

**Information Technology Strategic Planning Forum**  
**February 23, 2009 (Monday)**  
**2:00PM-3:00PM**  
**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 present and reviewed key questions that have been raised at previous forums and online. A handout was distributed containing answers to frequently asked questions. Larry asked the audience especially for input and comments on the following key questions:

- How can we best align planning for Information Technology with campus-wide strategic planning?
- How can we better align IT resources with teaching and learning?
- How can we work together to improve the efficiency of use of our scarce IT resources?

**OPEN FORUM**

**Issue 1:**

Jing Wang, Institutional research, reported that a key issue of her department is transferring old student census data to the data warehouse and Cognos. Her unit is concerned that the data on their current server is not secure. Colleges go to them for data from many years back, and their data is used for a lot of official reports.

Larry Gilbert stated that ideally all such critical data will be in the new data warehouse. The development of baseline data for current reporting is a current project. Helen Norris, the new Associate Vice President of Administrative Computing Services will be overseeing the data warehouse and would be a good resource to work with Jing and others in identifying the priority of information to be added to the data warehouse. Helen was previously in charge of Client Services at UC Berkeley, and created a data warehouse that disseminated information to over 2,000 faculty/staff. The data warehouse is critical to our efforts in evidence-based decision-making, but the project is just getting started and has a long way to go.

**Issue 2:**

An audience member raised a question about the centralization of resources and if a core IT staff will be developed.

Larry Gilbert responded that there is no intent to centralize staff or take away departments' abilities to make IT-related decisions. Institutionalization that the Strategic

Plan refers to is different than centralization or decentralization. Larry gave an example in which a unit of Student Affairs purchased a new software system and worked with IRT to install and support the hardware for that system and integrate it into CMS. The result was substantial cost savings to the unit, with no loss of autonomy or the ability to manage the software as needed. IRT's role is basically an advisory role and departments can make the final determination of their departments' and the allocation of resources on a case-by-case basis.

Mike Lee, IT Steering Committee Member, said that it makes sense to make campus-wide purchases, as it saves the campus money, but it does take more time to come to a consensus on various departments' needs and priorities.

### **Issue 3:**

Matthew Mills, audience member, asked for examples on how the current practice of making campus-wide purchases has saved money.

Mike Lee responded that Academic Affairs set aside funds for purchases of refreshed computers that were needed for departments with very specific needs. Consolidating the different purchases of many departments allowed us to make a larger purchase, which gives the university more purchasing power and negotiating possibilities.

Larry Gilbert reported that a consultant for the state attempted to find better deals on IT purchases for the Governor, but was unable to identify better deals than those that the CSU system and individual campuses were already receiving. Individual CSU campuses are increasingly working together to get quantity discounts on software and hardware, based on our huge purchasing power as the largest four-year university system in the world. The CSU system can get 25-30% discounts on system-wide purchases, which is a very significant savings compared to individual purchases. Larry's experience at his previous institution was that simple coordination of purchases across campus could result in savings of several hundred thousand dollars annually. These savings would accrue directly into the pockets of departments making the purchases.

Matt said he was concerned that campus-wide purchases would prevent departments from getting the software they needed. Larry responded that cooperation on software purchases was voluntary. No department would be preventing from acquiring the software it needs for teaching. In most cases, working cooperatively across the campus will reduce costs for everyone without limiting local choice.

### **Issue 4:**

A member of the audience asked who is making decisions about purchases of IT for teaching.

Bob Buckley, IT Steering Committee Member, stated that the Strategic Plan is needed to establish processes for making such decisions. The long-term focus of the plan is to have

central and local IT services work together. A plan needs to be created to figure out ways to respond to everyone's needs.

Larry Gilbert stated that the plan is not intended to give IRT the power to make decisions about resource allocation. Resource allocations and setting of priorities will continue to occur through departments, colleges, and divisions. The IT Steering Committee is looking for cost-effective ways for everyone to work together on purchases to mutual benefit. Departments may not be aware that other departments share their same program needs, and ordering programs together may reduce costs. It's all about improving communications and cooperation.

Jing Wang asked if there can be some kind of meeting to discuss departments' similar purchase needs.

Larry noted that there was a new software coordinator position in IRT that could be helpful in this regard and said there was also a new campus-wide hardware/software account set up by UBAC. He agreed that there needs to be better mechanisms to increase communications about software purchases.

#### **Issue 5:**

A member of the audience asked if there are timelines for IT purchasing requests; would further coordination cause delays.

Larry Gilbert responded that departments know when they need software for use and typically plan accordingly; there should not be any imposition of additional wait time to coordinate necessary purchases.

Jing Wang suggested holding meetings once a year or once a semester about departments' software needs would be useful.

Larry Gilbert said that an annual review of campus-wide software needs will take place and that he will get a list of academic software purchase requests to the Provost so that Academic Affairs can make decisions on priority purchases of software.

Otis Scott, IT Steering Committee Member, stated that departments need to provide their respective vice president with a list of their software needs. Those needs can then be relayed to the IT Steering Committee. Otis reported that his department's ITC's are well informed of the department's needs. There may be some IT functions currently being performed by the ITC's in Otis' department (College of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Studies) that could be done more efficiently if they were centralized.

Bob Buckley stated that the discussion on centralized and decentralized IT services is not balanced, and there needs to be more opinions from decentralized IT staff. For example, the College of Natural Science & Mathematics has the most need for technology services, and they are at the bottom of the colleges in terms of technology resources.

Mike Lee stated that a department's IT budget (for equipment, software, support, etc.) must be determined by the respective Dean. IT decisions cannot accommodate everyone's specific needs, but need to address what is best for the university overall.

**Issue 6:**

Laurette Suter asked how decisions about Smart Classroom designs are made. Laurette reported that faculty have problems with room setups, and are sometimes unable to use a room for their needs.

Larry Gilbert stated that a CSU Faculty Survey done in 2005 found that the number one faculty issue was lack of support for faculty using technology in the classrooms. IRT has been working with Academic Affairs to determine how to renovate and set up classrooms to meet faculty needs. Standards have been established using information from faculty members, but there is no way to set up classrooms to accommodate each individual faculty member's specific needs. The idea is to create classrooms that are flexible enough to meet a wide variety of faculty and student teaching/learning needs.

Laurette stated that faculty would like to be able to give input on classroom needs, and suggested that more surveys be sent out. Laurette's department has established a committee to meet about classroom and technology needs. Larry agreed that faculty needed to be involved in classroom design and said that was the clear intent of the IT strategic plan.

Bob Buckley of the IT Steering Committee stated that departments are encouraged to establish committees to discuss their technology needs.

Otis Scott stated that department chairs in his college serve as committee members and consult with their faculty members about hardware and software needs; this information is then given to him.

Larry Gilbert reported that CSU, Chico spends \$1 ½ million per year on classroom updates. This is such a large issue with such huge budget implications that decisions about allocation of resources for classroom upgrades necessarily must be made at an institutional level.

*Meeting adjourned.*