

Senate Computing and Information Technology Committee

December 14, 2018 -- 10:00AM

Room 717 CL

Attending: Vincent Arena, Dmitriy Babichenko, Joe Costantino, Kenny Doty, Alex Labrinidis, Young Lee, Marty Levine, Maura McCall, Ralph Roskies, Susan Serika, Michael Spring, Jinx Walton, Frank Wilson, Fran Yarger

Minutes: Minutes from November 16, 2018 meeting were approved as mailed.

New Business:

Review and Action of IT study by Deloitte.

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)

Regarding Software Upgrades: Walton reported on the issue raised by Matt Laving regarding software upgrades during the term. In general, all software upgrades are done prior to the beginning of the term. CSSD would do a mid-term update if it was related to a security concern. The upgrade that was raised was for a particular private lab. CSSD will be reaching out to the various labs to make sure there will not be coordination issues.

Regarding Multi-factor Authentication: Passport single sign-on starts the multi-factor authentication. Passport does have a 12 hour timeout, but there are a lot of things that do cause a logout. Basically, Passport is currently tied to the user's browser. CSSD is looking into a way to keep the MFA session active across browser logouts. Basically, the MFA connection will be linked to a trusted machine. Ken Doty asked if such arrangements could be determined by local policy.

Mobile application deployment and publishing at Pitt: Mobile app deployment is being looked at by CSSD and the Innovation Institute. At the current time, for reasons pertaining to branding and the potential for sales, the Innovation Institute has primary responsibility. Dmitriy Babichenko met with the Innovation Institute. The Innovation Institute requires a review for legal protection -- Pitt brand, FDA regulated devices, and copyright. Dmitriy documented the steps and will share a summary.

After the Innovation Institute does its work, developers need to work with Apple or Google to launch an app. Alex Labrinidis indicated that you are allowed to do limited testing in the App Store to identified logins. Test Flight to push an app to 10K users. Can do a limited testing in the App Store this way. Unity remote is a mechanism that allows publishing games developed on

the Unity game platform. However, the University EWI doesn't allow x-frame and Unity requires x-frame for deployment.

Regardless, we need to have a clear set of guidelines as to how to proceed. The next step will be to create a one page summary of the issues. This might include input from other researchers who create apps. Then a request for mobile application development and publishing at Pitt and a game hosting and publishing platform.

Learning Management System: A group did some research on whether blackboard was the best system. The committee report and recommendations have been updated. Walton will share the report with the SCITC.

Information Technology Study by Deloitte

Spring introduced the discussion by talking about the context of the IT study. Information technology is a large part of the University budget. It is 6%-7% of the overall University budget and depending upon how it was calculated, it might be somewhat more – it is not clear if the estimate includes things like office space and electricity usage. It is important that the SCITC provide feedback to the administration in a timely fashion.

See report on the CSSD web site <http://IT-Transformation.pitt.edu>. Comments from the University community are requested by January 11.

Walton indicated that this report is a series of recommendations and it will be important for the University to look at each of the recommendations and decide what they want to do. Each aspect of the report will require more feedback from the University community. It was pointed out that there was no indication that the Senate would be ignored – indeed there is every reason to believe that the University administration is favorably disposed to involve the Senate in a meaningful way. The recent work on the Policy on Policies specifically refers to the importance of involving the Senate in shared governance activities.

Spring indicated that the SCITC needs to review and comment on the full report. He asked the committee to focus today on the recommendations related to governance. As one example of the importance of doing this, he suggested that the data governance group was an example of a committee that was not coordinated as well as it might be with the Senate. Walton indicated that such involvement would be corrected. She is still in the process of pulling together the people needed on such a committee. Spring made clear that it was his personal opinion that the broad set of committees suggested by the report were well beyond the workload that could be managed by a Senate committee. At the same time, it was not clear from the report that the Senate would be involved in a way that would allow it to serve its role in keeping communication channels open.

Roskies suggested that the 14 recommendations were broad, and as stated it would be hard not to agree with them. Walton indicated that the report was generally favorable toward Pitt. She went on to indicate that in large part Deloitte is saying that there is a high level of redundancy and there are not a lot of controls on IT spending. Walton said that the effort was to have a better picture of how things are working. The spending models are not as clear as they might be. The university needs to set out its top level priorities. IT isn't broken, but we can do better. We can be Proactive rather than reactive. We can clarify, coordinate, and streamline purchasing and finance. We can increase transparency and communication with regards to governance

Labrinidis suggested that we should not wait for things to break before moving ahead with planning for the future. We need to be forward looking to make sure things are planned for the future. Same for data governance – we need to look ahead.

The report also addresses UPMC and the relationship between UPMC and Pitt in the area of IT is likely to be complicated. The relationship between UPMC and Pitt is complicated by the differing natures of the regulations and laws that govern the organizations. There are several locations in which both PittNet and the UPMC networks exist side by side. PittNet is designed to support faculty and their research i.e. it is a high-bandwidth, robust network with those needs in mind. PittNet has connections to Research and Education Networks as well as Internet2, all resources of value to researchers. UPMC is running a clinical network that is appropriately restricted and in general is less capable of supporting high-end research needs. For this reason many faculty have asked to be connected directly to PittNet.

Spring suggested that it might be the case that some of the inefficiencies in the system are exactly what make the system work well. While the University needs to be vigilant about cutting costs and being efficient, it may well be dangerous to become more efficient in a way that would harm our ability to teach students or conduct high quality research. Similarly, while multiple help desks may not be efficient, to the extent that they serve multiple different populations, they may provide a higher quality of service in some fashion.

Spring asked if there were reactions to the three groups that were identified as the subcommittees that need to exist. There was discussion about whether there were adequate representation for teaching and learning.

Ken Doty asked about comparisons to peer institutions. They haven't provided any indication of where the peer institutions are. He indicated that Engineering is looking at how IT works at other engineering schools. There is some rumor going around that has raised fears that IT is going to be centralized and people might be out of work.

Fran Yarger mentioned that CMU has done similar centralizing and they are beginning to see some benefits of that centralizations.

Spring suggested that the committee present a motion to Faculty Assembly indicating the role the Senate should play in the new governance structure. The motion could be specific and detailed or more general and tonal. Labrinidis suggested that the more general motion would be better. SCITC will prepare a motion on the IT governance regarding representatives appointed by the Senate to these committees to provide advice.

Spring agreed to prepare a draft motion for the committee to consider. He indicated that as a first step he would circulate the motion by email for comments and corrections. He will take the feedback and construct a motion for vote via Doodle. All of this will be done in time for the motion to be presented to Faculty Assembly at its first meeting on January 8th.