SENATE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT)
MINUTES OF MEETING
NOVEMBER 1, 2011

[In these minutes: Committee on Committees Review of SCIT Charge, Vice President and Chief Information Officer Search Update, Science Teaching and Student Services (STSS) Building Update and a Discussion on the Role of Active Learning Classrooms in Improving Undergraduate Education, Office of Information Technology Quarterly Project Update]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: Ted Higman, chair, Allison Jacobsen, James McDonald, Benton Schnabel, Sue Van Voorhis, Noel Phillips, John Butler, Ann Hill Duin, Neil Olszewski, Billie Wahlstrom, David Arendale, Sean Conner, Brent Larson, Yuk Sham, Mary Vavrus, Bonnie Westra, Tiffany Beauford

REGRETS: Shashi Shekhar

OTHERS ATTENDING: Tim Gagner, Bernard Gulachek, Myron Lowe, Renee Rivers

GUESTS: Committee on Committees representatives David Kirkpatrick and Carl Adams

I). Professor Higman called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present.

II). Members unanimously approved the October 4, 2011 minutes.

III). Professor Higman introduced the first agenda item, a review of the Senate Committee on Information Technology (SCIT) charge by Committee on Committees (ConC). He then welcomed the two ConC representatives who were invited to facilitate this discussion, Professor Carl Adams and Professor David Kirkpatrick.

Professor Kirkpatrick began by explaining that one of ConC's responsibilities is to annually review the charges of a percentage of standing Senate committees. The purpose of the review is to make sure committee composition as well as duties and responsibilities are reflective of what the committee does and that it is functioning as intended. Professor Kirkpatrick also noted that members should feel free to contact him or any other ConC member outside of today's meeting if they think of additional comments to share.

Professor Adams stated that the four committees being reviewed this year by ConC are Disability Issues; Equity, Access & Diversity (EAD); SCIT; and Library. An outcome of these reviews will be a report to the University Senate. Issues for members to think about related to the review are whether the charge is appropriate, whether there is any overlap with other Senate committees that is problematic, and whether the membership is adequate.

Professor Higman stated that despite the fact the committee has three student seats, these seats are rarely, if ever, all filled. In addition, regarding membership, while it would probably not make sense to add representatives from each of the other University IT stakeholder groups, Academic Technology Advisory Committee (ATAC), Information Technology Leadership Alliance (ITLA), and the senior OIT management and leadership team, it may be worthwhile to consider putting in the charge that the committee is expected to meet annually with the chair of each of these groups. These groups have much more direct day-to-day interaction with OIT decisions that are being made than does SCIT. John Butler noted that he currently happens to serve on all three of these committees. Interim Vice President Hill Duin added that OIT also has an enterprise planning group as well as an IT executive oversight group.

Hearing no further comments, Professors Adams and Kirkpatrick reminded members that they can still confidentially share any thoughts and/or ideas they have regarding the SCIT charge following this meeting by emailing the chair of ConC, Professor Joanna O'Connell, or any of its members (http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/committees/conc.html). Professor Higman thanked Professors Adams and Kirkpatrick for leading this discussion.

IV). Professor Higman reminded members that he and John Butler both serve on the search committee for the new OIT vice president and chief information officer. Applications have been received and the search is moving forward quickly. With that said, what role, if any, does SCIT want to play in the interview process? Does SCIT want to meet with each of the finalists? Mr. Butler added that other IT stakeholders are also being asked this same question. Because time for interviews will be limited, it will be extremely important for any requests to meet with the finalists be met with a commitment to attend. He also noted that the search committee is anticipating that public interviews will be held, which will provide members with an opportunity to hear from the finalists.

Professor Westa stated that it will be very important for there to be technology-savvy/knowledgeable faculty involved in the interview process. Professor Sham asked about whether it would be possible to submit written questions to the candidates. Professor Higman agreed to look into this request. After a brief discussion, the committee decided that it would not request a special meeting with each of the finalists, but encouraged public interview attendance for those members who are available. Mr. Butler noted that if the finalist interviews are streamed and recorded like in the case of the recent provostal search, this would be another way for members to hear the finalists.

V). Professor Higman welcomed Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education Robert McMaster who was invited to provide an update on the Science Teaching and Student Services (STSS) building and to talk about the role of active learning classrooms in improving undergraduate education.

Vice Provost McMaster distributed a handout to supplement his presentation. Salient highlights from the presentation included:

- The 150,000 square foot STSS building with 1,639 student seats (17 classrooms of which 10 are active learning classrooms) cost nearly $80 million to build.

- STSS incorporates numerous sustainability features and is a LEED certified gold building. The entire building's infrastructure is below the floor, e.g., HVAC, wiring, which makes modifications much easier.
- STSS is part of the student service corridor being created by the University along the river.
- STSS is not only a science teaching building but it is infused with student services such as Academic Support Resources (ASR), student study space, Center for Academic Planning and Exploration (CAPE), Office for Student Engagement, Career Services Center, CLA Health and Natural Sciences Advising.
- Because a lot of learning takes place outside of classrooms, the University realizes it needs to accommodate students better in terms of study spaces. STSS has a significant amount of student study space.
- For a variety of reasons, the University is planning to increase the number of undergraduate STEM students it admits (College of Science and Engineering (CSE), College of Biological Sciences (CBS), and College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Sciences (CFANS). Over a five-year period, CSE and CBS applicants grew from approximately 5,000 to 13,000. In addition, the number of students who are indicating on the ACT that they want to study science and engineering has grown from 16% to 21% over the last five years. STSS, therefore, will play a key role in increasing the STEM fields and mode of pedagogy.
- In the first year since STSS opened, 46% of undergraduate students took a course in the building and 33% of undergraduate students took a course in one of the STSS active learning classrooms.
- A series of units have come together to assist faculty in transforming their courses into an active learning format.
- Research indicates that GPAs are higher and Ws lower when faculty use an active learning approach. Learning improves significantly in active learning classrooms.
- It will be very important to make certain that STSS is fully utilized for active learning teaching. STSS has become a national model for active learning teaching.

