

University Computing Standards Committee Meeting Minutes  
9:30 a.m., November 8, 2000  
DH Hill Library, Administrative Conference Room

Steve Keto, Sam Averitt, co-chairs.

Voting members present:

Arnold Bell, Frank Buckless, Baran Erkel, Joe Flowers, Mike Freeman, John Isenhour, Barbara Kirby, Rick Liston, Betsy Mebane, Harriet Mermes, Tom Miller, Don Patty, Scott Payne, Bill Scott, John Tector, Gail Wilkerson.

Technical advisors present:

Mardecia Bell, Joanne Dehoney, Shawn Dunning, Pete Evans, Alan Galloway, Kevin Gamble, Gwen Hazlehurst, Charles Hunt, Tim Lowman, Carl Malstrom, Bill Padgett, Greg Sparks, Jennifer Van Horn.

Steve Keto called the meeting to order. The September 27 minutes were approved.

**AGENDA:**

• **Campus IT presentations**

Steve introduced the first two presentations in a series of overviews of IT issues. Harriet Mermes, Director of Computing Resources, College of Veterinary Medicine, gave a presentation entitled "Strategic Overview, Information Technology, Veterinary Medicine." Harriet began by observing that from her perspective, the status of strategic planning for information technology in CVM was typical of other colleges and the university as a whole. Due to various historical and organization reasons, information technology strategic planning is done in piecemeal fashion. This puts college-wide projects and prospects at risk. She has a staff of about 10 to provide college-wide IT infrastructure, applications development, systems and user support for 800 CVM students, faculty and staff. Not all IT projects with college-wide impact are coordinated through her office, however, and her office is not automatically included in planning for IT aspects of college projects and budgets. Harriet gave an overview of projects that are being impacted by piecemeal planning and discussed the opportunities presented for more effective strategic planning. The campus-wide projects included the hospital system (the Teaching Hospital Information System), including image management; the separate college image management project; network infrastructure; wireless computing; the CVM web presence for both public information and learning technologies; classroom/video conferencing; standard office applications and PC support; computer equipment as planned budget item; help desk services.

Rick Liston, Director of Information Systems, Graduate School, gave an overview of Graduate School activities and information systems issues. Rick observed that, unlike most other units at NC State, the work of the Graduate School is distributed across campus and integrated with all colleges and many administrative units. All graduate students at NC State are admitted and have their degrees conferred by the Graduate School—more than 1100 master's and 300 doctoral degrees each year. Degrees are awarded in 107 fields, including 13 interdisciplinary fields. The Graduate School works

with the directors of 72 graduate programs and maintains a database of 2000 graduate faculty. In addition to processing all admissions, the Graduate School maintains active records of more than 5100 current graduate students' status and activities. It administers financial support, including assistantships and fellowships amounting to \$5,000,000 annually. Some of the pressing IT issues for the Graduate School: 1) Legacy data systems are based on workflow and degree-tracking models that do not match the reality of the distributed workflow and complexity of the degrees tracked by the Graduate School. 2) The university's information systems are not integrated enterprise-wide, but the work of the Graduate School is. For example, student records don't match records in HR; the Graduate School is now working with four different ID systems. 3) The challenge of converting legacy IT systems to PeopleSoft is unbelievably complex; the project has been delayed for a better version of PeopleSoft. 4) As a matter of survival, the Graduate School has developed its own database solutions and IT expertise in cooperation with ACS. Rick concluded by observing that creating custom IT solutions is a "double-edged sword" which will not in the long run facilitate the goal of enterprise-wide integrated information systems.

- **Committee/topic reports**

Steve observed that the day's agenda was based on the typical format of the old Standards Committee, and its usefulness would be up for discussion later in the meeting.

- **Data and Data Access Standards:**

Mardecia Bell reported that there would be a committee meeting tomorrow (November 9) to discuss the ASAP (Automated Security Access Process) program being implemented to streamline access to university data. A report for ACS is expected by the end of the month. Steve added that committee members include principal owners of affected university information: Charlene Hayes, AVC for Human Resources; Bruce Mallette, VP for Academic Administration; George Dixon, VP for Enrollment Management; Mike Cross, CFO of CALS and others.

