

Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC)

MINUTES

9:00, February 9, 2012 in EPC 304C

Members in attendance: David Anderson (chair), Peggy Beranek, Cindy Brown, Jackie Crouch, Tabby Farney, Jan Kemper, Kirk Moore, Sharon Stevens, Scott Switzer, Jerry Wilson, Regina Winters

UPDATES

1. IT – Jerry Wilson, Kirk Moore
 - a. **IT System Alerts** page
 - www.uccs.info page is coming along; hope to have it up and going by early next week.
 - b. **Strategic planning**
 - Merged IT with Facilities for the plan going to Regents in April; called it all Infrastructure; reduced to three IT action items; Jerry will email; IT will internally use the detailed plan it had created.
 - c. **Smart classrooms**
 - David and Mike Belding are leading a group to plan out smart classroom technology for the future; primary focus is on flexible infrastructure.
 - d. **Mediasite** lecture capture
 - Up and running, being used; studio installations in IT and TLC; mobile units in Beth-El and Business.
2. Blackboard – David Anderson, Kirk Moore
 - a. **Blackboard performance problem solved!**
 - We started having performance issues on January 9. Those issues were exacerbated by the fact that both we and the Blackboard support team were operating in a reactive, rather than proactive, mode. This served to extend the time over which problems persisted.
 - We had many conversations with Blackboard’s support team, and the initial response to our problems was to reboot the servers, which cleared things up for a while, but invariably performance would start degrading again within a couple of days. They further upgraded our hardware – adding a third server and increasing CPU and memory capacities – but the problems persisted.
 - To create a more proactive environment, several major offensives were put into operation:
 - IT created an internal alert system, whereby the Blackboard logon page is monitored for how long it takes to load, and if it takes more than twenty seconds, or if it is down completely, seven members of our Blackboard support team receive both phone text and email messages. Those team members will respond immediately, having direct access both to Blackboard’s ticketing system and telephone

hotlines, and to their worldwide support network (being able to enlist their Amsterdam and Sydney teams, in addition to the east coast team).

- As a result of a conference call with high-level Blackboard administrators, their support team has given us much closer attention, and on February 6 one of the Amsterdam's team members discovered that the problem was with one of our installed building blocks (causing a "memory leak," whatever that means). That building block has now been disabled, and won't be re-enabled until it is fixed and thoroughly tested. We are confident that this was the source of the performance degradations we were experiencing, and fully anticipate that the problem is solved. (Knock on wood.)
- Since email messages coming from yours truly are often ignored, and since messages from "UCCS Announcements Do Not Reply" are perhaps more often filtered out or ignored, IT has implemented a messaging system for "Blackboard Alert" messages to come from the IT Help Desk, in the hopes that those messages will be given more attention.

– As noted above under IT updates, a system alerts page has been built to provide alerts if any of our systems – email, network, web site, etc., in addition to Blackboard – are experiencing problems. (It is hosted by off-campus servers, so will be active even if our own servers go down.) We strongly encourage users to check this page if they perceive they are having problems with any of these systems.

b. Collaborate

– We will schedule a demo sometime later (summer?); anticipate decision for fall.

c. Outcomes Assessment

– We are still working on setting up conversation with David Moon and Lynn Calhoun; COE would like to be involved.

3. Campus Online Task Force – Venkat Reddy

– No update.

NEW BUSINESS

1. None.

Next meeting: 9:00, March 8, 2012 in EPC 304C