

Attachment B

Summary of Survey Comments

The Survey of IT Strengths, Weaknesses and Values allowed respondents to enter open-ended suggestions for additional items that might have been overlooked by the IRT Steering Committee. Over seventy (70) respondents used the opportunity to provide input on a variety of IT related issues. That input is briefly summarized below in eight different categories. The complete text of the open-ended survey responses, as well as the quantitative results, can be found at www.csus.edu/irt/itsurvey.

Classrooms

One in seven faculty respondents noted deficiencies in the state of teaching technologies in Sacramento State's classrooms. Typical comments about the state of such classroom technology include:

- "None of the classrooms I teach in provide access to any kind of modern technology."
- "Most elementary schools are better equipped!"
- "Can't believe that not all classrooms are smart."
- "The variation in access to IT equipment in classrooms is a huge problem."
- We need money to go to better classroom equipment!!! The digital projectors (even the new ones) are a disaster!!!!

Other problems noted were the inability to be scheduled into existing smart classrooms, the absence of whiteboards instead of chalkboards, lack of equipment to videotape classes, spotty and inconsistent equipment quality. Two faculty members complained about the inconvenience of having to use faculty-owned laptops in classrooms, while one complained about the planned change from use of laptops to use of permanently installed classroom computers for faculty use (in addition to use of laptops).

Clearly, the above comments add credence to the weakness that "...classroom technology and classroom support have been inadequate", as well as the weakness that "the integration of technology with pedagogy on campus has been inconsistent."

Faculty Concerns

Other faculty members expressed concerns about other issues related to their use of technology for teaching. Two noted the inadequacy of equipment for students in computer labs, Several mentioned the need for more training for faculty on the integration of technology with pedagogy; one even suggested that most faculty should be required to take workshops about technology issues. Another said that faculty members need more information regarding what IT can do for them, so they know what they are missing and what questions to ask. Two respondents cited the need for more support of on-line classes, including the need for training of faculty and the need for more library resources for support of on-line learning. A related response was a complaint about the lack of available test proctors when a class can't fit into a single computer lab for an online test.

These responses lend credence to the perceived weakness that "The integration of technology with pedagogy on campus has been inconsistent."

Central Versus College/Department

The topic that received the most feedback in the written comments was the issue of the relationship between university-wide IT support and college/department-based IT support, with most such comments coming from staff members. Some comments cited the need for a balanced approach that considers both aspects of support, including:

- "I have very much appreciated the dual aspect of technology--having a central work force to be planning for and maintaining the classroom technology, while allowing for the more individualized and knowledgeable support for specific departmental, faculty and college needs," and
- "Turf wars and an unwillingness to share resources impede cooperative progress."
- "I believe it is extremely important to maintain quality and collaborative working relationships with the college IT's"

A number of comments were received cautioning against forgetting department-specific needs, including:

- "Our current decentralized IT environment enhances our instructional programs due to hardworking, knowledgeable, forward thinking, local ITCs who are aware of our College's needs."
- Technology administrators need to understand that each learning environment has its own unique technological demands.

A number of related comments commended the college/department-specific knowledge of local ITC staff members.

Other respondents were openly hostile even to consideration of campus-wide IT needs, including:

- "I am all for collaboration, but I just don't like it shoved down my throat."
- "IT at CSUS = Big bureaucracy with a an overpriced chargeback system that doesn't support users well"
- "I am not in favor of a centralized IT decision-making model that dictates from the top;"
- "Do not centralize all IT functions"
- "I have serious concerns about the assumption that a centralized approach to IRT is the automatic way to approach our IRT needs."

The above comments (and their strength) certainly lend support to the following two strengths cited in the survey: 1) "Many areas of campus have localized IT support;" and 2) "There is recognition of the need to use information technology for unique and diverse needs." The statements also indicate why the suggested strengths related to "a new collaborative spirit" and "a willingness of IT staff members from different areas to collaborate together" were not supported by the survey results.

Service

Five respondents addressed the need for attention to customer service:

- "You need to work on customer service; you need to get more people cross trained in all areas."
- "Efficiency is also about meeting the needs of your constituents and allowing for flexibility and personalized services."
- "Response time is very important when we are trying to provide services to our users."
- "I am concerned that technology is increasingly substituted for "service," meaning people helping people on campus."

