Technology Services would like to share information about an important plan to help Fresno State meet the growing demands of technology within education in the Digital Age. We call this endeavor the Common Ground Initiative.

This initiative is part of the changes we have undertaken to deliver effective, quality support for technology during a crucial time in higher education. In July 2010, we reorganized Information Technology Services and Campus Information Systems into one department called Technology Services. The move was prompted by our commitment to handle the challenges of budget constraints while adopting practices and structures that fit our context and provide long-term benefits. We greatly appreciated everyone's patience and understanding during that transition.

The reorganization spurred the idea for the Common Ground Initiative. We wanted to hone our focus on service and support for the thousands of desktop and laptop computers provided by Fresno State.

As we all know, technology is increasingly integral not only to our students' education but to our jobs as faculty, researchers, staff and administrators. In the last five years, we have all seen the incredible growth of laptops, tablet devices and smartphones.

The Common Ground Initiative is vital to our management of Fresno State's expanding inventory of laptops, desktops and other technological assets. Technology Services believes the Common Ground Initiative will improve our efficiency and the quality of our services. Technology Services developed the strategy by including Fresno State technical support staff, administrators and after receiving feedback from faculty and staff. Being aware that other campuses have undertaken similar efforts, our department consulted with different schools to compare plans that would provide insights.

To date, the Common Ground Initiative has accomplished several goals. These include establishing standards for technology purchases; forming a Mac Management Task Force to develop tools and common practices for Apple computers; and creating a PC Management Task Force to develop tools and common practices for PCs.

Now, we want to move forward with the next phases of the initiative:

- ⚔ Remote Support Services will be broadened to further increase efficiency and timely support for PCs and Macs provided by Fresno State. Many of our employees already take advantage of remote services, rather than wait for desk-side assistance. Now, employees will see improvements as we expand the use of remote support and establish standard practices. To ensure privacy, Technology Services has a procedure that requires the user's consent to participate in a remote support session. The user may elect to "opt-in" to receive remote support, or request a desk-side appointment.

We want to establish standard practices and tools for these computers. This will give us consistency in numerous areas. It will also help support staff be more effective when providing support to end-users by providing more flexibility as to when changes are applied to their systems resulting in better management of campus software licenses. However, we recognize that standard practices cannot apply in every case.
- ⚔ We will continue to support standards for technology purchases. We encourage

employees to consult with their IT Liaison about recommended equipment and programs. (Exceptions may be made if the employee's MPP has approved a business rationale for it.)

- ⚔ Employees must use Active Directory when logging onto their computers. This single step improves security.

Security, of course, is a major issue. The measures in the Common Ground Initiative will strengthen the safeguards for confidential information. Technology Services wants to assure employees that the initiative will not be more intrusive than previous security steps. Technology Services respects the expectations of faculty and staff that they can use their computers with confidence in privacy. However, the university wants to do its best to help employees protect their research and other materials from ill-intentioned outsiders, whose objectives are disruptive and destructive.

For example, outsiders use fraudulent phishing emails to steal a person's identity. These emails ask for personal information, or direct the user to websites or phone numbers seeking personal data. These deceptive emails can look official, by copying logos or other information from the websites of banks and other businesses. But there are ways to identify phishing emails, such as misspelled words, generic greetings and their use of scare tactics. Technology Services asks everyone to be vigilant.

In summary, Technology Services believes the Common Ground Initiative bolsters our ability to serve the Fresno State community. The benefits include consistent campus standards, timely responses to service requests, support for innovation, security improvements and cost-controlling efforts. You will be receiving additional communications before changes affect you and your area.