



Professors Emeriti Network

A Letter to University Administration

Subject: Continued University Email Access for Professionally and Academically Active Retired Professors

Dear Members of the University Administration,

Retirement from university employment does not necessarily mean the end of a professor's academic and professional life. Many professors continue to conduct research, publish, participate in conferences, collaborate with colleagues and students, contribute to professional organizations, and share their knowledge internationally long after their formal employment has ended.

This raises an important question for universities in an increasingly digitalized society: *Should university autonomy allow a university to terminate the digital academic identity of a professor who retires from employment but remains professionally and academically active? Is this fair and ethical toward the professor—and is it wise for the university?*

A university email account is no longer simply an administrative communication tool. For an academically active professor, it can be an important part of their *digital academic identity*. It enables continuity of professional contacts, research collaboration, access to academic networks, communication with former colleagues and students, and participation in international academic activities.

Terminating such an account immediately upon retirement can therefore create a significant barrier to continued academic engagement. It may also disconnect the professor from a professional identity that has been built over many years through contributions to the university and the wider academic community.

At the same time, we recognize that universities have legitimate responsibilities concerning cybersecurity, data protection, account management and institutional resources. The question, therefore, need not be whether retired professors should automatically retain exactly the same access as active employees. Rather, the question is whether universities can develop *appropriate forms of continued digital affiliation* for professors who remain professionally and academically active.

Possible solutions could include:

- continued university email access under clearly defined conditions;
- an emeritus or retired-professor email account retaining the university domain;
- a renewable affiliation for professors who demonstrate continuing academic activity;
- limited access to appropriate university digital services;
- clear security, privacy and account-management rules;
- periodic confirmation that the account continues to serve a legitimate academic or professional purpose.

Such an approach could benefit both sides. *Professors would retain continuity of their academic identity and professional relationships, while universities could maintain valuable connections with experienced scholars and benefit from their knowledge, networks and continued contributions.*

We therefore invite the University Administration to consider whether its current policy on university email accounts after retirement remains appropriate for the realities of an increasingly digital academic environment.

Perhaps the fundamental question is not:

“Why should a retired professor retain a university email account?”

but rather:

*“How can the university enable professors who remain academically and professionally active to stay **CONNECTED BEYOND RETIREMENT?**”*

We believe this deserves an open discussion among university administrations, professors, retired professors' associations and university associations.

A professor may retire from employment without retiring from *knowledge, experience, collaboration and contribution.*

Connected beyond retirement should be a possibility—not a contradiction.

With kind regards,

Members, [Professors Emeriti Network](#)

Members, [Retired Professors Associations Network](#)

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