

October 21, 2009

Dear Provost Lavernia,

We understand that as the Administrative Process Redesign progresses, it will be informed by reports from the Budget Advisory Subcommittees. The administrative review subcommittee contains a section on the Office of Information and Educational Technology (IET). Based on our knowledge of the campus information technology landscape, in general, and with IET, in particular, we would like to offer our thoughts on some of the topics mentioned in the report from the subcommittee.

Since the suggestions from the subcommittee have been ongoing priorities for IET, there are existing frameworks in which to account for them. We expect that it will be primarily a matter of re-examining and strengthening existing approaches.

The report suggests increased attention to the partnership between IET and faculty. We note that the majority of the work done by CCFIT on topics such educational technology and networking as they touch end users is carried out in the related CCFIT subcommittees. This year, we are adding a subcommittee on research computing. These subcommittees are chaired by faculty and draw the majority of their members from faculty and students. When you attended the CCFIT meeting last spring, you saw that most of the recommendations in the CCFIT annual report for

2008-2009 were generated by the subcommittees and were faculty driven.

This partnership with faculty has been working well, but it may be possible to further strengthen it by connecting more directly the agenda items for full CCFIT meetings with the subcommittee work.

Additionally, in the part of its work most directly interacting with faculty and instruction, IET, through its Academic Technology Support Group (ATS), has a partnership with the Teaching Resources Center (TRC).

The TRC director is a faculty member reporting to the Vice-Provost for Undergraduate Studies. In this cooperative work with faculty and students on educational technology, the TRC emphasizes the educational side while ATS specializes in the technology. One concern we have is that successful efforts over the last five years to strengthen this coordination between ATS and TRC is now jeopardized by a suggestion from one budget subcommittee report to eliminate the TRC.

The subcommittee report also mentions taking an approach more oriented toward standards, interoperability, efficient support, and long life---in short, good planning. With service on CCFIT, we become familiar with the highly developed system for planning, coordination, consultation, input, and feedback managed by IET. In addition to CCFIT itself and its subcommittees, this system includes the PPM 200-45 process and the roadmap process. The governance structure includes the Administrative IT Governance Board and receives input from the Deans Technology Council, the Technology Infrastructure Forum, the Technology Support Program, the Academic Senate and CCFIT. The Administrative IT Services Roadmap has eight domains organized to emphasize unifying elements of architectures, policies, and services and is embodied in the Administrative IT Systems Coordinating Council. The justification for this formalization of campuswide planning is prioritization, shared, stable standards, increased efficiency, and decreased redundancy.

The subcommittee report suggests that the mission of IET, as it serves campus needs, could be clarified. This is an important but challenging item. The history of information technology shows a constant tension and ever-shifting balance between centralization and distribution of computing assets and services. It is important to realize that IET is only a part of information technology at UC Davis. Through its planning and coordination and responsibility for networking and core services, it touches virtually all aspects of information technology on the campus. Nevertheless there are a huge number of computers and software systems that are owned and managed by units other than IET. Thus the role of IET itself manifests the tension between centralization and distribution. An area that benefits from the centralization of policy and implementation is cybersecurity. This is a top IET priority, and the campus has an admirable record in this area.

The scope of IET's planning and coordination work is substantially larger than the hardware and systems for which it has direct ownership and responsibility. The Roadmap and PPM 200-45 processes recognize and address these issues. However, the budget pressure we face motivates us to improve our conceptualization of this very complex landscape and the contributions that IET makes to planning for and providing essential information technology services to the campus. The first meeting of the full CCFIT committee will have an agenda that begins a discussion of precisely this issue.

We understand that the subcommittee had limited time and may not have been able to explore in depth all the items we have only touched on here. We will be pleased to provide you or others engaged in the Administrative Process Redesign with additional background information and any assistance that is desired.

CCFIT members are mindful of the budget pressures faced by all campus units. We will continue the tradition of providing oversight, advice, and input to IET with an emphasis on participation by faculty, students, and staff. In the present environment, there will be a strong focus on prioritizing IET responsibilities and projects. Nevertheless, information technology, in general, and IET, in particular, are more than just places to save money. IET will also provide hardware, software, and services that will allow the campus to operate more efficiently while minimizing impacts to its core mission. For example, shared service centers will certainly need innovative, sophisticated, and robust software to be successful.

We look forward to discussions with all parts of the campus so that we can provide the most informed recommendations to IET and to you.

Regards,

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Chair, Campus Council for Information Technology (CCFIT)
On behalf of the CCFIT Steering Committee