

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Present:** Bender, Guevara, LaCost, Nickerson, Reisbig, Rinkevich, Ruchala, Woodman, Wysocki, Zoubek

**Absent:** Anaya, Purdum, Schubert

**Date:** Wednesday, October 3, 2012

**Location:** Faculty Senate Office

**Note:** These are not verbatim minutes. They are a summary of the discussions at the Executive Committee meeting as corrected by those participating.

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### 1.0 Call to Order

Guevara called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

### 2.0 CIO Mark Askren

#### 2.1 Upcoming Survey on Information Technology Survey

CIO Askren stated that he mentioned to the Information Technologies and Service Committee (ITSC) that it would be a good time to send out a survey to receive feedback on current Information Services (IS) solutions and services, and which additional services would be useful. He noted that Academic Affairs sent a survey out in 2008 to address the needs of the faculty. He stated that he will be working closely with Associate Vice Chancellor Perez on a new survey and will share a draft of it with ITSC and the Faculty Senate to get feedback on it before it is sent to the faculty. He pointed out that the survey needs to be direct and brief, followed by communication on the results and related action items. He noted that Heath Tuttle, Assistant Director, Learning Technologies, would like to do a survey on the teaching technology project and this might be combined with Information Services' survey.

CIO Askren reported that the Roeber survey was helpful although it focused more on centralization and decentralization concerns within IT at UNL. He stated that at this point he is most interested in the quality of the service that IS provides. He reported that IS no longer charges individual faculty or staff members for wireless service.

Guevara stated that Dean Manderscheid sent out a survey to the Arts & Sciences faculty members in Oldfather about the service received from the computer technicians and the management of the college's technicians. CIO Askren stated that he has not heard of the survey and asked if it was sent to Arts & Sciences exclusively. Woodman stated that it may have gone just to faculty in Oldfather Hall because he did not receive it in Manter Hall. Askren stated that he will follow up to learn more about the results of that survey.

#### 2.2 Help Desk

Woodman stated that he has been in contact with Todd Jensen and Pam Holley-Wilcox from IS regarding issues with the help desk. He noted that there seems to be a delay in

getting a response back once a ticket has been generated and asked whether this is due to a personnel problem. He noted that he had a help ticket in for several months before the issue was resolved. CIO Askren reported that the management of the help desk was changed about 18 months ago and a new call center system was also implemented this past year. He stated that he believes the client services management and staffing are sound but something is obviously not working right if a ticket is out for months. He noted that he will be meeting with Client Services and will ask them to review the process. He stated that he is not sure why a help ticket would be closed out without a response but thought it could be that the ticket wasn't updated as it should have been. He pointed out that the biggest challenge with the help desk system is to track all of the resolutions of the reported problems. He apologized for the problem and stated that a delay in responses is not acceptable. He noted that he is also interested in continuing to hire staff with improved skills and to pay higher wages accordingly. He stated that the question is whether we want to staff the help desk with someone who is not as technically or organizationally knowledgeable and triages all help issues, or have someone with the background and UNL training who can answer 60 – 80% of the help questions and those unanswered get triaged. He reported that IS did look at outsourcing the help desk, but after seeing mixed reviews about the service provided from an after-hours outsourcing for Blackboard he is not sure that we want to further outsource any of our help desk services. He stated that a priority is to provide additional user friendly automation where an employee or student can send a text or chat live with a technician in addition to calling. He pointed out that the bottom line is that we need to have great follow through with help questions.

Woodman noted that Heath Tuttle and Todd Jensen are very helpful when you contact them but the disconnection seems to occur between the initial call to the help desk and the time it takes to get to the appropriate person to be resolved. CIO Askren noted that the delay in a response could be a result of different groups within IS not coordinating as well as they need to on the triage and subsequent management of the help incident tickets. He stated that he will work the managers from all areas of IS to ensure that they are reviewing the help tickets that are received to make sure that issues are being resolved in a timely manner.

Nickerson noted that the automated response to a help ticket did not allow room for a technician to say that they don't have an answer yet. He stated that from his own experience it was clear that the technician didn't fully understand the problem he reported. CIO Askren stated that a problem in this case might be that there is more pressure being put on technicians to respond quickly to tickets in the cue. Nickerson asked if there are an unrealistically high number of issues that do not get resolved. CIO Askren stated that annual surveys should assist the help desk in getting better, but it is not good enough yet. Woodman asked if there is a way for the technician to ask if an employee would be willing to take a short survey after the phone call. He pointed out that IS would probably get good responses if this was done. CIO Askren stated that it would be helpful to offer a short survey on a more frequent and random basis. He noted that the annual surveys are helpful to see how the help desk is progressing on a macro

level. Woodman pointed out that knowing that a survey was going to be sent out might make technicians more productive.

