SENATE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT)
MINUTES OF MEETING
December 4, 2012

[In these minutes: review of IT priorities; Communities of Practice discussion; future agenda items.]

[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: David Arendale (chair), John Butler, Sean Conner, Lara Friedman-Shedlov, Stephen Levin, Yiwen Li, Helen Lin, James MacDonald, Noel Phillips, Benton Schnabel, Yuk Sham, Tom Shield, Mary Vavrus

OTHERS ATTENDING: Brad Cohen, Bernard Gulachek

REGRETS: Ted Higman, Scott Studham, Tisha Turk,

ABSENT: Shashi Shekhar, Nolan Shen

WELCOME

Professor Arendale called the meeting to order, welcomed those present, and asked members to introduce themselves.

IT DOTTED LINE RELATIONSHIPS

Mr. Gulachek began by explaining the memo that was sent from President Kaler to unit leaders in September 2012, calling for greater alignment across the institution in managerial positions that are considered to be traditional such as: HR, finance, and IT. Greater alignment within administration will create cost savings to fund continued investments in teaching learning.

The dotted line enables execution of the governance model. The governance model is focused on input, decisions, funding those decisions, and implementation. The focus on alignment is to ensure that all technologists are accountable to institutional initiatives that are the results of the governance process, in addition to the work that is completed for individual departments. There should be a perception that while there are separate departments, they are part of a greater whole that is the University and are connected through this dotted line.

Some units have centralized their IT personnel, while others have not he noted. For example, there are technologists in central IT and in all other units across the institution. Unit leaders and technologists have met to define service levels, professionalization, and standardization to understand the dotted line. Each unit has undertaken the implementation of the recommendations in the memo differently. University Relations

began this process before the memo was sent. Scott Studham, VP and CIO, IT, gathered IT leaders from each administrative, collegiate, and coordinate campuses to define the dotted line in IT management within the University. This group has produced a list of recommendations that are now being shared with deans and administrative unit leaders.

Members discussed their understanding of and experience with the alignment process:

- Mr. MacDonald explained that the power still remains with the academic units, but the dotted lines are for advisory functions. He emphasized that this is a cooperative and open effort that is being made by IT operations. The communities of practice are a way for IT professionals to voice their concerns.
- Professor Levin added that there is more transparency regarding IT functions, funding, and planning.
- Members expressed concern regarding directives that do not fit the specific academic needs of their departments. The effort of cost savings must be flexible and include exceptions. Mr. Cohen agreed that flexibility is necessary, and the dotted line will ensure that when they deviate from a standard it is understood. Deviations are an opportunity for information to be shared institutionally and standardization should not imply limitation. Professor Levin added that alongside the standards there should be a clearly articulated exceptions process. The intent is to have IT in support of exceptions and the academic technology process.
- The active directory implementation was discussed. Mr. Gulacheck explained that there is a security standard to be applied to desktop computers to ensure that updates can occur in the most efficient way through the active directory infrastructure. In the past, several units were running their own active directory infrastructure and the institution has invested in an enterprise class version. The insistence is that active directory is used, but it is up to the units to decide how this is used.
- Professor Levin has been pleased with the dotted line philosophy and approach. He understands that IT is working towards service level agreements and has proven that special needs can be adapted to.
- Professor Sham explained what he has experienced with the front line of service providers. He felt the person is often inexperienced and does not know where to forward the issues to be resolved. Professor Sham asked how the training of these employees could be improved. Mr. Gulachek responded that they would first monitor the percent of issues resolved on the first call. The number of escalations are then monitored and traced to individuals to address them as process, person, or technology issues. The realignment effort is aiming at defining metrics to address service failures.

The Communities of Practice launched at the end of November and have begun with high attendance and participation. Information regarding the Communities can be found at: it.umn.edu. The intention is to make local successes exploitable at an enterprise level. Innovation occurs locally and it is often unknown on a widespread basis, which hinders operational excellence. Mr. Gulachek emphasized that the Communities are not only for IT; they should be populated with users that are not technologists. The dotted line process

is evolving and Professor Arendale suggested that this matter be discussed at the final SCIT meeting of the year to assess the progress.

IT SURVEY RESULTS

Mr. Cohen shared the results of a survey that was distributed to students, staff, and faculty to obtain the opinion and perception of IT service levels. Ideally, this survey would occur in the spring, but this year it occurred in the fall. The survey used was available through open access, free, cloud served, and the data could be benchmarked against other institutions.

Members discussed the results that were presented in a color-coded chart.
- The wireless Internet coverage and timely resolution of problems with campus technology services were perceived as deficient.
- Focus group follow-ups will be conducted to determine the issues hindering timely resolution. The help-desk consolidation is occurring and Mr. Cohen expects to see this issue resolved as the process is completed.
- Mr. Gulachek added that they are seeking information regarding where they need to enhance wireless coverage.
- Ms. Lin explained that students respond from a different perspective. Their demand for wireless coverage may be higher than necessary and their perception of problem resolution may not involve interaction with technicians, just the time involved waiting for service to be restored.
- Members pointed out that only examining the colors and status labels does not reveal the true level of strengths and weaknesses. Many "strengths" are nearly at the minimum level. Members agreed that the survey would be more valuable in a longitudinal setting.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Professor Arendale stated that the means for presenting professional development opportunities should be the main topic for the next meeting. Members discussed this consolidated approach could also be expanded to include access restricted trainings that are required for certification or certain employment functions. Mr. Cohen added that this conversation is timely because the Provost's Office is considering how to present trainings due to the focus on eLearning and the need to support faculty on using technology in the classroom.

Hearing no further business, Professor Arendale adjourned the meeting.

Jeannine Rich
University Senate Office