

Senate Computing and Information Technology Committee

February 14, 2019 -- 2:00PM

Room 717 CL

Attending: Dmitriy Babichenko, Kenny Doty, Irene Frieze, Young Lee, Donovan Harrell, Dwight Helfrich, Ralph Roskies, Michael Spring, Albert Tanjaya, Jinx Walton, Frank Wilson, Steve Wisniewski, Fran Yarger

Minutes: Minutes from January 18, 2019 meeting were approved as mailed.

New Business:

No New Items

Chair's Matters (Michael Spring)

Spring indicated that the only item he had was the discussion of IT study by Deloitte. See below.

CIO Report (Jinx Walton)

Walton indicated that she was trying to wrap up several items through the weekend. Spring asked if she had any further information about the search for the new CIO. She did not know whether the Search Committee had yet been formed.

Regarding the Deloitte IT report, Walton indicated that the new governance structure will be governed in part by the new policy on policies. She indicated that the Deloitte recommendations would have to be considered on a case by case basis once the new CIO is selected.

Learning Management System: Walton introduced Dwight Helfrich to provide more information on the LMS report. He indicated that canvas had been built with the user experience in mind. A lot of people are going with canvas. They now have 50% of the market share. There are a lot of positive things about Canvas. The Provost will make a final decision about Canvas.

The question in front of this committee is how easy the transition will be for faculty and students. CSSD and the Teaching and learning center are confident that the transition will be seamless. There were focus groups and a survey that sought faculty input into the needs the system would have to meet.

Fran Yarger feels comfortable with the new system. Babichenko thinks the new system will present a challenge for some faculty who prefer to use one up systems. Fran thinks some schools may choose to use a local version of Canvas. Discussion indicated that if the University commits to Canvas, this school will work with the University wide system.

Spring asked what Pitt's relationship with Canvas will be in terms of requests. Helfrich indicated that Canvas collects information from all its clients and builds those requests into builds.

The committee was satisfied that the cost would be equivalent to the cost of the Blackboard system. Walton indicated that the cost for the system would be negotiated by the University and it was too early to say what that cost would be. Spring asked if we had details on the service level agreement conditions and penalties. It was indicated that they would be similar to other agreements Pitt has developed. Spring asked about the relative cost of the system will be in terms of user time. Blackboard Ultra and Canvas will both be SAAS operations, and while Ultra is a couple years away, it is anticipated that the costs of conversion will be similar. Doty asked when the blackboard transition to Ultra was likely to occur. That is, will faculty be required to make two transitions? The answer was no, if we transition to Canvas, it will be before Blackboard releases ultra. Doty also asked if Canvas consultants would be available to work with us.

Spring asked for clarification on the timeline for the roll out. The goal would be to phase the Blackboard system -- courseweb -- out in May of 2020. The preferred plan is to move forward allowing initial implementation over the summer. Given a decision by May of this year, such a timeline is judged feasible. The transition would be both systematic and personal – i.e. simpler use cases should be able to be transitioned automatically. More sophisticated uses will probably require personal adjustments by faculty. Fran asked if blackboard data can be used to target the more difficult courses. More support could be targeted there

Babichenko said he wouldn't worry too much about students. He believes students would not have a problem managing the new system. Support is readily available on line and through the teaching center for students. Helfrich indicated that reports from other institutions suggested that students had problems when more than one system was run in parallel.

Spring asked for a vote by the committee on the report submitted by the LMS committee. He indicated that such a vote and the report of that vote would be provided to the Provost who will be making the final decision on the transition to a new system. The committee voted unanimously to accept the report with one abstention. Spring indicated he would communicate the vote formally to the outgoing CIO and the Provost. He further indicated that he would include in that communication a concern about the timing of the transition and about the importance of providing support to faculty in the process.

Mobile application deployment and publishing at Pitt: Mobile app deployment is being looked at by CSSD and the Innovation institute. Dimitriy provided a report, attached, that describes what the various approaches are to mobile app development.

Walton indicated that CSSD could support some of the efforts that are desired. Jinx will start to develop a set of guidelines and to involve the Innovation Institute. She will initiate the next steps. Nothing suggested in terms of next steps is out of bounds.

Information Technology Study by Deloitte: Roskies indicated a concern that some of the centralization may be less than optimal, e.g. the number of helpdesks. Some of the bulk purchasing discussion may also present a problem.

Spring reiterated his concern that the suggestions for governance did not reflect a strong involvement of faculty. Walton indicated again that the Deloitte report was never meant to be definitive – it was meant to say here are some potential ways to improve the operation.

Jinx is anticipating a revised report on the report with the comment will be released, but declined to provide the comments she has received to the committee.

Spring indicated that he would ask the full committee to again review the report and identify specific matters of concern to them.

Meeting adjourned 3:30.

Draft minutes submitted for review by:

Michael Spring
February 17, 2019