Bill White called the meeting to order and the minutes of the October 13, 2003 meeting were approved.

Architecture

Mort Rahimi reviewed the Systems Architecture Platform Plan, including a portal front-end for all of the Northwestern University community and external users accessing University information. He indicated that this architecture would allow schools and departments to develop their own customized applications that can be accessed with full security and with a single sign-on. This approach replaces the “silos” system culture.
(stand alone systems; not integrated) which currently exists. Larry Dumas asked about the status of this plan. Mort Rahimi indicated that the architecture is in the conceptual stage and the portal needs to be developed. Bill White asked whether it is an enduring architecture or does it have an end. Mort Rahimi responded the former.

Mort Rahimi said our architecture is not all new; Boeing and many other companies are using similar architecture. The NSF Advisory Committee for Operations and Management, which Mr. Rahimi serves on, is looking at the same concept to integrate different systems used by NSF. The Navy, too, is moving in this direction. This architecture minimizes the risk related to identity theft and other security issues. We want to move toward using NetID’s for access to all systems. Larry Dumas indicated that the biggest issue about NetID’s is in the Medical School. The Dean is expected to issue an edict to University faculty and staff that they must use a University NetID.

Ben Slivka agreed with the architecture and asked if we have a concrete diagram of the systems in place today and understand the complexities of how they relate to each other from a functional standpoint. He continued that with this information communicated, we could explain the benefits of the architecture including time and money. Mort Rahimi said that we would discuss the mechanism for this integration at the next meeting.

Bill Sagan asked about the status of moving servers to the University Central Data Center. Mort Rahimi indicated that this is moving forward. Larry Dumas said that Admissions servers are being evaluated, and that the servers will be moved to the Central Data Center. Bill Sagan asked after a server moves to the Central Data Center, if the application development moves to NUIT. Mort Rahimi said the Central Data Center staff is responsible for the maintenance of the operating system software, networking, and the server environment. The applications would remain with the schools and the departments. Marilyn McCoy said the advantage of having servers at Central Data Center is availability 24/7 and security. Timothy Krauskopf asked whether we are leading edge or if there are others who have done this. He pointed out that identity theft is a risk issue and while centralizing servers may be a solution, end users do not always embrace this approach. Mort Rahimi said this centralization is more acceptable to end users because, except for central administration systems, we are not requiring the use of the Central Data Center.

**Financial Management System**

Bill White noted that the timeline shown stops on December 9, 2003 and asked when the full plan would be delivered. Mort Rahimi said in April 2004, a high level plan will be delivered.

Mort Rahimi then reviewed the committee structure, which includes staff, faculty, and school representatives. The Research Office project interfaces with the Financial Management System committees. He then discussed other resources required such as, training and communications, indicating we were using existing experts from the offices of University Relations and Human Resources to fulfill these needs. Timothy Krauskopf
advised that marketing should focus staff energy on replacing systems knowing the new system will not meet all needs, but will meet Northwestern University’s longer term needs.

Bill White asked what the next steps are. Henry Bienen said that we should move quickly on vendor selection by April 2004 and development of the high-level plan. Henry Bienen also said where we got in trouble before was changing systems to accommodate existing processes. Our approach with the Financial Management System is to change our processes to accommodate the system. The committee advised the administration not to spend too much time on the choice of the system but rather on what actually has to be done to implement the chosen system effectively, including what changes are needed in our own processes.

**Research**

Eugene Sunshine indicated that what is important to users is our focus on Financial Management System, as well as integrating the Research System. He indicated that Research is on a faster track than the Financial Management System. Mort Rahimi reported that Huron Consulting Group has defined a clear plan in the research area.

Mort Rahimi told the committee that Northwestern University hired Huron Consulting Group to review system needs and on December 10, 2003 the final presentation will be made to the Administrative Systems Executive Committee. He continued that some recommendations are already in process: recruiting a “CIO” for Research Administration, beginning the integration of systems, moving servers to Central Data Center, and reviewing Research Administration desktops and the possible provision of desktop support from central staff on a contract basis.

Larry Dumas said other short-term solution goals are being pursued, such as the effort reporting system and the redevelopment of policies. The policy changes are moving a culture change forward. Larry Dumas said that Huron has brought the best practices to the table, but said there is no system in place anywhere containing all the best practice elements.

**Distance Education**

Mort Rahimi said Deans are interested in using technology to enhance education. This is evidenced by the increased use in the Course Management System and NUIT’s investment in time and resources to support faculty. Bill Sagan asked if the content is retained. Mort Rahimi responded that content is retained. Gary Thompson asked if Blackboard was used at other institutions. Mort Rahimi said that many institutions are using Blackboard, but at Northwestern University the system interfaces with the Student Enterprise System. Bill White suggested that CTEC should be integrated with Blackboard as well, in the future.

The meeting was adjourned.
The next meeting of the committee is scheduled on Tuesday, April 13, 2004, Chicago Campus.

Agenda
- Financial Management System
- Research
- Possible visit to Starlight