

February 18, 2011

EVC Galloway
Chancellor's Office
Kerr Hall

RE: Senate Responses to ITS External Review Self Study

Dear Alison,

Attached are the responses from five Senate committees that reviewed the *ITS External Review Self Study*. I transmit to you the comments in their entirety from the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB), the Committee on Computing and Telecommunications (CCT), Committee on Research (COR), Committee on Teaching (COT), and the Committee on the Library (COL).

Thank you for the opportunity to advise on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Gillman".

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division

February 16, 2011

Susan Gillman
Chair, Academic Senate

RE: ITS Self-Study External Review

Dear Susan,

The Committee on Computing and Telecommunications (CCT) recently reviewed the ITS Self-Study. The ITS Self-Study is a fairly comprehensive document outlining areas of progress, areas needing improvement, and unit priorities for the future. The document addresses such issues as the recent consolidation of ITS support for faculty and staff, as well as concerns over limitations in supporting the variety of activities on campus.

CCT recommends additional discussion in two areas:

Budgetary detail -- providing specific, related dollar amounts when discussing particular projects would greatly assist the reader in understanding the conceptual framework behind spending prioritization and the assessment of future budgetary needs.

Decision-making process -- clearly delineating the unit's decision-making paradigm, providing greater transparency, would allow reviewers to better determine steps that are sufficient and recommend steps to enhance the process. For example, it is not clear at what point, if any, campus constituents are brought into the decision-making process, nor at what juncture they are provided information about decisions. How does ITS assess which constituencies are impacted? Faculty need to know where in the process their voice is considered and need to receive feedback in order to make local decisions judiciously. CCT encourages ITS to make recommendations on how the decision-making process can be improved, from the ITS viewpoint.

Additionally, related to both budget and decision-making, CCT would like to see some discussion on the priority placed on open source programs and freeware and how such programs are considered in the bidding process. As budgets shrink, consideration of freeware, open-source programs, and third-party support is vital.

CCT is grateful for this opportunity to comment on the ITS Self-Study Review and commends this unit on the valuable services and support it provides across campus.

Sincerely,

/s/

Joel Primack, Chair
Committee on Computing and Telecommunications

cc: CPB Chair Haddad
COT Chair Gonzalez-Pagani
COL Chair Manduchi
COR Chair Williams

NOTES
COMMITTEE ON COMPUTING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS
January 5, 2011
9:30am – 11:00am
Kerr Hall 307

Present: Joel Primack (Chair), Charlie McDowell (Chair pro tem after 10:30a), Jose Renau, Ted Warburton, Martin Weissman, Chris Wilmers, Mary Doyle (VCIT), Scott Medling (GSA), Shari Skinner (staff)

Absent: Greg Laughlin, William Crawford (SUA)

Announcements

The January 5th meeting minutes were approved.

ITS Review

(Please note: VCIT Doyle recused herself from this portion of the meeting.)

CCT has until February 16th to comment, so can continue discussion at next meeting if necessary. Committees were not asked to address any specific questions, so the CCT commentary can address anything members deem important, including process. Members agreed the self-study is fairly comprehensive; however, it is deficient in budgetary detail. For example, no numbers are attached to the projects outline, and there is little/no discussion on how decisions would be made based on potential budgetary constraints. How will spending be prioritized? Committee members commend the step of creating a budget for upgrades to ITS needs on campus and strongly support increasing this budget to improve the technological infrastructure of campus, particularly the network and server hosting space. Consideration also needs to be given to the utilities, such as electricity and cooling equipment, that are integral to running functions like the data center. The Chair commented that these utilities are provided by the campus, so are not part of the ITS or departmental budgets, but he warned that UC Berkeley plans to start charging for such things next year. Other members noted that UCSC Engineering faculty are beginning to be charged for electricity. It is probable that units on campus will be charged for electricity soon; currently there is a large amount of non-ITS hosted hardware which the campus hosts and for which the campus covers the cost of electricity. ITS wants to centralize servers that have important data, but will want to develop a charge model that doesn't encourage people to use their own hardware and circumvent the system.

One committee member advised not using 3D pie charts, as they can visually distort proportions, and defining acronyms used. (Another member pointed out acronyms were defined in a different location in the study.)

The committee questioned the low priority placed on open source programs and freeware. There is general agreement that the bidding process is biased in favor of non-open source, since, of course freeware and open-source products don't bid. This issue came up last year in the choice of campus web content management software, where a number of faculty members were disappointed that Drupal wasn't chosen. It is strongly recommended ITS ensure their processes for assessing new software/vendors fairly consider open source and freeware. This should also extend to ensuring ITS staffing is able to support open source.

The self-study makes reference to ITS not being able to support some activities, which may lead campus constituencies to pursue other options that lead to greater expense over time. ITS needs to have a decision-making process that better includes campus member participation. This manifested negatively in the ITS consolidation of support. For example, Digital Media lost a lot of support due to consolidation, at the same time as a new research building was being built. Because of this convergence, some research ground to a halt, and it was a struggle for faculty to obtain high-speed connections to support research. Although UCSC did get a dark fiber connection to the high speed internet, there are many units on campus that are not yet connected but should be. A great deal of money was invested in running the dark fiber to UCSC and Delaware Street, but the additional connection equipment has not yet been provided, minimizing the dark fiber's utilization. Again, an understanding of the decision-making process, of how ITS addresses parity in sharing support money across campus, would be most beneficial in mitigating the continued negative attitude about the consolidation. Also, including campus constituencies in this process is vitally important. Faculty need to know where in the process their voice is considered and need to receive feedback in order to make local decisions judiciously. Committee members acknowledged that ITS may not have much say in this process and encourage ITS to make recommendations on how the decision-making process can be improved from the ITS viewpoint.

VCIT Doyle rejoined the meeting at 10:10am, at which time members summarized discussion points for her benefit and comment. VCIT Doyle noted in response that ITS does have staff skilled in maintaining/updating/supporting whatever environment/programs are offered; Sakai is an unusual example of using third-party support for an open-source platform. She can provide a list of all currently used and supported open source programs. They do not provide the hardware or the research staffing to initiate use of an open source program. Virtual server hosting is provided.

One member commented that simply submitting an IT help ticket (managed through a central support center) can often solve most problems, such as having free software installed, having a new open source piece of software put on a server, etc.; usually there is no charge to the department, and often the local IT staff liaison will do the work.

Regarding the decision-making process: that will be addressed in the governance section of the self-study. The VCIT will review the issues discussed and will incorporate responses into future documents. If constituencies such as a division are not feeling that they have input, they may not be providing a representative to the advisory committee, an important part of the process.

The VCIT noted that much of the budgetary information is contained in the appendices, as well as a communication plan; members should review the appendices to see if their concerns are addressed adequately. The reviewers for the self-study have been identified. The review itself will take place March 27-29, and will include a campus visit.

CITRIS

The committee has no comment on the CITRIS Academic Review Report.

eCommons

One member felt there are one or two slight inadequacies in eCommons, functions that Moodle addresses better, such as the test tool. However, he has heard several comments from faculty that the move to eCommons was smooth and they feel it works pretty well. In response to a member's question about ITS's satisfaction with rSmart's support and service, the VCIT feels it's been a bit bumpy; other institutions may be receiving more attention than we are. The biggest issue is accommodation/accessibility; eCommons is supposed to be 508 compliant but isn't yet. ITS has recently set up an assistive technology committee to help address this. One member commented that assistive technology is an area that wasn't really addressed in the eCommons report – what steps will be taken to make eCommons more accessible and increase faculty awareness? Some dates/timelines in the “next steps” section would be valuable.

Meeting adjourned 10:50am.

February 15, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: ITS Self Study for External Review

Dear Chair Gillman,

The Committee on the Library has reviewed the Self-study Report produced by Information Technology Services (ITS) in preparation for their upcoming administrative review. Overall, COL found the Self-study Report to be informative and clear; the committee felt that the document represents an honest and transparent attempt on the part of ITS to assess both its accomplishments and shortcomings. Particularly noteworthy is the inclusion of the overall budget of ITS, although no breakdown by salary group classification and function is provided, an addition COL felt would be very useful to the reviewers.

With respect to the relationship between ITS and the University Library, COL noted that the Self-study Report lacks a significant discussion of ITS's support of the library in the dissemination and delivery of library materials, particularly regarding off-campus access.

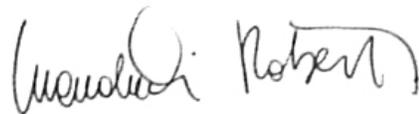
COL members also noted the absence of a discussion of ITS's role in the maintenance and administration of library archives and databases. A central question for COL arises from the study around how (if at all) ITS will support faculty in the archiving of research data; whether this data would be housed via the California Digital Library or locally remains unclear.

Lastly, COL would like to see ITS take a more active role in assisting the library with developing new programs, tools, and interfaces (such as applications for iPhones and other "smartphones") that would foster easier access for patrons and support the overall educational mission of the library.

On the whole, the Committee on the Library found the ITS Self-study Report to be a good document that will, no doubt, be useful to the external reviewers. It will be useful, in addition, to the campus and to COL's work if the above information is included. COL very much looks forward to the results of the ITS review.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roberto Manduchi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R'.

Roberto Manduchi, Chair
Committee on the Library

CC: CPB Chair Haddad
CCT Chair Primack
COT Chair Gonzalez-Pagani
COR Chair Williams

February 11, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: ITS Self Study for External Review

Dear Chair Gillman,

The Committee on Research very much looks forward to the upcoming review of the Information and Technology Services (ITS) unit. Obviously, ITS should represent a pivotal part of the campus' research infrastructure, and hence the degree to which this enterprise facilitates and enhances research on the campus is of primary concern to COR, particularly given its non-insubstantial budget.

It is no secret that there has been widespread faculty dissatisfaction with the ITS enterprise: this dissatisfaction has perhaps become less severe over the last several years, but the ability to longitudinally monitor improvements (and shortcomings) in the ITS enterprise seems minimal. In the Self-study, a set of polling results is presented (7 of the 14 Charts in the report). With such poll results, it is difficult to determine what the trajectory of this enterprise is. It may well be positive; but the documentation (beyond anecdotal) of this appears to be minimal. For example, as described on p. 57, focus group assessments occurred in 2006 and 2007—and portions of these were highly critical. In 2008, another assessment occurred, but it is not clear from this Self-study whether this was a poll or a focus group. The generally positive results shown in Chart 13 are taken as evidence that there “appear(s) to be a dramatic improvement.” But it is impossible to tell whether the current poll is compatible in approach or methodology with the prior focus groups' assessments. Thus, as a polling exercise, without establishment of a baseline, the results of the poll (and half the charts) lack contextualization and hence usefulness. For example, the “ticket” IT system for service, anecdotally, continues to be viewed by some on the campus as ineffectual, untimely and minimally responsive. The standard story is that days to weeks after filing a ticket (and often having already worked out the problem for yourself, or with local help), one might get a follow-up e-mail from IT asking about the “ticket.” Thus, what (and whose opinion) the polling results actually reflect is unclear; and, the degree to which local versus centralized assistance is being monitored by these polls is impossible to assess—as noted in the report, users tend to be generally content with their local support.

Even the results of the current poll are not at all compelling. The participation of students in the poll was pathetic (~4%); and that of faculty and staff was only 17% by non-ITS employees. It is not stated explicitly what the faculty participation rate was, but some insight may be garnered from Charts 5 and 7. From these charts, it appears that the number of faculty participants might be at most ~80, and for some categories of questions less than 30 (out of 552 non-ITS faculty and staff responding to the survey, and out of ~550 occupied faculty FTE at UCSC), which seems to be a **quite** poor turnout, and almost certainly does not provide an adequate representation of faculty from the different academic divisions. Indeed, Chart 7 raises more questions than it answers---when most of the faculty responses fall in the “all other responses” category, one is left wondering what these actually might have said. In short, the difficulty that the ITS unit has in quantifying whether things are improving (and where) is not a subtle

shortcoming for an enterprise that is technologically fluent, and which views itself as a service organization. Moreover, the difficulty in getting responses from stakeholders might be as plausibly attributed to either an overarching malaise with polls that are perceived to be pointless, or with the ITS organization itself. No discussion is included in the Self-study of why the turnout for some constituencies in the rather heavily emphasized polling results is included, and this lack of attention to why so few people pay attention to polls by the ITS enterprise is also a major shortcoming of the Self-Study. In short, COR suspects that these poll results, without context, trends or respectable response rates, may at best be very difficult to interpret; at worst, they may be largely meaningless.

As discussed on p. 21 of the Self-Study, the Research and Faculty Partnerships Unit of ITS contains 2 of the 234 FTE associated with the ITS enterprise. As described on p. 40, “Technology to support scholarship and research can generally be seen as developing from two sources: DLs and the LITS they supervise, and the staff in Research and Faculty Partnerships.” For reference, DL’s are Divisional Liaisons and LITS are Local IT Staff. From this description, COR is completely unable to discern what resources ITS devotes to enhancing or facilitating the research enterprise. Given the two FTE devoted to the RFP unit, we suspect that it is **extremely** small. Indeed, COR would find it useful to know (in at least an approximate way) what the absolute amount of ongoing ITS resources are that are devoted to the different overarching tasks of the campus: research, teaching, student life, and so forth. Do these allocations make sense relative to the importance attached to each area on the campus? From this document, COR simply can’t tell.

On pages 41 and 42, different major research initiatives that have been aided by ITS are described: the specific research projects described are confined to Astronomy/Astrophysics and Bioengineering (the Dark Fiber is campus-wide infrastructure). These are clearly two of the principal major computing enterprises on campus, and it is both expected and unsurprising that ITS would play a role in facilitating the research of these enterprises. It is unclear from the brief description of other initiatives how broadly the research outreach of ITS is into other research areas—and this is a topic of primary concern to COR, and which might well benefit from improvement. The impression given here is that ITS may have plucked the largest, lowest-hanging fruit of campus research computational enterprises—how much they have moved up the tree (or how poised they are to assist others) is completely unclear. In an era when computational resources are one coin-of-the-realm in academic research enterprises, COR would hope that a broader, higher-profile level of outreach can be achieved in future by the ITS enterprise.

Lastly, the Self-Study entirely lacks comparisons with the ITS enterprises at other campuses, or even other UC’s of roughly comparable size. In this sense, the document is more of a “Self-Description” and less of a “Self-Study.” As a result, COR cannot assess whether our ITS portfolio, expenditures and organization are typical of a mid-size public university, or whether they might be aberrant in some important ways. At the least, COR would have hoped for some perspective on how other universities manage and fund their analogous enterprises to ITS. But, as it stands, we are left with a sense for only how UC Santa Cruz operates, without any broader perspective. Again, this is a key shortcoming.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Quentin Williams". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "Q" and "W".

Quentin Williams, Chair
Committee on Research

CC: CPB Chair Haddad
CCT Chair Primack
COL Chair Manduchi
COT Chair Gonzalez-Pagani

SANTA CRUZ: OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

February 15, 2011

To: Susan Gillman
Chair, Academic Senate

From: Committee on Teaching

Re: ITS Self-Study Report

Dear Susan,

The committee was asked to respond to the ITS Self-study Report which was prepared in the context of that division's upcoming review in March. The committee reminded itself that discussion and advice should center on the area of the committee's purview.

One pertinent comment is the fact that although we were asked to respond to the Self-study itself, it was hard to keep our discussion away from larger pedagogical issues in connection with instructional technology, especially more so in the context of present budgetary limitations.

The report focuses on three areas: how the division's current organization serves the campus mission, the adequacy of its resources given the campus mission and size, and strategies that focus on efficiency and effectiveness given a budget-constrained environment. The COT's response to these areas follow.

In general, members expressed satisfaction with the services ITS provides for teaching and learning. Most of us make intensive use of technology in all areas reported on in the study, such as classrooms, instructional computer labs, the learning management system, course web sites, etc., and the discussion of this document engendered a lively exchange on several related topics. The highest satisfaction was expressed concerning classroom technology and the greatest worry was in connection with scantron services, which will be addressed briefly below. Some concerns were also raised regarding future availability of instructional computer labs.

