

Senate Computing and Information Technology Committee

April 12, 2019 -- 10:00AM

Room 717 CL

Attending: Dimitriy Babichenko, Joe Costantino, Kenny Doty, Adam Hobaugh, Arif Jamal, Marty Levine, Maura McCall, Ralph Roskies, Michael Spring, Albert Tanjaya, Steve Wisniewski

Minutes: Minutes from March 5, 2019 meeting were approved as mailed.

New Business:

Software for Postdocs

Chair's Matters (Michael Spring)

CIO Search. The Chancellor is in the process of making a final decision on the two CIO candidates. The Committee had several opportunities to meet with the Candidates directly and indirectly. Spring summarized the recommendations of the members who met with the candidates as representatives of the SCITC – Ken Doty, Albert Jamal and Michael Spring. Separately, Ralph Roskies and Steve Wisniewski also met with the candidates. In general, all the interviews revealed similar results. Both candidates were well qualified. There were some minor differences in how the members saw the styles of the two candidates. The committee agreed that the university is in a good place in that we would be in a good position with either hire.

Elections. Spring mentioned that new members were being elected to the committee. He also indicated that at some point over the summer, we would need to engage in election of a chair for the committee.

Next Meeting. There will not be a May meeting of the committee unless some matters warrant an additional meeting.

CIO Report (Adam Hobaugh)

LMS. LMS committee has been formed. Looking to start a pilot this summer. The size and scope of the pilot has not yet been determined. The pilot will look to find a full range of faculty to stress the system. Communication is going to go out to the Deans soon. The steering committee is looking to add faculty and student. The steering committee is going to go to the senate to ask for a faculty representative. Spring asked for report back at the first meeting in the fall. McCall suggested we put a question on the OMET to see what students think. In discussion, it was suggested that this might not be as effective as surveying students involved in the tests directly.

Service Level Agreements. Hobaugh shared general CSSD Service Level Agreement (SLA) negotiation guidelines and best practices. While not all-inclusive, they serve as a starting point. SLAs developed by CSSD look at a variety of criteria these include:

- For cloud or hosted services, 99.9% availability or uptime.
- Credits as a remedy for failing to comply with the uptime requirements.
- Clearly defined escalation procedures.
- 24/7/365 Service desk availability.
- Adequate notice for product updates, patches and scheduled maintenance, i.e. to adhere to our Change Management processes.
- Remote response within 1 hour for “critical” issues.
- Resolution of “critical” issues within 24 hours.
- Vendor generated Root Cause Analysis (RCA) when required.
- Pre-defined escalation path for unresolved issues, complex or otherwise.
- Minimum 30 days advanced notice of any price / product changes.
- All service level agreements require review by the University Counsel.
- Vendor/service security review, which includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Technical, administrative, and policy/procedures in place to secure the data
 - b. Prefer 3rd party risk assessment verifying systems security; if none, they must complete the Pitt IT security questionnaire
 - c. Some of the security considerations/requirements:
 - i. Where and how the data is stored
 - ii. How the data can be used by the vendor
 - iii. Data protection that must match or exceed the sensitivity of the data
- *Note:* SLA negotiations are product or service specific. CSSD Vendor Relations staff works closely with the technical team to determine the level of importance of the product, which in turn determines the appropriate service level.

SLAs available from CSSD for services offered to other entities within the University.

Spring suggested that our committee should not have a say in financial issues, we should be involved in decisions that we would have an impact on users.

Research Computing Report (Ralph Roskies)

Roskies reported on the developments in the Center for Research Computing. Most hardware has been upgraded – about a million dollars’ worth. Usage increased by 73% with 35% more users. There had been a separate cluster devoted to medicine, but it was isolated and only available to medicine. It has now been integrated so that the storage system has been made accessible to all users. This required significant effort. The research computing resources have been fronted by a GUI that obviates the need for extensive command line knowledge. The new capabilities are available through the website.

New people have been hired to provide support. The plan had been to hire someone in machine learning, but in the last analysis they decided to hire a generalist and asked them to focus on machine learning. They also hired an administrative aid. They worked with physics to attract a new astrophysicist. They contributed funding to create a cluster for CS to be able to

work with the OS. They also contributed funding to add FPGAs for Alan George's group to be able to fix programming on hardware on the fly in space.

The work of the center has been responsible for six journal covers. CRC sponsored a symposium last month, which was very successful. They also post real time cluster availability information

Wisniewski asked about departments that have been recruited to use the systems. A number of new departments used CRC in 2018, compared to 2017, including: 'business', 'developmental biology', 'environmental and occupational health', 'geology and environmental science', 'microbiology and molecular genetics', 'neurobiology', 'neuroscience', 'ophthalmology', 'orthopedic surgery', 'otolaryngology', 'physical medicine and rehabilitation', 'psychiatry', 'statistics', 'structural biology', and 'surgery'.

New Business

Software for PostDocs. McCall asked about software access for Post-Docs. Do they have any access? Should they have the same access as students or faculty? How are they classified? There are a number of issues that need to be explored to answer the questions. Adam will look at how post docs are classified and their access to software.

Adobe Acrobat Professional. The committee asked Adam to look into the site licensing for Adobe Acrobat Professional.

Old Business

Game hosting and mobile application development. Dimitriy met with Jay Grahm and they are working on providing a solution for mobile and game application development. Dimitriy is working on building a website over the summer for the systems being developed at Pitt.

Meeting adjourned 11:30.

Draft minutes submitted for review by:

Michael Spring

May 8, 2019