Information Technology Coordinating Council (ITCC) Meeting Minutes

April 19, 2007


Absent: Coleen Coleman – School of Education & Social Policy, Frank DiSanto – Office of Research, Jonathan Lewis – Feinberg School of Medicine, Rene Machado – School of Music, Jeff Miller – Feinberg School of Medicine, Michael E. Mills – University Enrollment, Brian Peters – University Services, Mort Rahimi – VP and CTO Information Technology, Lyn Bourne Weick – Weinberg College of Arts & Sciences, Rita Winters – Law Administration, Ken Woo – School of Continuing Studies

Guests: Jim Konrad – University Services Purchasing, Mike Moody – Auditing Department, Wendy Woodward – Technology Support Services

Laptops/Desktops University-wide: – Jim Konrad – University Services Purchasing

Ms. Todus began the meeting by introducing Jim Konrad, Purchasing Director, University Services. Ms. Todus invited Mr. Konrad to begin the meeting with an update on the procurement of laptops and desktops University-wide.

- Mr. Konrad said that toward the end of last year he was invited to meet with the School Technology Leaders group to discuss a Request for Proposal to preferred vendors for laptops, desktops and other peripheral equipment. Purchasing then established a template for a formal RFP process.

University Purchasing received feedback from the School Technology Leaders at various stages which were; development of the RFP, evaluation of the proposal, and final selection of the vendors. They selected Dell, CDW and Apple. CDW is for IBM ThinkPads and ThinkCenters, and the discount is 36% off list. In comparison, if you ordered simply from CDW, you would get 3% off list, so this is a dramatic improvement.

The discount from Dell was previously 25%. With the newly negotiated agreement, laptops are discounted 31% and desktops discounted 36%. Mr. Konrad said that University Purchasing felt these discounts were excellent improvements from the existing contracts.
Mr. Konrad was asked if the discount is for the base or standard product only. He stated that was the case, and that any accessories and/or upgrades would be discounted at 16%.

Mr. Konrad said University Purchasing negotiated an agreement with Hewlett-Packard. Included in this contract, University Purchasing negotiated an HP Direct model, which they are getting ready to role out at a savings of approximately 8% over the discount we already receive.

Mr. Konrad added that the University is talking to CDW to make a bid for peripherals, but in the meantime, they are discussing improving the price agreement we have with them for all the other desktop and laptops.

The Apple discount is improved by 4%. The higher end catalog is already discounted at 10%, and this will be an additional 4% off. Apple is not as aggressive as the other companies, but this is still an improvement. There was a problem with Apple in past with shipping, but Mr. Konrad reported that University Purchasing has worked out these problems, and hopefully will see an improvement soon.

General Updates: Patricia Todus – Information Technology

- **NetIDs:** Several years ago a decision was made to allow NetIDs to be distributed by the schools. The schools requested this local distribution so that NetIDs could be sent out to the student before they arrived on campus. Mr. Greenwold asked NUIT to review this local distribution, to see if it would helpful from an image standpoint and a customer service standpoint to do centralized NetID distribution and support for graduate students and undergrads. Central support will require access to the Enterprise Systems when students are having a problem with their NetID. This changes NUIT’s support center model which now is manned by only students. We cannot provide students access to these systems, so we are reviewing support models, and we hope to have some forward movement to report by our July meeting. We are looking at both technology solutions to make this easier, as well as the human aspects

- **NMH Dialing Status:** Ms. Todus reported that NUIT has been meeting with NMH about the Chicago Campus dialing plan because they are opening the new Prentice Women’s Hospital and they chose a 3-digit prefix that has the same last digit as our Residence Hall in Chicago. Ms. Todus explained that when you are doing a 5-digit translation, you can’t have certain combinations. NUIT is trying to come up with a solution so that the majority of our Medical School faculty and Chicago campus staff will be able to retain 5-digit dialing. This may be a somewhat interim solution, since AT&T at some point is planning an overlay, bringing another area code to the Chicago Campus. Ms. Todus assured the Committee that there will be significant communication about this as soon as we come to closure with NMH.
• **Collaboration Services:** Ms. Todus reported that NU has received funding for Collaboration Services. She will keep the committee advised as this plan develops.