Guevara noted that CIO Askren indicated that two models can be followed and asked which one IS plans to follow. CIO Askren stated that IS plans on going with the model where the help desk person can answer 60-80% of the questions. He pointed out that many of the questions are the same and the help desk staff should know the answers to the top ten questions due to training and repetition. He stated that when he arrived he found that we were paying low salaries for the help desk and some other IS employees. While there is not a lot of funding available, he reported that he has reallocated some funding from other places to pay more competitive wages for IS staff.

### **2.3 Issue of Using KACE**

CIO Askren stated that in an effort to reduce UNL procurement costs, IT procurement was moved from IS to Purchasing last year. He noted that Gary Kraft, Director of Purchasing, is very good at negotiating better prices for procurement of IT equipment and software. He noted that some confusion arose due to eShop coming on-line during the transition to Purchasing and a decision was made in the spring to use KACE. He reported that KACE has been used to distribute software and security in IS. He stated that the thought was that using KACE would allow for quicker installation and better security and an inventory of the software being used could be easily attained. He stated that the strategic and operational interest for purchasing is to gather only aggregate information, and that programs are being developed so that areas using KACE will not collect individual information. He noted that the decision in Purchasing to require the use of KACE for software procurement was not well thought out, and that campus leadership and faculty should have been engaged. The intent was not to spy or monitor anyone's computer, only to see if we are in compliance with licenses and to gather usage data on a broad scale that would be helpful in negotiating better campus-wide agreements. He stated that because of the concern that was raised about KACE he made its use optional, not required. He pointed out that KACE cannot view data on a computer and what websites have been viewed by the user. He stated that no one will be penalized for not using it in terms of the IT purchasing process. He pointed out that using a desktop management program is very helpful, but he understands the sensitivity around inventory issues and concern with the feeling that Big Brother is watching. He stated that he does not expect to pursue the use of KACE as being mandatory. He noted that the message from the faculty about the use of KACE was received loudly and clearly and its use should not have been required without faculty engagement taking place.

Woodman pointed out that it is nice to know that there can be limitations to what KACE can access on a computer. CIO Askren stated that some of our security policies and guidelines are outdated, and that in addition to updating those there will also be specific KACE related documentation that specifies the exact use of the program and related information for those that have it installed. He noted that he meets monthly with IT leaders on campus and suggested that a faculty member from the ITSC be asked to join this meeting. CIO Askren also stated that he is working with the Faculty Senate IT committee on issues related to the use of KACE.

## **2.4 Lack of Communication from Information Services Regarding Classroom Computers?**

CIO Askren noted that at his spring meeting with the Executive Committee the most significant concern raised was about administrative rights on classroom computer systems. He reported that IS made the decision to allow faculty administrative rights on classroom computers this year based on that feedback. The configuration is such that the classroom computers are refreshed over night to a base configuration so that modifications are temporary. He noted that the reason why this was not done before over the years was because of security concerns for the computers and concern that a faculty member might inadvertently make changes on the computer that would not meet other instructors' needs. However, he understands that this is inconvenient and unworkable in some cases for instructors so they've changed. He pointed out that Todd Jensen expected him to talk to the Executive Committee before the campus is informed, so that is why the communication just went out this morning. He reported that changes to the Mac computers to allow the temporary administrative rights have just recently been completed the windows computers were changed earlier in the summer. He stated that classroom computers will be refreshed at night and will return back to standard settings. He stated that if this is inconvenient for anyone, they should contact Todd.

CIO Askren stated that IS is trying to do a better job in communicating with the faculty. He stated that IS would like to receive feedback on how the temporary administrative rights to classroom computers is working. Woodman stated that he tried it out and sees no problem with it. He noted that faculty members usually don't want to install new software, just get updates on programs already on the computer.

Woodman stated that he hopes faculty members will be contacted if any major change is scheduled for a classroom computer. He stated that faculty members should be asked what they need on the computer in order to teach their course well. CIO Askren agreed and stated that he believes IS has accurate information on who teaches in specific classrooms that would allow for communication with the instructors using these rooms in advance.

CIO Askren noted that Todd Jensen is in charge of managing the classrooms and he believes he will do well. He noted that Jensen managed the New Media Center previously.

## **2.5 Who Makes Decision to Remove Classroom Computers?**

CIO Askren stated that IS works with the Office of Academic Affairs, specifically Associate VC Perez, on configuring and refreshing classroom computers. He noted that Associate VC Perez brought forward the 'media ready' initiative to reduce the number of classroom computers to recognize the prevalence of laptop and mobile devices and to be able to invest more funds in other areas of technology in the classrooms. However, he was not aware of the impact that removing the computers would have. He noted that Associate VC Perez will be attending the ITSC meeting to discuss the changes to his

thinking on this initiative based on the feedback, and the idea of removing the computers has been put on a long term hold.

Guevara questioned the temporary hold. He pointed out that the faculty members teaching in the classrooms were never contacted and only found out about the removal by accident. He stated that it is a great convenience for instructors to have the classroom computers but it is not convenient for instructors to haul their laptop around. CIO Askren stated that he appreciates hearing this feedback and doubts that this particular initiative would want to move forward given the feedback he has received. He stated that the faculty needs to be engaged before any future decisions are made.

Guevara pointed out that it is worth investing in classroom computers. He noted that his department has 20-25 part time instructors who do not get paid much and the university cannot expect them to have to use their own laptops in order to teach courses for the university. CIO Askren stated that this issue could be included on the survey. He understands what the problem is, and there might be other issues that IS needs to have better communication with the faculty about. He noted that he and Associate VC Perez are focused on making the classroom environment more effective for teaching and that Associate VC Perez has changed his thinking and strategy on this issue based on the feedback this summer, and he'll discuss that as well as how to increase faculty input in this issue at an upcoming ITSC meeting.

## **2.6 Computer Technicians for Each Building Rather Than Just For a Department?**

CIO Askren stated that he welcomes feedback on this issue of support being better in some locations on campus than in others. He noted that UNL is highly decentralized as is the norm for research universities, and that there are three different support areas: general office support, classroom support, and support for computer labs. He stated that he is generally impressed with the distribution of IT support people across campus and he thinks UNL is fortunate to have these people. He stated that there is no reason to move away from the decentralized system that we have, and the focus is on how to strengthen it. He pointed out that conceptually if quality and cost effective basic services provided by a central unit, local technicians could do more targeted and strategic work within their units. He noted that some colleges have invested more in having computer support and some areas might have twice as many technical staff as another of similar size.

Guevara asked if the colleges decide on how much they want to provide IT support. CIO Askren state that it is up to each college to make this decision. He noted that he has started having monthly meetings with about 25 decentralized IT leaders who are funded out of the colleges or other departments. He stated that he is trying to make sure that the colleges have access to the same state of the art technology tools. He noted that these tools can be requested. He pointed out that a decentralized model of IT will have different levels of support throughout the campus. He stated that his interest is in helping the college and unit technicians and generally they get along well with IS. He stated that IS does not have the seed money to invest in local technicians but if a technician is struggling and needs help with a problem that he and IS will attempt to help solve it.

Nickerson stated that he thinks many faculty members want to keep a decentralized support system.

Woodman pointed out that in the School of Biological Sciences the faculty in the Beadle Center has great support, but in Manter Hall there is no service. He stated that proximity to where the local technicians are housed can be an issue for some units. CIO Askren stated that there are different pieces to this issue. He stated that IS has custom support service and units pay IS to have a local technician but these people tend to be in departments or centers and not in colleges. IS is also offering a per FTE desktop support model on request for those areas that are interested. He pointed out that any of the units could hire one of the IS technicians and the advantage to this is that the rest of the IS technicians can help out if there are problems or the technician is out. He stated that proximity is a key issue and technicians need to be where the users need them whether they are from IS or from a decentralized area. He stated that all of the colleges have their own IT people but the level of investment for this is decided by the Deans.

## **2.7 Who Administers the Student Technology Fee and What Does This Funding Support?**

CIO Askren noted that this is an issue that has come up several times in different contexts. He reported that the student technology fees are for instructional support, not for any administrative overarching systems like NeSIS. He stated that IS, Academic Affairs and Student Affairs work closely with these funds and ASUN has a technology fee committee that is a very dedicated group that IS and the administration listen to carefully.

