

ITCC Annual Report 2016-2017

For this and our monthly minutes, see:

<http://facultysenate.mst.edu/infortechnology/>

Elected Officers:

Chair:	Thomas Vojta, Physics
Vice Chair:	John Singler, Mathematics
Research Subcommittee Chair:	Richard Dawes, Chemistry
eLearning Subcommittee Chair:	Jeff Schramm, History & Political Science
Computer Security Subcommittee Chair:	Daniel Tauritz, Computer Science

ITCC met regularly every second Wednesday of the month. In addition, we had a special meeting in April 2017 concerning changes in the IT Budget. The following issues were addressed by ITCC in the 2016/17 academic year:

- 1. Learning Management System.** The transition from Blackboard to Canvas as S&T's learning management system (LMS) was discussed extensively in the September 2016 meeting. No major IT related issues appeared as Canvas was implemented; the topic was therefore not discussed further.
- 2. CIO Search.** In the fall, ITCC also discussed the (failed) CIO Search. During the October meeting, ITCC adopted a motion urging the Provost the restart the search for a new CIO a.s.a.p.. This issue is resolved as Dan Uetrecht was appointed CIO in June 2017.
- 3. Purchasing policy (BPM 1204).** UM System has been working on an update of BPM 1204 that regulates IT purchases. The update will require IT approval for many IT related purchases. ITCC discussed this issues in several of the 2016/17 meetings. ITCC's input ensured that the draft policy is sufficiently flexible as to not be in the way of teaching and research. In particular, each campus will develop its own implementation, and there will be exceptions from the required approvals based on classes of devices/services and also based on projects/people.
- 4. Two-factor authentication.** Rollout of SecureAuth, the UM System based two-factor authentication system, attracted attention not just in ITCC but also elsewhere on campus, in particular in the department chair's council. Concerns were raised both about privacy

(providing personal information such as cell phone numbers or private email accounts) and, in particular, about productivity loss if two factors are necessary for routine operations several times a day. ITCC urged the introduction of time limits (second factor only required once a month or perhaps week) and/or trusted machines.

5. Research Computing: Research Computing Subcommittee chair Richard Dawes led a successful initiative to improve high-performance computing (HPC) on campus. It secured funding (\$400k from the Provost and \$100k from IT) for an expansion of the HPC cluster. Richard also pushed for the establishment of the High Performance Computing Research Center at S&T.

6. IT Personnel Issues: ITCC discussed repeatedly the difficulties IT has in finding and hiring suitable staff as well as the impact on research and teaching on campus. This is a particular problem in the research support group. The lead HPC support person left, and IT has been unable to find suitable candidates, partially because IT is not able to offer competitive salaries. The topic gained further urgency in view of the budget cuts of spring 2017.

7. IT Budget Cuts. The IT budget situation was a major topic during the February, March and April meetings. The IT budget has been cut/ is being cut to a significantly larger extent than the campus as a whole. ITCC had a special meeting with the Provost on April 6 concerning the IT budget. ITCC urged the Provost to restore funding for research support, in particular in view of the HPC hardware expansion (see point 5) that could otherwise not be fully utilized. The budget cuts will lead to service reductions. At the end of the 2016/17 academic year, the situation was still in flux both w.r.t. how large the cuts will be and what services will need to be reduced.

8. Further topics: Further ITCC topics included the move to a new Microsoft Exchange server, data center relocation, the move of parts of IT staff to the Mercy building, and the outsourcing of printer support. Details can be found in the ITCC meeting minutes.

The first meeting of 2017/18 academic year will be held on **Wednesday, September 13, 2017 at 4:00 PM, Room 208 Physics**, unless otherwise announced prior to that date. The agenda will include election of new officers, and the Scheduling of Upcoming Meetings.