These comments appear to be addressed by the suggested value statement, "We will promote effective customer service by making it easy for our clients to understand and use our services."

CMS

Although CMS (the Common Management System implementation of PeopleSoft) received only four comments, all of the comments were negative:

- “The information management system seems to be very problematic--I hope that the bugs will be worked out soon.”
- “CSU has made an enormous error by implementing CMS.”
- “The CMS system does not consistently have optimal time between transactions. This is very frustrating, “ and simply
- “I hate CMS”

One respondent asked that specific uses of CMS (e.g. financial accounting) not be supported through the general campus Help Desk.

Equipment Replacement

Numerous comments were made throughout the survey supporting the presence of the weakness that: “There has been little planning for replacement of information technology equipment.” Several comments were made regarding outdated classroom and computer lab equipment, while the following responses cited problems with replacement of desktop computers:

- “I am unhappy with IT on this campus. I am using an old, old computer that is a fourth generation hand me down”
- “I have had the same computer for 6 years and there seems to be no process for replacing my now outdated computer.”
- Faculty and students seem to be at the bottom of the list of constituents. Faculty in our department are trying to cobble together their teaching and research using machines that are six or more years old.
- “I feel that \$\$\$ is greatly lacking to upgrade staff computers.”

One faculty member also commented on the need to use old versions of software for teaching.

Accessibility

There is growing recognition of our campus having a strength through the recognition that “making technology accessible for all has become a solid campus commitment. A statement that summarized this sentiment was: “I think we need to keep in mind accessibility for all our students, students with disabilities too. This should be part of the larger picture here on campus.” One individual working in the office that provides support for students with disabilities cited several specific areas where such support is lacking, including support for students taking online courses.

One faculty member expressed serious concern that faculty would not be adequately supported in their efforts to make instructional materials accessible to all students; they are so concerned they described the accessibility project (ATI) as “a train wreck in progress.”

Communications

Improvement of communications across campus was highlighted in the following comment:

- Excellent communication is also an essential element, which technology supports well.

In the overall survey responses, lack of communication in the past about IT issues was seen as a weakness at Sacramento State. A specific weakness of campus communications that was noted was: “Inadequate maintenance of electronic address lists for campus community and inability to segment lists.” Comments were also made on the weakness of web support, including:

- “We could use lots more support for web development. We’re vastly underutilizing our web site potential simply because we lack the staff resources to keep it dynamic,” and
- “I think that the whole csus.edu website should be changed because it is really not user-friendly.”

Staff Concerns

One respondent cited the importance of not forgetting the IT needs of those staff members who work swing and night shifts. Other comments, adding to those noted in the section above on College/Department needs, were made by IT staff members:

- “Need more training of IT Staff” and
- “We need to ensure we are staying competitive in salaries in order to keep such staff.”

The Survey Instrument

A half-dozen individuals made negative comments on the survey instrument, with most of those indicating they did not complete the survey, including:

- “I don’t like the way that the questions are worded.”

- "I am unable to complete this survey due to the poor quality of the survey instrument."
- "This survey was vague and written in that "business-managementese" language that I find meaningless."
- "What is this supposed to be? A make current IT manger feel good survey?"

Other comments about the survey itself were complimentary:

- "This survey is a good step towards improvement and sustainability of the existing resources, the next step is to have all the stakeholders work together towards the common goal. Keep us informed and good luck."
- "Thanks for the opportunity to state my opinion!"
- "Excellent survey and thank you for reaching out to the campus community for feedback."

Other Issues

Other comments were not easily categorized, but made important points, such as:

- "Decisions that affect the highest number of people on campus are made by very few people, out of touch with their constituents...."
- "I would like folks to travel to other states (not just CSU' s) to see what / how REAL universities collaborate... it just doesn't need to be this difficult to do things here..."
- "Hopefully, more faculty and staff will be consulted regarding future decisions about IT on this campus, not just the IT advisory committee."
- "I was glad to see technology connected to assessment at the recent assessment summit, and I'd like to see a formal and sustained connection as assessment becomes a bigger and bigger issue. I think technology can play a critical role in assessment, and I think faculty could use help in this area."
- "You could have another Web based forum on IT and its support of our education mission where you can inform the general population as to what products and software is available for use in teaching and get their requests or comments."