• **System Architecture:** Ms. Todus reported that senior management of the University wanted to verify that the system architecture that we have in place adheres to industry standards. A consultant was engaged and has interviewed representatives from across the University. He is returning next week to conduct the remaining interviews. The report is due by the end of May.

• **WebMail:** Ms. Todus told the Committee that many years ago when there was a demand for web mail, NUIT tried to find a solution that could meet the users needs at least on an interim basis. There were not affordable commercial products at that time, so an open source solution was implemented. Recently users have been experiencing problems. For this reason, NUIT started looking at what was available to replace our current web mail system. Technology Support Services selected and tested a new product, but when it was launched, it began to degrade email service as volume increased. Because it was affecting our email system, it was removed from service. Now this open source email product is under review again. Since we now have funding for Collaboration Services we are considering including it in this deployment plan.

There were questions and concerns about the affect on email when the new web mail was being launched. It was noted that critical areas were affected.

Mr. Greenwold brought up the issue of SES going down over the weekend of April 16th which is an extremely critical time for The Graduate School. Ms. Todus explained that in the eleventh hour of the upgrade, human error brought the system down. Mr. Greenwold asked how dates and times are chosen for upgrades. Ms. Todus responded that this is done through the Office of the Registrar, and they work to find the least disruptive time.

**Status of Administrative Business Continuity Planning (BCP): Ingrid Stafford**

Ms. Stafford began her report by identifying four tasks that the BCP initiative is working on based upon the 44 plans submitted during the past several months:

1) Looking at gaps in assumptions between functional plans and NUIT plans, resolving those gaps, and feeding back any resource issues into the next round of planning. They are working with Sharlene Mielke of Information & Systems Security/Compliance (I&SS/C) to provide feedback to NUIT

2) Reviewing the academic year calendar to identify critical points of demand, i.e.; August through September, end of fiscal year, etc. With this information they can advise NUIT what systems are critical during specific times so they can be addressed first during emergencies.
3) Schools and departments must be contacted to create BCP plans. They will modify the Enterprise System Template to ensure the terminology is more user-friendly.

Ms. Stafford reported that she and University Police Chief Bruce Lewis made a resource and budget request to the University’s Budget and Planning Group in March. They discussed the requirements for preparedness and have spent time on follow-up questions posed by the Budget and Planning Group. The number one issue was emergency notification due to the recent events at Virginia Tech. They are examining various policy issues involved in collecting emergency contact information. Mr. Hurley mentioned that Mr. Sunshine supported this effort.

Mr. Hayward said they are working with 12 offices and there is not one single list of information and this is only the undergrads. This needs to be addressed.

Ms. McPhilimy again questioned the impact of the recent SES outage. Ms. Stafford said the Office of Student Accounts invoked their emergency plan to provide services.

SES Module for The Graduate School (TGS): Lesley Perry

Simon Greenwold, Associate Dean, The Graduate School Administration, introduced Ms. Lesley Perry. Mr. Greenwold said that when Dean Wachtel came on board, he re-imagined The Graduate School as a service organization. With that in mind they worked to streamline their Forms Project. In the past, graduate students filled out ten forms, and staff had to input that data. Now, with NUIT, they have implemented self-service on Caesar, and students enter their own data.

Lesley Perry presented the service forms site. She also showed how the department views their data after input and approves their information. If they do not have the correct data, they don’t get approval, and this has streamlined the process. She demonstrated the forms needing committee entry, such as Master’s Degree Completion, PhD Prospectus and PhD Final Exam. Master’s has a minimum of two graduate faculty who must sit on a committee while Prospectus and Final Exam have a minimum of three graduate faculty, and graduate forms cannot be approved without these approvals.

Graduate students can access each of the forms on Caesar; department staff check the information and approve them accordingly. TGS then provides the final approval. TGS requires that students print out the PhD Final Exam page for signatures, and after they are collected, milestones are updated automatically. An overnight refresh is required for the information to show up in reports. With this forms program, graduate students can also request a leave of absence online.