Although not in unanimous agreement with the merits of all features in the new course management system (e-Commons), committee members support its adoption and continued improvement. While we are very happy with several of its features, such as its integration with the student information system (AIS), we are looking forward to the upcoming implementation of new features such as improvements in the grade book and final grade push back.

Regarding campus instructional computer labs, concern was expressed on the possible risk of losing some of them due to budget cuts. Although the report mentions the increased use of labs and their important role, it was suggested that it might be good to emphasize information on these potential risks in the ITS self-study. The self-study might be more explicit about some of the most essential, but perhaps easiest to overlook, functions that the labs serve, such as printing, web access, etc., without which many students without laptop access would be disadvantaged.

The issue of scantron services raised many questions among committee members. While some members expressed concern regarding the use of scantrons for assessment, they did acknowledge that increasing class sizes necessitates the use of these tools. Therefore, since assessment of student learning is integral to instruction, strong desires were expressed on part of our members to keep scantrons for exams when no other options are applicable, and that this service be funded centrally. It was suggested that some more information in connection with this topic be included in the report; for example, number of forms processed for exams and cost model for forms and processing.

On the section that deals with the synergies between Learning Technologies, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), and the COT (page 34) some of our members believe it would be beneficial for the report to expand on the present crisis situation of the CTL. In addition, other members felt the report should clarify the relationship among the three parties mentioned above.

In sum, the ITS Self-Study does a good job at describing improvements as well as areas that need more support. It also outlines future priority goals. It reports well the unit's role in supporting faculty, and providing and servicing finely equipped classrooms, and other areas that are important to teaching and learning such as e-Commons. As mentioned above, this committee recommends clarification and expansion on reporting in some areas, which might be helpful to reviewers and to the campus as well.

COT is appreciative of the opportunity provided to comment on this report and recognizes the invaluable services the ITS unit provides to teaching and learning at UCSC.

Sincerely,

María Victoria González Pagani, Chair
Committee on Teaching

cc: CPB Chair Haddad
COL Chair Manduchi
CCT Chair Primack
COR Chair Williams

February 18, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: CPB response to ITS External Review Self Study

Dear Susan;

Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) has reviewed the Information Technology Services (ITS) Self-Study, and we are pleased to see progress on this initial prototype 'external-review' for an academic support unit. In the past CPB has recommended implementation of such reviews as parallels to the periodic external reviews conducted for academic departments.

CPB recognizes the importance of information technology to the primary instructional and research mission of the campus. We commend Vice Chancellor Doyle her colleagues for their efforts on this first-step of the unit review.

However, the August 26, 2011 "Proposal for ITS Assessment 2010-11" states that both a Self-Assessment-ITS View (Step 1) and Self-Assessment Campus Constituencies View (Step 2) are necessary before a final "Self Study Report" can be produced. (Step 3). From this perspective, the present ITS self study represents Step 1 of the preparation for the external review. Although the current report does contain survey results referred to in terms of an assessment of the "Campus Constituencies View", we do not see interview data "from key groups with questions targeted for key service areas, as well as open-ended questions about how information technology can support the strategic direction of the campus." CPB feels that this interview data is an important aspect of the self-study.

While many of the technical issues in the self-study fall more appropriately within the purview of other senate committees (CCT, CEP, COL, COT, COR), we have identified here specific CPB concerns. Each of these issues must be viewed in the current context of the diminished budgetary resources.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The extension of CENIC (Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California) to the 'campus gate' is a notable achievement of recent years. In evaluating efforts to distribute communications bandwidth throughout the campus, the self-study refers to an in-progress Telecommunications Master Plan (TMP) and cites extensive consultation with representatives of several academic constituencies [section 4.3.1.5]. **CPB asks reviewers to consider whether this plan can be pursued with current budgetary constraints and whether it is consistent with budgetary needs that might dictate postponing or reevaluating certain services, piece-meal implementation of services, and realistic compromises on levels of service.** We also note that within the School of Engineering there is considerable expertise on networking and communications as well as a specific

knowledge of the campus. CPB urges that the CP/EVC's office also engage this expertise in an independent critique of the forthcoming TMP.

