

# Senate Computing and Information Technology Committee

## August 31, 2020 – 10:30 AM

### Room 717 CL by Zoom

**Attending:** Michael Spring, Mark Henderson, Adam Hobaugh, Stacie Gabriel, Dwight Helfrich, Kim Barlow, Marty Levine, Douglas Fischer, Irene Frieze, Ilia Murtazashvili, Alex Labrinidis, Susan Sereika, Arif Jamal, Jonghyeon Jeong, Chris Bonneau, Dmitriy Babichenko, Gosia Fort, Sami Mian, Kenny Doty, Ralph Roskies, Mike Colaresi, Vincent Arena

**Approval of the Minutes:** Minutes from the July 28, 2020 meeting were approved as mailed with no changes.

#### Chair's Report (Michael Spring):

- The committee welcomes Douglas K. Fischer, PhD MS, Department of Microbiology & Molecular Genetics, representing the University Post Docs
- We've settled into a new set of relationships with Pitt IT since last year, specifically, how SCITC reports to Senate Council and ITAC. My agenda for the year is to work on the systematic reporting to SCITC, the examples of some are listed below. Systematic Reporting to SCITC could include things like:
  - Research computing – which has already been started
  - Help Desk Analytics
  - Network and Security Analytics – which has been done regularly
  - Planned Changes – which are occurring more frequently
  - ITAC Coordination
- One issue we know we need to address is the matter of cloud storage. While the choice of Box vs One Drive is easy financially, it is complicated by how dependent heavy users are on Box and by the fact that Box is being used by some for research data management. Everyone should be aware that it's going to be a huge commitment to go from Box to OneDrive and that it's a large, complex issue for faculty. Box, OneDrive, and other cloud storage services store data but there are policies and regulations that need to be complied with when it is used for research data, especially when that data is related to sponsored research. Some of these details can be better understood by looking at some of these resources:
  - 2014 Senate Plenary
    - Keynote: Liz Lyon, "[Gearing up for Data? Institutional Drivers, Challenges and Opportunities](#)"
    - University Times Coverage: [Plenary session tackles big data, Big data: Faculty panel weighs in, Big data: Chancellor addresses Pitt's role](#)
  - NSF/NIH Policies
    - NSF: <https://www.nsf.gov/bfa/dias/policy/dmp.jsp>
    - NIH: <https://osp.od.nih.gov/scientific-sharing/nih-data-management-and-sharing-activities-related-to-public-access-and-open-science/>

## Pitt IT/CIO Report:

Mark Henderson: Adam sent out a pre-read (The written pre-read provided by Pitt IT is attached), but before he begins, I want to give a shoutout to Pitt IT for pulling things together when everyone needed to switch to working remote. I also want to thank faculty members for their input because we'll be in a state of continuous improvement with their continuous input.

There are a number of dashboards available to the Pitt community. One of them is regularly sent to the Chancellor's cabinet and discusses statistics around the utilization of Canvas, Teams, Synaptic, virtual labs and desktops. I encourage you to explore these dashboards as well. (<https://ithealth.pitt.edu/>)

### Status of flex@pitt

- Dwight Helfrich: We started the deployment of Canvas last fall and the approach that we took worked. The faculty haven't had any major issues and more are using this platform than Blackboard. The training made available from the Center for Teaching and Learning really helped faculty members get acclimated.
- Michael Spring: I would still like to know how many part-time faculty, that didn't receive a contract until middle August, accessed their course materials online. That's been a senate concern since last spring. We need to make sure that we're made aware of the health of our overall system. Dwight is continuing to work on how to better distribute data in the future.
- Jonghyeon Joeng wants to know when faculty can expect spring courses to be uploaded. Dwight will update everyone once there's an exact date. It'll likely be within the next month and a half but he'll work with the registrar's office and get back to everyone soon.
- Dwight Helfrich: We worked with Radiant Technology to fix 161 rooms up with technology. All of it has been installed and 200 units were purchased, so there are still some left over if we need them. We've received some concerns from faculty about the amplification of their voice, so we also purchased microphones for them. We have a survey up to get feedback from faculty but we doubt too many people are using the technology at this point. However, any feedback we've received thus far has been positive.
- Irene: I'm happy to see there's an immediate action Help Desk. Can you do a walk-in help desk as well or is it only available online? Adam Hobaugh said that everything is virtual but that they can virtually connect to your computers and walk you through anything you need help with. The bookstore has device drop off and Pitt IT has consultants available for face to face resolutions as well.
- Susan Sereika: We can use our own laptops to connect to the devices in the classrooms, correct? Adam Hobaugh confirmed this is correct.
- Alex Labrinidis: The most common questions I've been getting are about using the projectors in classrooms, whether or not faculty members need to bring their own devices, and if there are studio options rather than working from their personal offices.
- Irene Frieze: Are we able to test devices before using them on our students? Mark Henderson said that Jeff Rhoades is available for training if needed. Alex confirmed

that Pitt IT can assist you with using devices (they're the same in each room), but not within the specific classroom that you've been assigned.

#### Status of cloud storage transition planning

- Detailed comparison of box vs OneDrive -- esp. what box can do that OneDrive can't. Dwight Helfrich: We came up with three things that box does that OneDrive doesn't; FTP uploads, mail enabled folders, and custom URLs. We're looking for options for all of these. With the transition, we're investigating partners to move the data. We're still in the planning phases for this.
  - Michael Spring would like to have the information on the top 10 users for box. He wants to know who the biggest users are and where Dwight's team is when it comes to conversations with them.
  - Susan Sereika: Is Google Drive an acceptable tool to store research data? Adam Hobaugh said that we're looking into it and that we'll make it clear to everyone once the communications start to come out.
  - Adam Hobaugh: When we signed the enterprise agreement for Google Drive, there were already a lot of faculty members who signed up using a personal account, so they had an error message when they tried to sign up through the University. The plan is to rollout support just like we do with any other platform. Once we saw people were having these issues, we switched enablement to fix this, faculty will still have full access to G-Suite.

