

# IT PROS IT UPDATE



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December 2021

## PARTNER SUCCESS

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**Dr. Joy Alonzo is using [STAR](#) cloud-based research resources as she studies breakthrough infections among 18-29 year olds who received the Moderna vaccine.** The work is part of Texas A&M's participation in the [Prevent COVID U](#) program through the [COVID-19 Prevention Network \(CoVPN\)](#).

**The College of Engineering's Department of Engineering Technology and Industrial Distribution is using the [IoT network for student capstone projects](#).** By harnessing the functionality of IoT, students can expand their knowledge and usage of technologies they encounter in daily life.

**[The Texas Apiary Inspection Service Beekeeper Portal](#) will soon accept online payments for permits through its website with coding from the division.** The site and online database streamlines administrative procedures, improves efficiency for inspectors and safeguards the apiary industry.

## NEW & NOTEWORTHY

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**Starting Tuesday, December 21, [Google Chat](#) will be available to campus members.** Google Chat is integrated into Texas A&M Gmail and available as a standalone app. Currently, there is interoperability between Google Hangouts and Chat, and campus members can continue to use Hangouts as their preferred chat application.

**The [Duo Net-ID Two Factor Authentication website](#) was recently redesigned.** The new site makes it easier for users to manage their duo-enrolled devices and quickly find answers to the most popular support questions.

[Google announced the U2F standard will no longer be supported in Chrome](#) beginning in February 2022. Duo security key users who registered their security key with a Chrome-based browser, or who use a Chrome-based browser to log in, will be required to select 'Use Security Key' each time they reach the Duo prompt. The Duo change is expected to take effect in January.

**The division is designing and piloting a university-wide endpoint management solution based on the Microsoft Intune platform.** The pilot team is working closely with the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine, Engineering and Architecture to ensure solutions will meet and exceed the needs of the campus community.

**In partnership with colleges across campus, the division processed over \$271,000 in new computers, docks, monitors and other classroom technology designed for faculty and teaching.** The orders were purchased from multiple vendors, received, sorted and distributed to the designated college. This first-of-its-kind partnership has received positive feedback from all involved.

**The Division IT is working with university Marketing and Communication to identify and purchase a new email distribution tool for campus.** The project team includes representatives from across campus. The new tool will replace the current BulkMail system powered by L-Soft Maestro.

Health IT created a [Digital Backpack](#) for students and [Digital Briefcase](#) for employees to make it easier for new Aggies to get started with technology. The overviews offer at-a-glance information about IT resources at Texas A&M Health, especially for new student orientation and employee onboarding.

## PROJECT PROGRESS

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**The [migration to Microsoft 365](#) from Texas A&M Exchange is almost complete!** Service accounts and public folders will be moved to the cloud soon. A BIG thank you to the entire campus IT community for your help and participation in this important initiative.

**A self-service Shared Mailbox Creation Tool (Beta) was added to the [Exchange Management app](#).** The tool allows admins to create, manage and delete shared mailboxes. Instructions for creating a shared mailbox are in the [Knowledge Base](#).

**Microsoft Teams accounts can now send and receive one-to-one messages with users from other organizations that allow it.** This means campus members can collaborate directly with other universities, organizations, or vendors on a regular basis. Additional information is available in the [Knowledge Base](#).

**The [Aggie Innovation Platform \(AIP\)](#) now has a Continuous Improvement/Continuous Development (CI/CD) pipeline to create autonomous, virtualized server images or templates that run on a diverse set of cloud environments.** The [AIP-managed images](#) are ready for customers to use within their linked AWS accounts, saving one to two days of work and avoiding errors that can result from building an image directly from the hardware.

**DocuSign changed their pricing structure for the upcoming year** and Texas A&M will be charged per user with authority to send documents for signatures (Sender Accounts) instead of per document signed. As a result of this change, **Sender Accounts that have not sent a document for signature since January 1, 2021 will be converted to User Accounts before February 1, 2022.** These users will still be able to sign DocuSign documents but cannot create documents and request signatures.

**Over the past few months, the [Next Gen Aggie Network](#) team made many presentations to campus stakeholders as well as captured hundreds of survey responses with input for the new network.** Campus feedback is being consolidated and an Executive Summary will be presented to the Board of Regents in early 2022.

**The network path from the campus edge to the West Campus and Main Campus data centers (including the data center firewalls) will be upgraded from 40G to 100G.** The upgrade is scheduled for Tuesday, December 21 from midnight to 6 a.m. Any disruption to connectivity to the data centers should be brief.

**To increase VPN bandwidth and add geographical redundancy, the division will move the hardware supporting [connect.tamu.edu](https://connect.tamu.edu) to the Networking DMZ infrastructure on December 17 from 12:10 a.m. - 6:30 a.m.** Multiple VPN outages can be expected during the maintenance window, and all users will be required to reconnect to VPN after the maintenance is complete.

**To prevent data loss when the Texas A&M Syncplicity contract expires December 21, the division is contacting users who have not moved and deleted their data from the service.** If you still have an active account, please contact Help Desk Central at 979.845.8300 or [helpdesk@tamu.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu.edu) and let us know if you need help moving or deleting your files.

**Outdated paging amplifiers are being replaced in buildings across campus.** The amplifiers are connected to fire panels to broadcast Code Maroon messages.

**IT Governance has established [several new advisory bodies](#) to tackle important initiatives.** A Collaboration Platforms Working Group and Identity Management Requirements Working Group were created. In addition, a task force was formed to provide recommendation reports on document signing products and to review Adobe licensing credentials.

## SECURITY SPOTLIGHT

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**The division is working to ensure legitimate emails sent from an @tamu.edu domain using a third-party email tool are properly configured now that the Domain-based Message Authentication, Reporting & Conformance (DMARC) tool is enabled in reporting mode.** The DMARC initiative will be completed in early 2022 and, once fully implemented, will prevent attackers from spoofing the @tamu.edu domain.

The [Cybersecurity Apprenticeship Program \(CAP\)](#) recently recruited 22 new students to help protect Texas A&M by working on live, real-world security data. Upon graduation, CAP participants leave Texas A&M “security certified” with years of deep cybersecurity experience. The division’s CAP program is recognized by the National Security Agency (NSA).

**To reduce the attack surface at the campus border, firewall openings unused for 365 consecutive days will be removed.** The number of openings have been reduced by about 20% this quarter.

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## CONTACT US

Please send feedback and questions to the Division of IT at [tamu-it-coms@tamu.edu](mailto:tamu-it-coms@tamu.edu).