CONSOLIDATION OF IT SERVICES

The self-study articulates the recent history of the consolidation of IT services on the campus. CruzTime, CruzMail, eCommons, CruzCalendar, CruzBuy, and AIS are examples of IT services that appear to be reliable and valuable in support of instruction, research, and administration. The self-study cites the challenge of maintaining the optimum balance between central and local services. The general sense of the ITS satisfaction survey and CPB members (anecdotal) is that a reasonable balance is being achieved between these two modes of providing support. CPB commends the efforts ITS in implementing the 'Satisfaction Survey'. We find the questions posed relevant and the results interesting. We do express the caveat that, due to no fault of the ITS survey staff, the data includes responses from fewer than 90 senate faculty. **CPB asks the External Review Committee (ERC) to assess the success of the balance between central and local services. Moreover, CPB asks that the ERC be provided with a cost-benefit analysis of the consolidation and ITS model of services.** To this end, CPB recommends that the campus Office of Planning and Budget provide an analysis of how/whether increased budgetary support of the ITS division was complemented by budgetary savings in other units that transferred IT functions to the ITS division.

STAFFING AND BUDGET

The ITS self-study (section 3.4.1) identifies principles upon which it will implement required budget cuts. CPB poses the following questions:

- The growth of the UCSC IT staff over the past five years is consistent with its increased responsibilities *vis a vis* campus IT consolidation. Now that many of the transformations are in place, should ITS, undergo a degree of retrenchment, even in the absence of overall campus budget reductions? Appendix K indicates that 73% (\$18,502,263) of the ITS budget is allocated for personnel salaries and benefits (an average of ~\$77,500 per staff based on 239 staff). Twenty-five percent (59 of 239) of ITS staff are in the MSP classification. Moreover, the ITS organization chart describes a management structure with six 'director' positions. **Does this current ITS organization optimize resources in this post-consolidation era? Is such an organizational structure, with accompanying administrative salaries, the most appropriate way to provide services from decreasing funding?**
- Academic divisions and support units are assessed for ITS services. CPB requests clarification of whether this assessment is categorized as 'info user' or 'self supporting' in the ITS budget funding. CPB has several concerns regarding these recharge costs.
 - i. To a large degree services such as telecommunications are non-discretionary and available only through ITS. Many in the academic divisions

are unconvinced that the amount of the recharges are commensurate with the service provided.

ii Funding for these recharges arises, for the most part, from redirection of general funds allocated to the budget of units. **CPB asks the ERC to assess the overall strategy of funding ITS through recharge and to consider the level of funding that is required for the services used. In a period of budgetary reduction, should these recharges continue to provide an unreduced source of income from reduced budgets in the academic divisions and support units? Do other campuses employ such an 'info user'/recharge model? What are the comparative rates and services? Does the ERC have suggestions for models of funding ITS?**

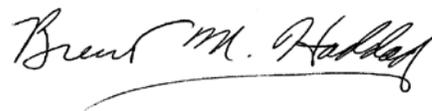
ADDITIONAL ISSUES FOR EXTERNAL REVIEWERS

- How does UCSC ITS compare (in size, scope and service) to IT units in similar institutions?
- How does UCSC ITS funding structure compare to that of IT units in similar institutions?
- What are opportunities for using third party vendors for some services?

PROCESS

- CPB reasserts its suggestion that the review committee include a representative from industry. Corporate and Academic missions are clearly distinct; however, given the central role that Research and Development play in the technology industry, those missions are not as divergent as it would seem. **Much could be gained by having an industry perspective on the ERC.**
- CPB finds the review schedule too abbreviated to allow for adequate review and response from Senate committees before the end of the term. CPB suggests a more flexible schedule.

Sincerely,



Brent Haddad, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: VC Doyle
VC Delaney
CCT Chair Primack
COR Chair Williams
COT Chair Gonzalez-Pagani
COL Chair Manduchi