The meeting was adjourned at Noon.

Draft minutes submitted for review by:  
Stacie Gabriel/Michael Spring  
September 18, 2020

## Attachment: PreRead Report from PittIT

Pitt IT/CIO Report (from agenda)

- Status of flex@pitt
  - Canvas
  - Technology enabled rooms
- Status of cloud storage transition planning
  - Detailed comparison of box vs OneDrive -- esp. what box can do that OneDrive can't.
  - Issues with transition to OneDrive – can it be automated? What can't be?
- Status of anti-virus software installations.
  - Where are we with faculty?
  - Where are we with students?
- Hotel networking update (submitted as a separate request)

### Flex@Pitt

Canvas

- The transition to Canvas has been smooth resulting from faculty actively preparing prior to fall term startup. Their preparations minimized demand for initial support.
- Currently 5,588 fall 2020 courses have been published in Canvas. This is 115% of the total available Blackboard courses from Fall 2019. A course is published in Canvas when faculty are ready for students to view course content.
- 3,143 faculty and 31,454 students are enrolled in published Canvas courses. Representing 105% (faculty) and 97% (students) of the corresponding totals from fall 2019 Blackboard courses.

Technology Enabled Rooms

- Technology has been installed and configured in all 161 registrar scheduled classrooms. Sixteen (16) additional departmental rooms in SDM, SCI and Katz have been approved by the Office of the Provost with installations in progress.
- Support and Monitoring
  - Automated technology monitoring is in place.
  - Virtual support will be available via the Pitt IT Help Desk. Issues that cannot be resolved remotely will be addressed by on-site support technicians during scheduled class times.
- Faculty Microphones
  - Faculty can request a hip pack or a larger personal amplifying device. The Requests are submitted to the Teaching Center with pickup at the University Store (Pitt IT). Devices will be available early September.
- Faculty Feedback
  - Survey available at <https://www.technology.pitt.edu/flexatpitt>. No responses to date.

- No help desk cases related to concerns and issues have been submitted. Informational requests only.

## Cloud Storage Transition Planning

### Google Drive

- Enterprise offering is now available as an extension of the Google Cloud Platform. G-Suite for education is a free service for all faculty, staff, and students. This was rolled out quickly to support existing Google Drive users who had signed up with @Pitt.edu accounts. Campus wide rollout information forthcoming.

### Box vs OneDrive

- FTP uploads - OneDrive, SharePoint, and Google Drive do not natively support legacy FTP uploads. We are actively investigating a solution for those who are executing uploads from Linux environments via FTP. This may only be replicated with solutions such as Azure, AWS, and the Google Cloud Platform. We know of 338 individuals who self-identified as using FTP in our Box survey. Box reporting will provide a full list of customers using this function.
- Mail enabled folders for upload / upload only permissions – Microsoft Forms and Google Forms offers functionality enabling file attachments via web form and directing to a folder in cloud storage.
- Custom URLs – the “pi.tt” short URL service offers similar functionality.

### Transition to OneDrive

- We are evaluating external migration partners to determine the best managed solution option. We do not anticipate that users will need to manually migrate data.
- We are investigating potential challenges with migrating permissions of external (non pitt.edu) users.

### Microsoft Defender ATP (anti-virus) Migration

- Faculty and Staff
  - 11,981 devices have been enrolled.
  - 460 devices remaining. Executing targeted outreach to customers.
- Students
  - We cannot track student enrollments as it is not centrally managed by Pitt IT.
  - Informational requests have been submitted to Pitt IT's help desk. No concerns or issues have been submitted.

## Hotel Wireless

### Wyndham

- Pitt recommended increasing internet bandwidth for student wireless from 300Mbps to 1000Mbps.
- Windstream, the hotel's internet service provider, indicated that they may have difficulty upgrading bandwidth prior to the start of the semester. Pitt offered to extend our network into the hotel and act as the internet service provider. The hotel opted to pursue Windstream.
- At the start of classes on August 19<sup>th</sup>, Windstream advised the circuit would not be upgraded until September 23<sup>rd</sup>. As students submitted issues, Wyndham management reconsidered our offer and we extended Pitt's network on August 21<sup>st</sup>.

### Residence Inn @ Forbes

- Pitt IT recommended increasing the Hotel's internet bandwidth for student wireless from 200Mbps to 1000Mbps. This was completed prior to the start of classes.
- On student arrival a resource constraint was identified with the hotels networking equipment. This equipment was replaced with Pitt network equipment on August 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- Internet speeds improved but remained variable. Further analysis identified a constraint in the Hotels wireless infrastructure. An upgraded device was installed on August 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Residence Inn @ Bigelow

- Pitt IT recommended increasing the Hotel's internet bandwidth for student wireless from 300Mbps to 1000Mbps. This was completed prior to the start of classes.
- Students experienced variable internet speeds. An assessment showed that hallways are adequate, but some student rooms are not.
- Guestek, hotel IT support, is currently performing a wireless infrastructure assessment. Additional device purchases and location changes may need to occur. Full report expected soon.
- Pitt IT has delivered over 150 mobile wireless hotspots to students as an interim solution.