

Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Committee on Computing and Communications

May 2, 2005

To: Robert Birgeneau, Chancellor
Paul Gray, Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Subject: Committee's reaction to the Chancellor's recent security memorandum

Our Committee discussed the Chancellor's April 4, 2005 "message on personal data security". We agree that data security is urgent and applaud the administration's efforts to deal with it. We feel, however, that *policy* recommendations, (even with the threat of sanctions) are not sufficient. We would like to suggest *capabilities* and *training* that the campus should provide users (including faculty, graduate students, and departmental staff) in possession of sensitive information. Specifically:

- A security web portal with the instructions and tools relevant to ordinary users (rather than system administrators) organized according to role and context. This portal should provide specific instructions for securing data tailored to specific roles and contexts (instruction, research subject data, human resources data, etc.) and should be empathetic to users with a lack of technical sophistication. Lists of 'common mistakes' would be helpful.
- Readily available encryption software for the widely used platforms, with a key recovery infrastructure, and guidelines for its use.
- Server-based secure storage to securely store and access centrally stored sensitive data, as well as tools to manipulate it from local personal computers.
- Training sessions on security techniques and mistakes. A self-running web-based course is one possibility, but a classroom mini-course, with some official certification, might be required of users handling highly sensitive data.

As faculty, we are sensitive to our responsibility to secure student information and grades in the context of instruction, as well as letters of recommendation and referee reports. However, the university has not provided us with tools, instructions or training, so we do not feel fully empowered to fulfill this responsibility. We suspect other ordinary computer users on campus harboring sensitive data must be feeling a similar frustration.

We have communicated these wishes to IS&T, and they have begun acting on many of them. We communicate these requests to you also, in the hope that you will continue to allocate the needed resources.

Respectfully yours,

David G Messerschmitt (EECS) Arthur Ogus (Mathematics)
Committee co-chairs