- **User Authentication:**

Mardecia Bell reported that ACS is moving forward with the efforts to reconcile PeopleSoft HR and Financials user IDs with Unity user IDs. About 500 user IDs will need to be changed. This is being done in conjunction with implementing Braintree's IntraSecure software, which will facilitate the synchronization of passwords across PeopleSoft systems. The IntraSecure system is scheduled to be implemented Dec. 18. After that date, PeopleSoft users will have to change their password, which will then be synchronized across systems. To authenticate users who forget their passwords, ACS is also requiring that users fill out a brief survey of 3 questions, with answers unique to each user. After February 1, if users forget their password and call the helpdesk, they will be asked to answer one of the questions to receive their password. Steve pointed out that these and other security changes were made necessary by recommendations from State auditors, including limiting the number of systems a user may be logged into at one time. State auditors have agreed to 3 systems as an acceptable limit

John Tector asked how the university is being informed of these changes. Mardecia responded that notifications are being posted in PeopleSoft Updates, on the ACS website, and on the PeopleSoft users listserv. John expressed concern that there will be people who do not know they are affected until they can't get access to data they need. He suggested notifying Unity users as well. Bill Padgett asked what the new default password will be, and Mardecia said that IntraSecure will set the initial password to the user's SSN number, backwards.

Betsy Mebane asked if auditors had identified security issues with other information systems on campus and was told yes by Gwen Hazelhurst. Betsy suggested that colleges were less careful about security than is needed. She suggested that these issues be raised from higher levels within the university to improve awareness. Steve observed that State auditors found that most users never change their initial passwords. Internal auditors will also be paying increased attention to these issues.

- **Communications and Networking:**

Jennifer Van Horn gave a report on efficiencies being implemented by ComTech, the new telecommunications and data networking group formed this fall by a partnership between FIS and ITD. New Category 6 wiring projects are more efficient now because data network electronics are being planned and installed at the same time as voice and cable. Historically, network electronics have been put in last. The new planning model has also enabled efficiencies in procurement. Ricks Hall will be the first to benefit from the new procedures. Jennifer also reported that the new ComTech network operations center (NOC) is now in operation and is staffed 8-5.

Jennifer also reported that phone rates are going down on campus. Effective January 1, 2001, data, analog, and voice mail bills are being rolled into one flat fee rate. Rates for the few remaining T1 connections are also being reduced. Vice Chancellor Worsley will make a formal announcement of the new rates to the campus soon.

Don Patty asked about upcoming plans for wireless technology on campus. Jennifer responded that because of the departure of several networking staff, ComTech has not been able to extend nomadic computing capabilities to the Brickyard and Court of Carolinas this semester as was planned. ComTech is still supporting nomadic computing in the DH Hill Library. John Tector asked about the appropriate person or group to contact for wiring infrastructure upgrades, since the bond referendum approval will make such improvements possible. Jennifer said he could contact ComTech's Ed Rogers or work through Facilities.

- **Electronic Mail & Directory Services:**

Steve introduced Greg Sparks, new Director of NCS, replacing Gwen Hazelhurst.

Alan Galloway reported that ITD Systems has increased the maximum size of incoming e-mail messages from 3 MB to 5 MB. He told the group that ITD is sending out memos to deans and department heads informing them that Systems will be discontinuing support for the NCSUGINA desktop environment in May 2001. The student computing environment is now using Novell Zen2 for Windows desktop management and application delivery, and Systems is recommending that other Windows desktops be migrated to this new environment. Betsy Mebane asked why department heads are being sent the memo, since this is an issue for IT people. Alan said that this procedure was followed out of courtesy, and that IT people are also being sent notices and more detailed information.

Alan reported that ITD Systems is still working with colleges to decide on an acceptable Directory Services standard. Sam noted that there is also a lot of work being done among universities nationally to come up with Directory Services standards, and that we will be coordinating with these efforts. Alan also reported that Solaris 2.7 Unix installation kit is now ready for beta testing.

- **PeopleSoft Implementation**

Gwen Hazlehurst, new Director of EIS, re-emphasized that all users of PeopleSoft on campus will be informed of the procedures required to synchronize passwords for implementation of the new IntraSecure software. Meetings of the PeopleSoft Steering Committee have resumed, and HR and Financial Prioritization Teams have been formed. She was somewhat surprised by how quickly the teams reached consensus on how projects should be prioritized. All requests for new PeopleSoft projects now go to these teams for prioritization. Gwen encouraged all those interested to request to become members of these teams, since user input is an important part of process.

