Bill White called the meeting to order and the minutes of the April 8, 2003 meeting were approved.

**Program Review Results**

Bill White asked if there were any questions regarding the Program Review materials. Ben Slivka suggested that dates of completion be added to assure that the action items were measurable. Mort Rahimi said that this would be done. Tim Krauskopf asked how the Committee could judge if Information Technology was properly funded in comparison to other university Information Technology organizations. Henry Bienen said that there was a problem taking gross numbers because of the differences between institutions. Moreover, Marilyn McCoy pointed out that there is no existing national benchmark. Tim Krauskopf then suggested the difference between total effort and
execution be used. Mort Rahimi stated that many times execution changes, noting for example the change in leadership related to the Financial Management System. Mort Rahimi said that some may use the percentage of the Information Technology budget in relation to the University budget as a measurement, but even this is not an adequate measurement. He did note that NUIT’s budget percentage is lower than other universities.

Integration and Financial Management System

Mort Rahimi advised that as a result of President Bienen’s letter appointing him as the leader of this project, work has started to model the internal structure to implement the system such as committees and position descriptions for a director to lead the project and others. Gary Thompson suggested hiring a consultant. Mort Rahimi said the effective use of consultants was being considered. However, an internal candidate who has a solid understanding of our financial requirements would be preferred. Ben Slivka added that the candidate should be someone experienced in handling a lot of systems, as well as someone who has a good technical education. Wayne Watson indicated that he found that having someone that is in charge of the project that has a clear understanding of the business processes and who will stay after the project is implemented is critical. Tim Krauskopf suggested a bonus structure be considered to retain the person. Mort Rahimi also advised that to facilitate the integration of the Financial Management System with other enterprise and support systems that he has named an Information Systems Architect. He then reviewed the vendor list for research universities and the Huron Consulting vendor document. He said while the Financial Management System included the core requirements as well as budget and procurement that the research component was an important part of the planning. Wayne Watson cautioned that customizing this system might cause concerns in the future when upgrades are needed and with the Financial Management System’s integration with other existing systems, such as Human Resources and Student Enterprise Systems. Tim Krauskopf suggested that when reviewing vendors; features should not be the main consideration but rather the relationship of the vendor with current customers. Mort Rahimi said there was also consideration being given to seven to ten visits with other universities, either using technology or site visits. These “visits” would provide more information on vendor implementation, methodology used, changes made in business processes and how we stand on inter-operability in comparison to other institutions.

Bill White noted the importance of communication about the implementation of a new financial system to the University community. Mort Rahimi agreed that communication was critical to the implementation. He said current plans were to begin a communication plan once the implementation committees were in place. Bill White emphasized the importance of getting out the message to the community about the Financial Management System implementation in such vehicles as the Observer.

Mort Rahimi then reviewed the proposed committee structure, which includes faculty and staff representatives. He said the premise of the committee structures was to encourage project leaders to share information, make recommendations to the Executive Committee,
and focus on the goals of changing the way business is done, integrating both enterprise and support systems and developing a more “self service” environment at the University.

Gary Thompson said in his experience that cultural management changes become more crucial and would require attention while addressing the technology and business aspects of a new system. Henry Bienen agreed and added that the implementation should require both short-term and long-term planning to avoid later customizations that can be very costly. Wayne Watson suggested the business process re-engineering could begin even before a vendor was selected because it sets a tone for the implementation and it takes time. He emphasized the need to start training earlier. This also supports the need for communication. Richard Dean said the re-engineering combined with the training would also serve the marketing effort.

**Strategic Plan Status/University Security Update**

Mort Rahimi said that the successful implementation of the Financial Management System is Information Technology’s number one priority followed closely by security. A question was raised about how Northwestern University survived the most recent virus attacks. Mort Rahimi responded that we did better than most universities since our students arrived after the virus attacks, which prevented them from bringing the viruses to campus. He also indicated that NUIT sent an email message to all students before they arrived on campus advising them not to arrive with compromised computers and providing them with preventative instructions. He also indicated that a backup facility on the Chicago campus has been funded to provide redundancy to the University’s enterprise systems and as a site for school and department servers. Mort Rahimi suggested that the Committee visit the facility at their spring meeting, which will be held on the Chicago campus.

Ben Slivka suggested in future strategic plan reports, Information Technology include planned budget versus actual, start and complete dates, FTE headcount along with milestones. Mort Rahimi indicated Information Technology would be updating the University’s strategic plan in November.

**Student Enterprise System (SES) Recent Registration Problem**

Mort Rahimi began describing the recent problem by relating it to a Course Management malfunction during which there was a fifteen-minute sporadic outage. The problem was investigated and found to occur when one system was updated causing a system crash. Working with the vendor it was found that fiber channel cards were flawed and they were to be replaced over the weekend. He said that the use of systems, such as the Course Management System and SES has increased so dramatically that even a few minutes outage was viewed as critical. The SES problem seemed to have been caused by the garbage collection routine on the system causing the system to slow down. He indicated that these types of problems combined with current business practices that stressed the systems could be minimized with business changes. For instance, expanding the number
of days students are allowed to register. He said that the Provost’s office was reviewing the possible changes.

Agenda items for the next meeting were reviewed and agreed upon. They include the Financial Management System, Progress on the Program Review Implementation Plan, and Distance Education.

The meeting was adjourned.

Next Meeting: Saturday, December 6, 2003
7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
1999 S. Campus Drive
Norris University Center
Big Ten Room
Evanston, IL 60208