At the conclusion of Vice Provost McMaster's presentation, Vice Provost Wahlstrom made the point that in a recent presentation to the Board of Regents that they were very receptive to the active learning concept and really understand what a terrific learning environment active learning classrooms provide.

Questions/comments from members:

- Regarding the goal of making sure that STSS is fully utilized for active learning, are faculty self-reporting this information? Vice Provost McMaster stated that as classes are scheduled in active learning classrooms, faculty will be asked whether they will use an active learning format.
- What constitutes an active learning classroom? Vice Provost McMaster provided a physical description of these rooms, which vary in size from 27 capacity to 127. These rooms are less about faculty teaching students, and more about students working together to solve problems and share their results with each other. The faculty member moves around the room to help students solve the problems they were given.

- Does active learning room scheduling in STSS accommodate hybrid courses that physically meet, for example, three times during a semester? No, stated Vice Provost McMaster, the demand is currently too high to accommodate this type of scheduling. However, if a hybrid course were at night or met at not standard times, arrangements could possibly be made. Ms. Van Voorhis added that another suggestion would be to consider partnering with other courses in order to maximize the utilization of the space.
- How can schools that currently do not have active learning spaces create them within the existing infrastructure? Vice President Hill Duin suggested leveraging resources by having schools partner with departments that can help revamp spaces. Vice Provost McMaster stated that the approximate cost for fully converting an existing classroom into an active learning classroom is in the neighborhood of $250,000; however, partial upgrades are also possible.
- What metrics are being used to quantitatively measure improved student performance as a result of taking active learning courses? Vice Provost McMaster stated that there is an abundant amount of research that confirms that active learning classrooms and this type of learning improves student learning based on student learning outcomes. The goal, overtime, for the University will be to convert as many of its classrooms as possible into active learning classrooms, but this is a long-term project.
- What is the difference in space requirements for active learning classrooms versus traditional classrooms? Space requirements for traditional classrooms are less, stated Vice Provost McMaster, so this means there is also a capacity issue that needs to be taken into account. The space costs for active learning classrooms are significantly higher than for traditional classrooms.

In light of time, Professor Higman suggested that the issue of scalability related to active learning classrooms be discussed at a future meeting. Professor Westra also suggested at a future meeting that the committee be informed about how the active learning approach can be replicated virtually. With respect to distance learning, what are the basic principles, resources and tools that can facilitate comparable types of on-line learning? Professor Higman thanked Vice Provost McMaster for his presentation.

VI). Moving on, Vice President Hill Duin and Bernard Gulacheck provided the committee with an Office of Information Technology (OIT) quarterly project update. A handout to supplement their presentation had previously been distributed along with the agenda.

Mr. Gulachek began by explaining the purpose of the quarterly OIT Project Portfolio Status Report and what it is designed to do. According to Mr. Gulachek, the report allows OIT to engage its stakeholders and business partners across the institution in setting expectations and ensures that OIT is working on projects that are in alignment with institutional goals and projects. The report also allows OIT to articulate its outcomes and define projects in such a way so it knows when a project is complete. In addition, because OIT staff report their time against each project, OIT is able to know how far any given project is from completion as well as if projects are not moving along as expected or not. The report also allows OIT to capture data, which it can repurpose for similar types of projects in the future thereby giving OIT a better understanding of what it will require to accomplish them. Mr. Gulachek then quickly walked members through the report highlighting the following:

- OIT categorizes its projects by size (large, medium and small). The size of a project generally is based on expected dollar value.
- Projects are reported based on a variety of factors, e.g., status, health, maintenance. OIT makes every effort to categorize its projects to ensure alignment with the institution's overall strategies.
- A section of the report deals with effort capacity and illustrates how well OIT has planned for effort capacity.
- Another section of the report provides an executive summary of all OIT's current large projects.
- The remainder of the report provides a project-by-project overview, which gives a comprehensive outline of all current projects.
- OIT's functional and business partner's efforts are also included in the report.
- At the end of the report, upcoming projects are outlined.

In closing, Mr. Gulachek noted that OIT uses this report as a tool for communicating initiatives from it six-year plan and compact.

Professor Higman asked why the Google Apps Implementation Project is considered a small project and why its status is reported as complete. Mr. Gulachek stated that nuances in definition must be clarified in order to fully understand the report. For example, the implementation to make the Google Apps services available has been completed, and is distinctly separate from the adoption process. The reason the project is categorized as small is because Google provided these services for free. There are, however, some maintenance costs associated with the project and they are tracked separately.

Next, Vice President Hill Duin called on Renee Rivers and Tim Gagner, co-owners of the IT Service Management (ITSM) Project, to describe how the report is used to track the progress of a large project.

Regarding the Identity Management Implementation Project, Professor Westra asked whether there is any crossover between this project and the $51 million Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA) grant awarded to the University by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). There will be crossover between the identity management project that OIT is working on to ready the institution for the evolution of the old X.500 authentication, stated Mr. Gulachek.

To conclude, Mr. Gulachek stated that this report serves to drive accountability both within OIT as well as institutionally. He added that this report can be found on the OIT Project & Portfolio Management website at http://www.oit.umn.edu/project-management/.

Professor Higman stated that he would like to review this report a couple times each year and asked Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, to put this on the agenda for March 2012.

VII). Hearing no other business, Professor Higman adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate