

**Information Technology Strategic Planning Forum**  
**February 17, 2009 (Tuesday)**  
**4:00PM-5:00PM**  
**Library 11**

**OVERVIEW OF THE IT STRATEGIC PLAN**

Larry Gilbert, Vice-President & CIO of Information Resources & Technology, introduced the members of the IT Steering Committee and gave an overview on what drives Information Technology strategic planning. The IT Strategic Plan Mission Statement was presented. Larry described how IT is helping to meet teaching and learning and student experience needs within the mission of the campus Strategic Plan.

**OPEN FORUM COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS**

**Issue 1:**

Sue Hall, Mechanical Engineering, stated that different departments on campus have specific needs that need to be addressed in addition to campus-wide needs and that it is important to maintain IT staff to meet those needs in the various departments. Sue also posed a number of additional questions, focusing on the potential conflict between mandates like CMS from the Chancellor's Office and campus needs.

Larry Gilbert stated that local needs definitely needed to be considered along with campus-wide needs. In regard to CMS, campus CIOs have become increasingly sensitive to the impact of CMS mandates on campus operations. When the Chancellor's Office recently decided to move to a common financial system within CMS, CIOs were quite vocal about the need to ensure that campus needs would be adequately addressed. Sacramento State actually has a representative on the steering committee for the common financial system to help ensure that is the case. Larry noted that he meets with a CSU system-wide committee on a monthly basis, with regular attention paid to the impact of Chancellor's Office CMS requirements on our campus.

Sue asked who the contact person is for CMS issues.

Larry noted that Helen Norris is the new Associate Vice President of Administrative Computing Services and also said that he was ultimately responsible for CMS issues on campus. He volunteered to answer more detailed questions about CMS after the forum. .

**Issue 2:**

Edward Jones, Associate VP, Student Life stated that his department has an ongoing need to purchase software programs like the Star-Rez system [used for Residential Life] and asked what level of IRT involvement is needed in their computer-related purchases.

Larry Gilbert stated that neither the IRT group nor the Steering Committee can make decisions about other departments' functions and needs; decisions about those needs are best made by the staff most familiar with the functions in question. However, it is important that there be collaboration with IRT when the software involves use of CMS and other centrally operated IT functions. In many cases, that collaboration is in the interest of the department purchasing the software, in that IRT can often identify ways to operate the software and hardware less expensively. The choice is up to the department.

### **Issue 3:**

An audience member stated that she has received excellent ongoing support from her college-based IT staff and has appreciated the immediacy of that local IT help. Larry Gilbert agreed that local IT staff are important and that he appreciates the importance of those localized resources. Larry also said that there's a common misperception that the strategic planning for IT is focused on centralizing IT staff and taking those resources away from local areas. He stated that there is no such plan or intention to remove ITC's from local departments. There is consideration of local IT support can collaborate with central IT staff to improve support for faculty and staff. The focus is clearly on making improvements in service, not detracting from it.

Pat Worley, IT Steering Committee Member, stated that Associated Students has their own IT Manager and there is great deal of valuable communication and collaboration between individual department IT staff and the IRT division.

### **Issue 4:**

An audience member expressed concerns about communication in terms of IRT decisions being relayed to faculty members. She stated that the IT staff from different colleges are not represented enough on IT committees and is concerned that there is not enough research on faculty and student needs to make appropriate IT decisions.

Larry Gilbert thanked the faculty member for her comments. He noted that the lack of previous IT planning and the lack of communication about IT issues to the campus had both been noted in the introduction as known weaknesses on campus. That's why the IT strategic plan is being done and why we are taking the time to hold these forums to communicate with the campus. Each section of the IT plan notes the need for continuous communication with faculty and staff. The IT Steering Committee is committed to communicating with the campus using all possible means. The lack of specific focus on technology on the committee was intentional. The IT Steering Committee was purposely composed of people who have knowledge of strategic applications of IT for academic and campus business issues. This was done to ensure a focus on campus strategic goals, not on technology for its own sake.

### **Issue 5:**

Sue Hall asked how communications on IT-related issues are being distributed.

