vice Presidents

Increasing Security by Migrating to Enterprise Endpoint Management Platforms

Dear Deans and Vice Presidents,

Each year, the university experiences millions of attacks against our critical information systems with ransomware attacks increasing by over 185% in 2021. The consequences of a large-scale ransomware attack against the university would be highly disruptive and could result in a great deal of loss, including the erosion of trust among employees, donors, alumni and public partners, as well as a negative impact on the university’s reputation.

To meet these security challenges and ensure that all colleges, schools and units (CSUs) comply with the UT Austin Minimum Security Standards for Systems, as well as state and UT system policy, the university is launching a program to move all university-owned laptop and desktop computers to new system management platforms, known as endpoint management platforms. With assistance, guidance, and collaboration of IT staff in CSUs, these standardized endpoint management platforms already in use by many CSU IT units across campus were selected through campus IT governance (ITLC) and are being centralized under Information Technology Services (ITS). This project represents a substantial change in that, for the first time, all support staff will be using the same centrally managed tools. In addition, the project represents the culmination of a collaborative and cooperative process between the CSUs and ITS.

This migration to centrally managed tools is essential, and in order to effectively safeguard our data, research, and critical infrastructure resources, CSUs may not opt out unless an exception has been approved by the Information Security Office. Individual research groups and/or faculty may also request an exemption in rare cases where business, technical, education, or research needs require non-standard endpoint management tools or practices.

The ITS Endpoint Management team has been coordinating migration plans with CSUs with work to be performed in stages throughout 2022. The initial focus will be on desktop and laptop computers used by staff in all campus units. Once that effort is solidly underway, the team will begin working with the IT community and campus units to develop a migration plan for computers used by faculty members.  Desktop and laptop computers used in research settings will be incorporated as a final step. The goal is to complete migrations for all staff computers in CSUs by the end of this calendar year, and a longer timeline is expected for faculty and research device migration. Through regular communications, meetings and online resources, ITS and local CSU teams are advancing this important work, but we are also seeking your support in prioritizing these efforts within your CSU to ensure your CSU is prepared to adopt the endpoint management platforms on time and in accordance with the migration plans.

While work has already begun, there are many more implementation objectives that can only be achieved through collaboration across the university. Thank you for your support in this endeavor and investment in our future security. If you would like assistance or more information on how this project impacts your CSU, please reach out to your local information technology support staff or contact the [Information Security Office](mailto:security@utexas.edu).

Additional Information and Resources:

* [ITLC Endpoint Management Committee](https://itlc.utexas.edu/committees/endpoint-management) with charge, membership, and meeting minutes
* [ITLC Members](https://itlc.utexas.edu/members)
* [ITLC Meeting Minutes](https://itlc.utexas.edu/updates) unanimous endorsement of the Endpoint Management Project (3/10/2021)
* [ITS Endpoint Management project page](https://it.utexas.edu/projects/epm/overview) with overview, governance, FAQs and status updates
* [University of Texas System Police 165 –](https://utsystem.edu/sites/policy-library/policies/uts-165-information-resources-use-and-security-policy) Information Resource Use and Security Policy
* [University of Texas at Austin Information Resources Use and Security](https://security.utexas.edu/policies/irusp)
* [University of Texas at Austin Minimum Security Standards for Systems](https://security.utexas.edu/content/min-security-standards)

Thank you again for your help and collaboration in this effort.

Regards,

**Sharon L. Wood**

Executive Vice President and Provost

The University of Texas at Austin

**Darrell Bazzell** (he/him/his)

Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer

The University of Texas at Austin