

Emeriti Call to Action Restore University Email Account for Professionally and Academically Active Retired Professors

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Universities increasingly emphasize lifelong learning, intergenerational cooperation, digital transformation, knowledge sharing, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence. Yet some universities discontinue the university email accounts of professors when they retire—even when those professors remain professionally and academically active.

We respectfully call upon university leadership to reconsider this practice.

Retirement from employment should not mean retirement from the academic community

Many retired professors continue to write and publish, participate in research, attend conferences, mentor younger colleagues, cooperate with universities and professional organizations, contribute to public debate, and maintain national and international academic networks.

Their formal employment may have ended. Their contribution to the university and to society has not.

For such colleagues, a long-established university email account is much more than a technical service. It is part of their *academic identity and professional continuity*. It enables colleagues, former students, researchers, professional organizations, and international partners to find and recognize them.

Closing that account can abruptly interrupt relationships developed over decades.

A question for university leadership

We therefore invite university leaders to consider a simple question: *What does the university gain by disconnecting professionally and academically active retired professors from their long-established university email accounts—and what might the university lose?*

The issue deserves consideration not only from the perspective of information technology administration, cybersecurity, and cost, but also from the perspective of institutional values.

Retired professors represent accumulated knowledge, experience, professional relationships, institutional memory, and international connections. Universities should consider how to make productive use of this valuable intellectual and social capital rather than unintentionally making continued participation more difficult.

Security concerns should lead to solutions, not automatic exclusion

Universities have legitimate responsibilities concerning cybersecurity, privacy, licensing, account management, and the appropriate use of institutional digital resources.

These concerns should be taken seriously.

But they do not necessarily require the complete termination of university email accounts for all retired professors.

Universities can establish appropriate conditions: periodic account confirmation, multifactor authentication, security training, simplified retiree accounts, clearly defined acceptable-use policies, or eligibility based on continued academic and professional activity.

The question therefore need not be:

“Why should retired professors keep their accounts?” A more constructive question is: *“How can we provide secure and sustainable university email access to retired colleagues who continue to contribute?”*

The age of artificial intelligence makes connection even more important

In 2026, universities are entering a period of extraordinarily rapid technological change. Artificial intelligence is transforming research, teaching, communication, knowledge management, and professional collaboration.

This is precisely the wrong moment to unnecessarily disconnect experienced academics from their university communities.

Professionally active retired professors can contribute something particularly valuable: decades of experience combined with new digital tools. They can help connect generations, preserve institutional knowledge, mentor younger academics, develop international networks, and explore responsible uses of artificial intelligence. Universities should enable such collaboration.

A practical call to action

We respectfully invite university leadership to:

1. *Restore university email accounts* to professionally and academically active retired professors whose accounts have been discontinued.
2. *Allow retiring professors to retain their established university email accounts*, subject to reasonable security and usage requirements.
3. Establish a transparent university-wide policy explaining eligibility, responsibilities, security requirements, and review procedures.
4. *Consult retired professors and their associations* when developing policies that directly affect their continuing academic participation.
5. *Examine good practices at other universities* that have found secure and sustainable ways to maintain digital connections with retired colleagues.

6. *Recognize professionally active retired professors as a resource for mentoring, research, international cooperation, institutional memory, and responsible experimentation with artificial intelligence.*

A small service with a large symbolic meaning

Providing continued university email access may appear to be a relatively small administrative matter.

Its meaning is much larger.

It tells retired professors:

You are still part of our academic community.

Your knowledge still matters.

Your professional relationships still matter.

Your contribution is still welcome.

Universities are communities of knowledge extending across disciplines, institutions, countries—and generations.

Retirement should change the employment relationship. It need not sever the academic relationship.

Our call

Restore university email accounts for professionally and academically active retired professors.

Do so securely, transparently, and fairly.

And turn a potential point of exclusion into an opportunity for *continued academic contribution, intergenerational collaboration, and connection beyond retirement.*