**IT Gov Minutes**

October 6, 2021

Via Zoom

**Attendees:** Linda Acciardo, Lori Ciccomascolo, Brenton DeBoef, Nancy Eaton, Melissa Frost, Joshua Gyllinsky (absent), Amanda Izenstark, Karlis Kaugars, Michael Khalfayan, Kara Larsen, Ian Lester, Dean Libutti, Ryan Menard (absent), Sanjay Kumar Mupparapu, John Stringer, Kathleen Torrens, Ted Walls

**Guest:** Jason Parent and Chi Shen

1. Approval of Minutes
   1. September 2021
   2. Karlis moved to approve minutes as presented.
   3. All present voted to approve.
2. Cloud-based Virtual Computer Labs (Jason Parent and Chi Shen)
   1. Need for virtual labs for student use arose when pandemic began
      1. GIS and remote sensing classes require specialized software that doesn’t run well on older computers and Macs.
   2. Can’t have both in-person and remote access with former set-up
      1. Solution is a cloud-based virtual computer lab and does not conflict with in-person use
   3. Currently 8 students using it regularly (102 hours so far) and expect usage to increase with number of students and hours.
   4. Estimated cost: approximately $132 first month / $4.53 daily and estimate total cost of $613 for the semester and is covered by lab fees.
   5. Jason provided a demonstration and it showed how quickly and well this operation works using a web browser.
   6. Questions?
      1. Brenton: is it better to login to a lab set-up like this or is it better to use a supercomputer? Chi: based on operating system, costs, and servers use, this is the most cost and time efficient model. Chi and Brenton will continue a conversation off-line as Brenton is interested in this for his area.
      2. Ted: what is the constraint in connecting with Macs? Jason said the software we use are not compatible with Macs because they weren’t designed to be used with Macs, and to make it function, there is an additional cost to students to run it in parallel.
3. CIO Updates
   1. Position description of the director, applications manager is posted and expect first-round review to be in six weeks. Please share this position description widely with your contacts so we have a strong pool.
4. Project Status Updates
   1. Modern ERP system ongoing discussion on how to put it in a larger context to put it in a culture of service making it more customer/user friendly.
   2. No questions or comments from the group
5. Implementation of Endpoint Security Policy
   1. Set for January 1, 2022
   2. Will speak with Faculty Senate Executive Committee on Friday with Amanda.
   3. Working with Finance & Administration currently to review their machines and update
      1. Many machines were not running the various security software required
      2. IT staff has been assisting with this
         1. Distributed IT staff will do the heavy lifting in your areas
   4. For the support of research activities, there is an ongoing discussion about limited exemptions that would be precluded from full compliance of the policy
      1. Will report out to this group on this work
6. Desktop Support Process and Issues
   1. Question of size, scale, and support
   2. Even areas with significant IT support, the desktop support process and set-up have huge gaps in them all dependent on the person who is providing the support. Many are doing self-managed desktops which is not a good use of time for non-IT folks doing their own patches and updates.
   3. Please consider how we are going to fix this as we are wasting time and resources and having inadequate protections.
   4. Are there any best practices? Yes, usually on a rolling 4-year replacement cycle and supported by an IT group which gives the individual no administrative rights. It is an automation process that has a single person dedicated to 100-150 machines. Additional costs with personnel and replacement costs.
      1. John supports this practice and advocates we do this. He suggests providing data to support the need.
      2. Kara asked if it is possible with staff support available to provide a Zoom session on a regular basis to update and patch? Do it in groups of people within a department.
         1. Sanjay supports this idea as well since his area does not have any IT support within the department.
         2. Ian wonders how far we could explore virtual machines and clients based on the demonstration we saw today. It could be more easily managed.
      3. Amanda asked about the inability of installing extensions to support research with URI credentials and how this would impact them.
         1. Mike K said it’s managed within Google Workplace and can be adjusted if brought to our attention.
   5. Karlis would like to resume these conversations next month based on information and thoughts you’ve gathered from talking to folks in your departments.
7. Follow-up on Digitization Survey
   1. The Priorities document has a mention of this in a subsection and talked about doing a survey.
   2. Would like to discuss how we should do this, when we should do this, how to start to corral this.
      1. Nancy: rather than it go through chairs and department heads, perhaps it’s better with people working on the ground who have more experience with processes not digitalized and they’d like to have them digitalized. Business managers, fiscal clerks, executive assistants, etc.
      2. Should we go beyond what processes are on paper today that should be digitalized? Yes.
         1. Curriculum forms, enrollment forms, employment forms
         2. Need to consider workflow and business processes as well to make more efficient process (fewer steps and less redundancies)
         3. This will be an essential part to moving toward a new ERP and document flow.
         4. This ties back to our culture of service.
   3. Karlis asked if John would participate in creating a survey (Kara and Amanda offered to assist too). Karlis will craft in Qualtrics and share with the three for input.
8. Open Forum
   1. John: storage of student data should not be on Google drive and asked Mike K for a draft communication to share the proper places for storage.