

Problems with the proposed Computer Use Policy

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I was indeed very sorry to read the proposed Computer Use Policy and to find it muddle-headed. As a professor of computer systems design I see a clear need for reasonable, updateable and negotiated policies about our vital computer resources. This proposal reads as a hodge-podge of conflicting concepts and *technically incorrect* suggestions. This is a proposed policy in search of consistent procedures for application. As it stands it would neither protect computer resources nor encourage collaborative research and teaching for which our university is known. Here are a few serious problems for your consideration:

1). Research: As Principle Investigators (PI) and research leaders we are required to protect human subjects data according to Institutional Research Board (IRB) policy and procedures. There is a complete training and testing procedure for IRB responsibilities and we take these very seriously. The proposal not only does NOT acknowledge IRB procedures and safe guards but also has provisions, which explicitly conflict with IRB policies. Should my colleagues and I take our research off line to our own computers?

2). Teaching and Learning: Our primary responsibility as educators is to motivate and encourage undergraduate students to become confident learners. Here are two examples of why #13 of the proposed policy will severely interfere with the process of teaching and learning.

a). Among American born students the most frequently chosen research paper topics are : suicide, abortion, eating disorders and sexual abuse. All of these topics would trigger (at minimum) section d of article 13. Should we prohibit students from researching socially sensitive subjects?

b). Among foreign born students the number one concern is continuation of visa status. Monitoring conducted under all proposed sections of article 13 could trigger a trail of trauma for students who

are visa carrying guests in our university. Do we wish to cut CUNY off from the increasing number of foreign and visa protected students who are sought after by other universities?

3). Technical: All IT professional know that the best technical safeguards are well chosen and updated firewall software and hardware and technical monitoring to shut off ports which are either under assault or are launching assaults. Sections 13 b, c, and d indicate NO awareness of the technical processes that all IT professionals are trained in. At the same time they appear to pass responsibility and liability on to the user rather than acknowledge that it is the responsibility of IT to install appropriate software and hardware protection. Should we assume that this proposal was written by lawyers without the inclusion of the technical professionals who currently work 24/7 to protect our computer resources?

4). Procedures: All policies must have clearly written procedures for implementation. This one does not. Where are the checks and balances? Where are the representatives of student groups? staff? the union? Why does it not include or acknowledge advance notice similar to that included in other CUNY policies? Why do our own Internet Service Providers (ISPs) offer us more protection than this proposed university policy?