Mike Besancon asked if this system is widely used. Lesley said they are still in training mode. This program was introduced last March. At this time over 200 students have submitted their data electronically.

Mr. Greenwold said that email notification is immediate when the student uses self-service.
Mike Besancon asked when the system will be entirely student self-service. Mr. Greenwold said this should be achieved by fall 2007. He said there is potential for scalability, and that’s the reason they presented it to this Committee. They definitely want input in order to scale this appropriately. Simon thanked NUIT for it’s assistance with this project.

Google Deployment Plan: Wendy Woodward – Technology Support Services
Ms. Woodward distributed a Power Point of her presentation. She began with the planning process which includes the scope definition, process documentation and analysis and communication development.

Ms. Woodward told the Committee that Phase I Implementation targets a web-based “opt in” process, deleting old NU mailboxes after a period of time. Ms. Driscoll questioned the time frame of 14 days, indicating this could cause concerns. Ms. Woodward said this is an outline and can be reviewed further. University listservs will work for alias based addresses (e.g. studentname@northwestern.edu). Ms. Woodward told the Committee that wherever possible, NUIT will try to duplicate existing services in the new student email system.

Ms. Woodward outlined the remaining Phase I Implementation process with regard to the initial account name, LDAP directory, and Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). NUIT is working to pilot the service with the Associated Student Government (ASG) and other selected students. They have a target launch date of June 4th, and she reported that graduating students will have the option to either; keep their account, purge their data and keep their account, or purge their entire account.

Ms. Woodward said that partnering with Google has been a great experience. They are responsive to the University’s needs, are working to develop student emergency notification features and are meeting regularly with NUIT with regard to regular development and future direction.

Ms. Woodward briefly discussed the proposed process after the launch of Phase I. She reported that NUIT will work with the Office of Alumni Relations and Development (OARD) to develop Alumni support processes. Phase II implementation will integrate @northwestern.edu account activation with the NetID activation process for included incoming students. At this time, they are targeting a winter quarter deployment. NUIT continues to work with the Office for Research and The Graduate School to address concerns surrounding graduate students who are involved in sensitive research. In closing, she told the Committee that NUIT will continue discussions with other interested schools as to appropriate next steps.

Ms. Stafford asked if there is a payoff for moving in this direction. Ms. Todus said the driver for this expectation is cost avoidance. The student expectations are already high, and it would be extremely costly for NUIT to develop what Google has already achieved. This move will allow Northwestern University to retain contact after graduation.
Members Roundtable

Steve Green – Athletics Office
Mr. Green told the committee that Athletics is planning to refine the wireless access for Media during football season. He stated that this is critical because they can have up to 100 Media reporting on games and only a few actually have wireless access. They are working to correct this situation.

Simon Greenwolf – The Graduate School
Mr. Greenwolf reported that The Graduate School just completed a project with Management Systems that enhances communication with graduate students through Self-service into SES, and he stated that The Graduate School is also enhancing their Financial Aid operations and changing the way graduate students are paid in HRIS.

Bill Hayward – Administration & Planning
Mr. Hayward reported that they will have an information table at the Project Café Meet-and-Greet sessions on April 24th and 26th on Evanston and Chicago campuses.

Ingrid Stafford – Office of Financial Operations
Ms. Stafford talked about the initiative around governance with regard to data access. She said they have two or three groups that are meeting to brainstorm governance strategies in order to get consensus, which may be ready by early summer or fall. If the committee agrees, they will bring this issue back for discussion at the next ITCC meeting.

David Keown - Kellogg Information Systems
Mr. Keown said that Kellogg is learning Office 2007 while working on the new Vista software for laptops.

Guy Miller – Human Resource
Mr. Miller reported that Human Resources are half way through their position management data clean-up.

Mike Moody – Auditing Department
Mr. Moody said that the Auditing Department is working on a policy format that they will take to senior management for approval.

Next Meeting:
Thursday, July 26, 2007
Rebecca Crown – Hardin Hall
9:00 – 10:30 AM