Gwen reported that EIS has increased efforts to work with colleges to address their particular problems and issues with PeopleSoft implementation. On the financial side, EIS has hired a firm of experts to act as a SWAT team dealing with problems with nightly batch processing. EIS is very pleased with the work they have done and the improvement users are seeing when they log in. EIS is also working hard to eliminate the legacy FAS system from the upcoming end-of-year process. Budget Office end-of-month processing has been expedited.

EIS has been working with Student Records, the Graduate School, Financial Aid and others to improve student billing. The new student bills will look much like credit card statements. Estimated financial aid statements have been added to help students figure out their payment responsibilities. As a result of the changes, the process is running much more quickly. Gwen also reported that as a result of State auditor recommendations, users are restricted to logging in to no more than 3 systems simultaneously. On HR side, the Human Resources system updates are almost completed, including tax updates. EIS has also implemented new reporting and query tools for using PeopleSoft data. Rick Liston asked for more details about this, and Gwen explained that they were providing denormalized data and that customers can access data

by using a standard query language. This service is also being planned for the Financials System, but EIS doesn't have the resources to do that yet.

- **Discussion and New Business**

- Review of Committee and Committee Agendas

Steve asked if this structure for Standards Committee meetings was useful, or if the Committee wanted a different format. No suggestions were presented. He asked if new topics should be added to the standard agenda. Sam suggested that two additional topics be added: Distance education and learning technologies (DELTA), and desktop computing.

Betsy Mebane asked for clarification on what the desktop computing topic would include, and Sam said he was thinking particularly of the academic computing desktops. John Tector observed that some individuals in colleges have need for a hybrid of both academic and administrative desktop environments. Sam elaborated that the issue is complex, especially given the proliferation of versions of operating systems on campus. It is not just a matter Windows, Linux, or Mac operating systems, for example. He noted that the issue is becoming more critical because of the new assistive technology initiative for ADA compliance.

Tom Miller suggested that ADA should be added as a main topic for the Committee agendas. John Tector asked who is coordinating the ADA and assistive technology initiative and who is on the committee. Sam explained that ITD, in cooperation with Joanne Woodard and the Office of Equal Opportunity, had hired a Coordinator of Assistive and Information Technology, Terry Thompson, last May. Over the summer Terry has been working on an assistive and information technology plan, in part in response to legal issues that have been raised. The university has been getting positive feedback from federal agencies on our progress, but there is a long way to go. John said that the College of Design and the Center for Universal Design have a particular interest in this issue. Harry Nicholas suggested that John contact Greg Holden and the Office of Equal Opportunity about joining the committee.

Steve suggested that the Committee continue to have presentations about IT from the colleges, and asked for volunteers. Barbara Kirby suggested that the next meeting have a presentation on ADA issues. It was agreed that this would be an appropriate topic, and the presentation should include an overview of Web access issues and a discussion of what colleges need to do to be in compliance with technology access laws.

Steve asked if there were any more topics to be added to the standard agenda, and if the committee felt comfortable with adding three more. Harriet Mermes asked whether each topic represented a committee. Steve said not at this point although some would be reports of committees. Pete Evans raised the issue of video conferencing on campus and the need for standards to be developed and discussed within the forum of the Standards Committee. He said that at a recent meeting of DELTA and college representatives, it was suggested that a moratorium be placed on the creation of new video conferencing facilities on campus until such standards are

in place. He observed that the approval of the bond issue added to the urgency of this need. Sam suggested that this issue would be appropriate to discuss under the topic of distance education and learning technologies. Pete stressed that the video conferencing standards are important within colleges and other units on campus and are not just a matter of distance education.

Steve said that for the time being, the three suggested topics will be added to the agenda:

Distance education and learning technologies

Desktop computing

ADA and information technology

- **Next Meeting**

John Tector suggested that the next Standards Committee be scheduled for January, since a December 13 meeting would be in the middle of exams. This suggestion was discussed and approved. The next meeting will be 9:30 a.m., January 10, 2001 in the Administrative Conference Room DH Hill Library

The meeting was adjourned.