Here are some considerations and recommendations with the first being that SFOS has no intent to convert everyone to UA Gmail.

Those who now use UAF "ff' or'fn' accounts will be converted to UA Gmail within the next 6 months or so with 6 months of forwarding from the old account to the new, except upon request to OIT to extend. Most of those users are faculty, with some admin staff in Juneau as well. Others, such as MAP use a variety of mail servers. UAS and UAA have their own schedule for Gmail conversion, but are similar.

SFOS maintains three mail servers with about this many users per server:
- sfos = 260
- ims = 150
- guru = 8

We utilize our mail servers, particularly topcat.sfos for back-end server support, our mailing lists, and for those who are not otherwise or no longer affiliated with the UA system, sometimes as a courtesy, mostly necessary to do SFOS business. We also have a number of service accounts for groups, e.g. arrv. UA Gmail does not currently provide for service/group accounts.

Having our own mail servers gives SFOS IT staff the ability to do some things that OIT cannot or would not do as a matter of course to service our users. If on UA Gmail, users would be primarily relying on OIT for support, except for mail that is locally downloaded.

UA Gmail can be configured as pop or imap using Thunderbird, Outlook, MacMail, etc. and of course supports webmail. Total quota at no charge is 7gb, much larger than UAF mail. SFOS mail only limits in boxes (300mb), however most users won't approach the 7gb limit for total mail. UA Gmail IMAP support currently requires a separate side password that OIT must set up.

UA Gmail is being stored and services in the Lower 48, obviously with some risk that it won't be accessible with a statewide network outage.

If users want to try UA Gmail, we encourage it. It also has the various ties to calendar, chat, and other collaboration tools. Mail conversion of your UAF email account is required to use those features with UA authentication, but you can use them in conjunction with your SFOS email account. All UA staff, faculty, and students will have a UA Gmail account matching their edir userid, same as all UAF now has an email account. UA Gmail has good spam protection as well. The web interface is a bit busy for my taste, but then I've not adjusted to Office 2007 yet either.

For those who wish to move from sfos/ims/guru mail to UA Gmail, we can forward their email address or if they want it in the opposite direction, they can forward to their sfos email. That being said, we don't see that our email services are going away quite yet, though we wouldn't mind having guru users converted, as we maintain this server for only a few users. We also have nearly 3 years left on our license for updates and replacement for the Barracuda Spam Firewall. We can also help with mail migration from our servers to UA Gmail.

As folks do convert to UA Gmail, a maintenance task will be required to change every one of their email addresses in our 10-12 list serves. While users can change their own email on the listserv, practically it isn't going to happen in many cases. Ditto with edir listings. We also have user listings in mysfos that would need to be updated. Some coordination for these tasks should be established.

https://www.alaska.edu/google/index.xml is the link for UA Gmail.