

UTK Faculty Senate Resolution on the
Use of Social Security Numbers

Approved at the February 5, 2007 Faculty Senate Meeting

Whereas:

The Social Security Number (SSN) was designed solely as an identification number for use with the Social Security Administration; and

Whereas:

Over the years, the SSN has been used as a unique personal identifier throughout the UT system; and

Whereas:

The SSN is used in an unencrypted format in several systems across campus including parking services, on ID cards, in the Libraries, and in the Benefits office; and

Whereas:

There has been at least one instance where hackers had access to large numbers of SSN through unsecured servers on campus; and

Whereas:

Theft of the SSN can lead to identity theft with its consequent time, credit, and monetary damage; and

Whereas:

Technology exists to replace the SSN with another unique number for most uses; and

Whereas:

Technology also exists to encrypt identification numbers;

Be it resolved:

That the Faculty Senate asks the University Administration to halt the use of the SSN as an identifier, to the extent feasible and with the highest priority; and

Be it further resolved:

That the University create a written policy specifying acceptable uses of the SSN, specifying proper encryption to be implemented for any legitimate stored uses of the SSN, and specifying that any other use of the SSN is unacceptable; and

Be it further resolved:

That the University retroactively assign a unique identifying number to each faculty, staff and student whose ID Number is the same as their SSN and designate that number as the new ID Number; and

Be it further resolved:

That the University inform all affected persons of their new ID Number; and

Be it further resolved:

That the University inventory use of the SSN across campus and inform all inappropriate users of the need to immediately halt the use of that number and to remove it from existing files; and

Be it further resolved:

That the University request all departments to immediately begin using individual ID numbers for faculty, staff, and students instead off SSN (except as provided for in the policy above); and

Be it further resolved:

That the Faculty Senate urges the University to work with outside vendors (including, but not limited to, companies which provide benefits to faculty and/or staff) to stop the use of the SSN in their business with the University to the extent feasible; and

Be it further resolved:

That the Faculty Senate strongly urges all student, faculty, and staff members to replace all university identification cards which include the SSN with new identification freely available through the University.