

IT PROS IT UPDATE



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February 2022

PARTNER SUCCESS

[A student capstone project](#) is making onboarding for the Secure Technologies for Aggie Researchers (STAR) platform 95-100 percent faster through automation. The students in Professor David Sweeney's technology management class worked with Texas A&M Health IT Services to achieve these impressive results.

The Texas Apiary Inspection Service is now using its inspection mobile app and admin web portal. Developed with the Division of IT, the app and portal allow inspectors to access beekeeper information and enter notes and results. Beekeepers will soon be able to create an account with the online portal to access information regarding their apiary and pay fees.

Dr. Jeanmarie Verchot in Plant Pathology and Microbiology is launching an unfolded protein response website designed by the division. The site consolidates links to external databases of identifiers for plant proteins in Arabidopsis, potato, maize, rice, tomato and soybean. Additional species can be added in the future.

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

The division's 2021 annual report, "Connecting Possibilities. Driving Success," is [now available online](#). In addition to accomplishments from the past year, the report highlights partner success stories and ways value has been maximized - using IT innovation to save time and money.

The division's proposed service rates for Fiscal Year 2023 are [now available](#). Shared website hosting costs decreased over 70 percent from FY2022 due to increased adoption across campus. Some data center services such as network switches and firewalls are increasing due to rising hardware costs.

To assist in the implementation of MGT Report recommendations, the division created nomination forms for 41 working groups. Forms were accepted from campus members as well as former students and those outside the university. Nominations were received through Microsoft Forms and saved to SharePoint so nominees could be extracted for each group. A total of 2,904 nominations were received from 1,646 submissions.

The division is [using ServiceNow to help the university accept requests for free at-home COVID-19 testing kits](#). As of February 15, over 40,000 kits have been requested on campus.

The Division of IT [won three top honors](#) in the 2021-2022 Special Interest Group on University and College Computing Services (SIGUCCS) competition. The division was recognized in the categories of social media, short video and public/mobile website.

A new Electronic and Information Resources (EIR) Accessibility Awareness [TrainTraq course \(2114218\)](#) provides foundational accessibility knowledge across The Texas A&M University System. The course is the result of a collaboration of EIR accessibility coordinators, training specialists, and instructional designers across the System and will be required of all Texas A&M employees beginning fall 2022.

Health IT created a process and [accompanying webpage](#) for Texas A&M Health members who are scheduled to travel internationally to export-controlled countries to request loaner laptops. Equipment loans provide secure, standard functionality and software for traveling abroad with a lowered risk of exposure or loss of important university data.

PROJECT PROGRESS

As plans are underway for the [Next Generation Aggie Network](#), improvement continues on the existing network. The West Campus and Teague data center uplinks were [recently upgraded from 40GB to 100GB](#). Fiber was upgraded in 36 buildings and added to six new locations. The Virtual Private Network (VPN) was improved in January with an increase in service bandwidth and the addition of redundancy in case of a data center outage.

The Division of IT is working with the Division of Marketing and Communications to select a new enterprise email tool for campus. The new tool will replace Maestro email software. Technical meetings are being scheduled with potential vendors.

AggieCloud has been upgraded to the VMware NSX-T platform. As part of the upgrade, the service's vRealize Suite environment was updated to version 8.

The contract with the Syncplicity file sharing service has ended and customers no longer have access to the service. All customers who indicated they needed their files have had their data moved into OneDrive and backed up in an archive.

The division's new Problem Management/Root Cause Analysis (RCA) process is moving forward.

An RCA board has been created to review problems that have an impact on the campus community. The ServiceNow Problem Management module is being used to allow for better workflow and documentation.

The division's internal inventory system is being modified to allow those in remote areas to scan assets and run reports for the annual certification process.

This information will be checked by the Alternate Accountable Property Office before being transferred to the university's financial accounting system – FAMIS.

SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

On February 25, the Division of IT will fully implement [DMARC/DKIM security](#) and email from unapproved [@tamu.edu](#) senders will be delivered to recipients' quarantine or spam folders.

Configuration instructions for the most popular third-party email tools are available in the [Knowledge Base](#). The division will [host a Q&A Session](#) on Monday, February 28 at 10 a.m. to answer any questions that may arise after DMARC/DKIM is enforced.

Internal messages sent through Texas A&M Exchange and Microsoft Teams now receive [an additional scan](#) for malicious content. These messages are scanned with Microsoft 365 Defender and links are rewritten to use Microsoft's Safe Links domain ([safelinks.protection.outlook.com](#)). If the link leads to an attachment, it will also be scanned for malware.

System administrators can request vulnerability assessments from the division as well as credential vulnerability scans. These allow administrators to know what hackers see outside the system and how they may try to escalate privileges for phishing attempts. The scans identify vulnerable and outdated software, patch management issues and help with audits. The free scans can be requested by contacting secassessment@tamu.edu. Network level scans can also be found at csi.itsec.tamu.edu.

Security technicians at Texas A&M University at Qatar will [monitor the Texas A&M network after hours](#). The Qatar techs are receiving full training and access to the security tools used by main campus and creating a set of communication protocols.

The 6th Annual Academic Security & Counter Exploitation Program Seminar will be held March 1-3 at the Texas A&M Hotel and Conference Center. Sponsored locally by the Texas Transportation Institute, the event will feature speakers from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Science Foundation and other government organizations. Registration and program information can be found on the [main event site](#).

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CONTACT US

Please send feedback and questions to the Division of IT at tamu-it-coms@tamu.edu.