Larry Gilbert stated that the Steering Committee distributed a survey on IT values, strengths and weaknesses to all faculty and staff. Approximately 350 completed surveys were returned. Detailed information of the survey can be found at [www.csus.edu/irt/strategicplanning](http://www.csus.edu/irt/strategicplanning). The committee also consulted comprehensive surveys of faculty on twelve different CSU campuses (including Sac State) that were completed in 2004-2005. He noted that each area of the plan cites the need to regularly survey and communicate with the campus about IT issues.

Jean-Pierre Bayard, IT Steering Committee Member, stated that the IT Steering Committee members are going to their respective constituencies to get input, and that any of the committee members can be contacted for comments and questions.

#### **Issue 6:**

An audience member asked if training materials will need to be created for changes to the CMS upgrade, and how the cost of the materials will be funded.

Larry stated that all of the CSU campuses have expressed issues about the lack of funding for training and testing of CMS upgrades and changes. That's why that issue received so much attention in the previously mentioned common finance system discussion. Currently, the Chancellor's Office provides no funding to campuses for such training and testing.

The question of whether one training developer will be responsible for support of all CMS changes on campus was raised. Larry Gilbert additional resources have been provided to help departments with CMS issues. He stated that two new training developers have been hired, as well as a new data warehouse report specialist.

#### **Issue 7:**

An audience member asked if there is a way to know the different levels of decision making. The opinion was expressed that faculty and IT staff members have no input and there is top-down decision making by people who do not have a thorough understanding of different departments' needs.

Bob Buckley, IT Steering Committee Member, stated that the IT Strategic Plan is still a project in progress and is not focused on implementation issues. We know there is a lack of resources that means we have to have some way to determine which campus priorities will be met. The mechanisms for doing that are still being worked out.

Larry Gilbert stated that an example of the effect of lack of resources on planning is the lack of funding for all needed computer lab refreshes. In the past, there were usually adequate funds at the end of the year to pay for most or all computer lab needs. That is no longer the case. So this year, the Provost and CIO worked together to provide a campus-wide fund for computer labs, received input from all colleges on needs, and devised a

method for setting priorities for the limited funding available. The result was a distribution of funds across most colleges according to a common plan.

**Issue 8:**

A staff member from the University Library stated that she has witnessed long lines of students waiting to use the general university computer lab on the second floor of the Library, and that the lab gets very warm when filled to capacity.

Another audience member then expressed concern about the implementation of the new lab reservation system. She stated that she no longer has rights to reserve a lab.

Larry reported that the increased utilization of student computer labs represents one of the key strategic issues for ITY on campus. We all know that student use of technology has accelerated rapidly. In regard to computer labs, students ate up the extra capacity provided by about 300 additional computer lab stations in a very short period of time. When IRT added an additional 150 laptops for student loan this year, students almost immediately used up that capacity too. The emergence of these student technology issues is exactly why student technology use has received so much attention in the IT strategic plan.

Larry Gilbert stated that the computer lab reservation process was moved to classroom scheduling so that scheduling of computer labs for class use can be handled at the same time faculty schedule classrooms. The process has worked smoothly for most computer lab scheduling, but recently a few glitches revealed themselves in the ad hoc scheduling of computer labs. IRT is working with Academic Affairs to determine better ways to schedule labs for faculty.

**Issue 10:**

An audience member from Financial Aid asked if of the IT Strategic Plan was to have more of an emphasis on further alignment with campus-wide strategic plans and goals.

Larry Gilbert stated that was the main intent of the IT strategic plan. The emphasis on section II about the new Data Warehouse, for example, is supposed to support evidence-based decision-making by providing strategic data to the campus. Larry welcomed further input if the questioner had specific suggestions for how the language of the plan could better align with campus strategic goals.

**Issue 11:**

An audience member raised the question of how the IT Strategic Plan in incorporating community engagement.

Larry Gilbert stated that the plan had not specifically addressed community engagement, but that web services were critical to communicating with the public all across campus.

The CIO is working with the VP of Advancement to establish a campus-wide web planning committee. Larry welcomed further input on how community engagement can be better addressed. The intention of the Strategic Plan is to involve and consider everyone's needs.

Larry thanked everyone for taking the time to attend.

*Meeting adjourned.*