

April 10, 2013 ITCC minutes

Attending: Wunsch, Smith, Gosavi, Cesario, Crosbie, Brady, Trish, Bookout, Vojta, Lutzen, Dawes, O'Brennan, Bax

Meeting called to order at 4:00 PM

1. Approval of last month's minutes.
Vojta, Gosavi, passed unanimously
2. Strategic Planning pertaining to IT (Greg)

Greg Smith met with strategic planning folks today to verify which levers are selected to move forward on, and which IT owns. It is also worth mentioning that Jeff Schramm and Henry Weibe are heading recommendation of levers for distance education / online education.

IT needs to form action items for the strategic plan due June 3.

All campuses are being asked to do this. S&T is ahead of the game.

Modify conventional methods of teaching and research to accommodate technology that will enhance teaching and research.

There's a big concern that IT salaries are not competitive and we're at risk of continued brain drain.

3. Computer Security Subcommittee Report and Discussion Topics (Don, Karl)
 - Mandatory Training Requirement
 - Password reset policy

It is critically important to roll out training before the password change policy. Otherwise, the change could weaken rather than strengthen security.

Password Safe is very strong and not too hard to use. Also it is included in your image. So people should seriously consider using that tool.

Training software could be most effective if developed here. We can do more than the tools out there if the resources are invested.

It's important to have something of high quality to avoid the pacifier effect.

4. Educational Technology / Distance Technology Discussion

VCC and EDtech resources are a big advantage on this campus. Revenue stream from distance education is significant.

Faculty systemwide are being encouraged to offer core courses online. This helps to enable faster earning of degrees.

We need to make sure any new initiatives benefit S&T in the long run.

The goal should be to enhance learning for students AND increase efficiencies for teachers. Whatever can be brought in to enhance student learning is an example of something that would be harder in a traditional lecture-only format. There is some upfront investment by instructor but there is a return on this investment and an increase in efficiency. The total time required might be similar to what is done currently but the time is spent in different modes.

Many examples exist: Q&A pools for quizzes, course documents or videos on Blackboard, guest speakers via WebEx, etc.

We need to address retention, time to graduation, needs of students on co-op, dealing with time conflicts, etc.

Co-ops are a huge success but they extend time to graduation, but if we can alleviate those issues these efforts are worthwhile.

Faculty members who tried these technologies liked them. For example, it is easier to teach at a distance, bring in guest speakers for free, etc.

Input requested about what are barriers?

Not enough distance classrooms. All need to be distance. Perhaps resources could be configured to allow multiple classes to be supported simultaneously by a producer or producer / assistant combo.

One common concern is that people are so overworked that it is hard to work on gaining efficiencies.

We certainly don't want to lose our advantage of giving close attention to students. Be very careful not to lose our competitive advantage.

We need to ensure that faculty metrics reward efforts to participate in distance education.

We also need to maximize the possible visibility that comes from embracing distance learning technology.

Manpower is an issue: facilitators can help.

Is there a way to move to less-frequent lists of software requests? IT is planning to move that direction.

Lots of things are copyright protected and these offerings are of great interest but they have a cost.

The Chemistry department is moving heavily into online/blended learning. But there's also a place for traditional chalkboard lectures.

5. Research Computing Update

This is a very important enabling technology of interest to most faculty members. Human resources, such as experts in research computing are a resource that is hard to replicate and can really be leveraged.

Slide presentation by Mark Bookout. (Attached)

2 FTE, 11 Students

Academic Cluster (not research but training) Upgrades are in process.

Visualization systems making progress. IT would like to bring quad resolution in for review and display as well as a wrap-around screen.

As nodes age and come off warranty, what would this look like for faculty members, or should they be seeking funding or computing time from other entities?

One model IT has experienced success with is where we (faculty winning proposals) buy machines but share resources.

IT has funded the expansion of HPC. Utilization is impressive at 87%.

During the ITCC meeting, a power outage occurred on campus but IT verified that HPC power is still up.

We are much too reliant in a small number of highly-qualified individuals in IT in general and Research Computing in particular.

We have just invited two people to campus for entry-level positions in research computing.

6. Units are being asked to plan for cuts of 2%, 3.5%, 5% etc. How would this look at IT if these cuts come to pass?

Much of this is the normal cycle of budget challenges. If cuts come, new projects would get cut first, and possible staff development, perhaps even student FTEs. But the majority of IT's budget is for operations. Optional items are expanding and upgrading services, so cuts would result into moving into maintenance modes.

Answers from the units are due by April 30.

Meeting adjourned at 5:40 PM