

Senate Computing and Information Technology Committee

Meeting Minutes

February 8, 2022, 1:00 p.m. (Online)

Attending: I. Murtazashvili, I. Frieze, M. Spring, S. Quigley, K. Doty, G. Fort, S. Belle, A. Hobaugh, D. Helfrich, M. Henderson, S. Brown, M. Levine, K. Fish, A. Jamal, K. Phillips, C. Wertz, B. Hart

Meeting called to order at 1:00 p.m.

Minutes of the October 27, 2021 meeting approved as written.

Report of the Chair

- Welcomed Cindy Wertz, Pitt IT Chief of Staff, Brian Hart, also of Pitt IT. Hart will assist with the minutes replacing Stacie Gabriel, who has left the University. Thanked Gabriel for all her efforts assisting the Committee.
- The Committee is currently revising its mission statement to include appropriate diversity, equity, and inclusion language. Discussed sustainability language as a possible addition. Henderson suggested adding that the Committee is interested in sustainability, and can offer input to the Office of the CIO and IT throughout the University in identifying ways to improve sustainability. Murtazashvili noted that a subcommittee could work with the Pitt Office of Sustainability.

Action Item: Ilia to make further revisions and consult with Aurora Sharrard, Pitt Director of Sustainability as well as the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI).

- Migration to OneDrive – Discussed email distributed to the Committee as part of the agenda from a faculty colleague concerned about OneDrive space limitations. Also discussed written response from Hobaugh (see appendix to these minutes). Belle reported hearing about a similar issue from another person. Hobaugh indicated that Pitt IT will contact the users reporting problems to address concerns.
 - Users can request up to 25 TB of storage space through the Technology Help Desk
 - Problems with data transfer timeouts may be related to accessing OneDrive through a web browser. Using the OneDrive Sync client will avoid this problem.
- Chair noted that Hobaugh distributed an email asking for feedback on the Box issue concerning UPMC and will update the Committee during the CIO's Report.
- Chair asked for agenda items for the Spring Term 2022 and suggested that members should send items via email.

Report of the CIO

- Henderson reported that a new IT Budget Subcommittee of the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) was launched. Pat Cunningham of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences has been named chair. Members include representatives with budget and finance responsibilities from across the University, with engagement from Hart and other Pitt IT staff. The subcommittee is to advise on University IT expenditures and identify areas of duplication and waste. The Deloitte IT Study report from 2019 has been shared. Henderson noted that the One IT initiative, Salesforce implementation and development, along with other measures have already helped with duplication of software/services. Total University IT spend in the report was \$134 million. This fiscal year, spend is approximately \$140 million, with more than half generated outside central IT. Future agenda items for SCITC can include receiving reports on these issues, and providing advice on how best to utilize University IT resources.

Frieze asked why there were so many (16) helpdesks identified in the Deloitte report. The answer is that in addition to central IT, a number of units operate their own support desks. Many of these were using different tools to do so. In addition to consolidating the former CSSD and FIS help desks, along with others, through the One IT initiative, some help desk software packages have been consolidated into Salesforce Call Center.

- Hobough provided an update on significant joint initiatives between the University and UPMC. The CIOs of both organizations have committed to cooperative effort in resolving challenges facing faculty and staff particularly in the health sciences. These initiatives include:
 - Collaboration Tools
 - Exchange Calendars – it is now possible to see calendar free/busy information for people at Pitt and UPMC, simplifying meeting scheduling.
 - Microsoft Teams – connections can be made with people in both organizations including collaborations and digital whiteboards
 - Help Desks - Cross references have been established allowing both Help Desks to collect and share information, enabling improved responsiveness and communication.
 - Web Collaboration - Building Pitt/UPMC web collaboration goals to ease pain points, build positive solutions. Will advise SCITC when implemented.
 - Community Engagement – working with UPMC and the City of Pittsburgh to hold a regional broadband symposium. Goals include identify and address issues faced by broadband providers, specifically dealing with middle and last mile connectivity, and engaging subject matter experts to develop a digital literacy program.
 - Network Infrastructure – extend PittNet Wireless into UPMC buildings. Initially working on Forbes Tower and Rangos and will expand where appropriate.
 - EDUROAM – Wireless access using Pitt accounts within the UPMC system, CMU, Carnegie Library, and working with Pittsburgh to expand into city locations.

- People Search – find people at Pitt and UPMC through Microsoft Outlook email and calendar and other tools.
 - Box Update – email prepared to faculty impacted by migration to OneDrive. Ready to answer questions. Migration is going well overall.
- Helfrich provided an update on his team’s applications strategy including assessment of ERP tools to select a new one for implementation. Also defined an applications roadmap. Plan is to work with strategic partner vendors before determining whether to buy or build new applications. The standard approach for enterprise applications is to buy before building. This approach will ensure ongoing sustainability of applications and reduce the overall enterprise application footprint.

ERP Assessment – currently gathering requirements for the needed applications. Will assess strategic vendor capabilities, build a business case and recommendation for a new ERP application. Goal is to have this completed in June 2022.

Applications Strategy – Inventory all enterprise and non-enterprise applications in use within Pitt. Examine opportunities to consolidate applications, add needed new ones, or discontinue applications no longer needed.

Quigley asked about the University’s relationship with Adobe in light of concerns about costs of Adobe applications. Is it possible to arrange a better deal? Quigley concerned that Adobe Sign is very expensive. Pitt IT responded that the University has a contract with DocuSign for similar service at a lower cost. Will need to discuss specific Adobe concerns and licensing arrangements later on.

- Brown reported on the relationship with Dell. The Center for Research Computing just purchased new MPI cluster hardware. CRC is looking to establish a Center of Excellence with Dell in order to advance the research computing platform and capabilities. The Pittsburgh Supercomputing Center worked with HP Enterprise in the past, but Dell offers a great deal more of value with advanced research capabilities.

Belle raised a concern about “putting all our eggs in one basket” with strategic IT vendor partners. What are the risks of this type of consolidation? Helfrich responded that Pitt IT and the University do not simply accept any vendor’s standard contract terms and conditions, but these agreements are negotiated carefully to protect students, faculty, staff, and research programs. Belle asked how users know what obligations they face under University-negotiated agreements. Henderson replied that the agreements are between the University and the vendor, not the user. Pitt is not locked into single-vendor solutions, but has the freedom to choose the most appropriate software for a particular application. Strategic partnerships help in areas where needs are specialized. Most needs can be addressed with off-the-shelf software, but some unique needs require more. In strategic partnerships, the vendor gets something from us and we get something from the vendor, but we are not just captive to the vendor.

General Questions

- Spring asked a follow-up question on strategic vendor relationships. Raised the issue where ERP subsystems for some groups are doing well, but other areas have difficulty with other subsystems. Asked if Helfrich can give a sense of what functional categories Pitt IT is examining.

Henderson noted that whichever solutions we select, Pitt IT consults with stakeholders across the University in advance. We have a very good understanding of what systems need to be doing in order to have the greatest benefit.

Helfrich responded that state-of-the-art student systems deliver a much better user experience than the current PeopleSoft system. The first step is to address finance, then students, looking at opportunities for improvement.

Adjournment - 2:00 p.m.