CIO Askren stated that 72% of the student fees go to IS and it covers Blackboard, general purpose computer labs, and pays for student staff to manage the labs and other campus student computing services. He said that the colleges receive the other 28% based on total credit hours, and that there is a minimum distribution to colleges of \$25,000 even if their credit hour total is below that amount. He noted that the Deans are asked to report back to ASUN on how the funds have been used and that IS provides extensive documentation on their related expenditures. He stated that Academic Affairs receives 50 cents for each credit hour and invests it on technology related to students.

CIO Askren pointed out that the Blackboard contract was renewed system-wide this past summer for three years. He stated it is still a quality product but is quite expensive, and IS is looking at creating a faculty-led focus group along with Academic Affairs this spring to look at possible alternatives in Learning Management Systems since this area is changing rapidly. Askren mentioned that Indiana, Wisconsin, and Michigan are assessing their options as well, and that we could possibly benefit through collaborative discussions next year.

## **2.8 Difficulties with Common Software**

Guevara stated that faculty members wanted to record with Adobe Acrobat presenter which is a very common software program, but no one in IS seemed to know about it, even with how to install it. CIO Askren stated that he is not sure what happened with this

but he will talk to his people about it. He stated that someone with the knowledge may have recently left the university. He noted that we have a good Adobe Connect product with strong support that can be used. He pointed out that the campus wants to do more with Abode in terms of campus licensing.

### **2.9 Update on Plans to Get Rid of Hardwired Ports**

CIO Askren noted that there is not a plan to get rid of the hardwired ports, only an interest to stop individually charging for them. He pointed out that the ports are needed for employees to do their job, and that many universities have moved to a common good approach where funding for networking and other basic services is budgeted off the top rather than billing individually in order to be more efficient. He stated that the dorms are the only areas where consideration is being given for removing the hardwired ports, although they will likely remain as they provide higher performance and more consistency although they are not currently heavily used.

Woodman pointed out that many of the labs are hard wired and students pay lab fees in addition to the student technology fees. CIO Askren stated that this is something IS struggles with. He noted that we tend to charge less than our peers for a hard wired port. He stated that many of our peers have gone to a bundle program.

### **2.10 Digital Signage**

CIO Askren reported that an RFP was recently sent out to acquire a digital signage contract. He stated that his intent is for the campus to get a better price by aggregating demand rather than having each unit negotiate its own contract.

Woodman asked if any faculty member can use the contract. CIO Askren stated that a unit can buy off of the contract.

CIO Askren suggested that it would also be helpful to have the chair of the ITSC, Associate VC Perez, and Woodman to discuss lecture capture. He noted that he believes we should have more extensive lecture capture capabilities and it would be helpful to get faculty input on this. He stated that we need to move forward with this and believes it is important to the campus.

## **3.0 Announcements**

### **3.1 Lincoln Public School Requirements**

LaCost reported that LPS is requiring a copy of the course syllabus for a college course the student has taken if the student is to receive high school credit for the course. Guevara pointed out that this is a standard requirement for transferring credits.

### **2.3 AAUP Meeting**

Bender reminded the Executive Committee that there will be a meeting of the AAUP on City Campus on October 6. He noted that Schubert will present data on non-tenure track faculty members and there will be a keynote speaker.

## **4.0 Approval of 9/12/12 and 9/26/12 Minutes**

Reisbig moved for approval of the 9/12/12 minutes as revised. The motion was seconded by Ruchala. The motion was approved.

LaCost moved for approved of the 9/26/12 minutes as revised. The motion was seconded by Rinkevich. The motion was approved.

## **5.0 Unfinished Business**

### **5.1 Faculty Salary Data**

LaCost asked for assistance in determine which parts of the financial report from the Faculty Compensation Advisory Committee should be distributed to the Senate.

### **5.2 Parking Issues**

Guevara noted that the issue of parking fees was raised again at the Faculty Senate meeting. He noted that employees and students are getting tired of getting fleeced by the parking fees and asked if the Senate should address this issue again. Woodman pointed out that the plan is to build more garages but there is never a plan to reduce the fees once the garages have been built and paid for. Guevara stated that the parking issue is a legitimate concern that the Senate needs to continue discussing.

The Executive Committee agreed to have Dan Carpenter, Director of Parking and Transit Services, meet with the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on Wednesday, October 10 at 3:00 pm. The meeting will be held in the Faculty Senate Office. The minutes are respectfully submitted by Karen Griffin, Coordinator and David Woodman, Secretary.