MINUTES
IT Advisory Committee Meeting
October 9, 2008
8:30 – 10:00 AM

Present: Andy Bland, Dr. Becky Carr, Steven Conway, Nolan Flowers, Dr. Fred Fisher, Kirk Hausman, Dave Jennings, Alan Kurk, Willis Marti, Allison Oslund, David Sweeney

Guest Speaker: Dr. Pierce Cantrell

Item 1: Status Updates From Subcommittees
Charter Sub-Committee – Chair, Dr. Becky Carr. The committee has drafts of documents to go through and will bring information to the next ITAC meeting.

IT Employee Orientation Sub-Committee – Chair, Nolan Flowers. The committee has not completed anything as of this time.

Item 2: Charge to the IT Advisory Committee by Dr. Pierce Cantrell

1. IT Policy is a big part of Charge for the IT Advisory Committee. At the last audit the feedback from the focus groups was unhappiness with the process or feedback into it. Dr. Cantrell wants to incorporated feedback from the IT Advisory Committee. An important role of the IT Advisory Committee is their input and perspective on drafts of policies.

2. Dr. Cantrell suggests the need to look strategically with the new administration. The first thing would be a research roadmap with teaching and learning. Dr. Cantrell thinks IT professionals should have input.

3. Another thing to address is Data Center space. Teague and Wehner are basically out of space. Dr. Cantrell would like to get a new Data Center. The plans are for 21,000 sq. ft of 3-tiered space with a departmental cage space, high performance space, and then general purpose. Completion is about 5 years down the road. One of the advantages of the Data Center is that it would save money for departments; A&M could quit building machine rooms for departments and everyone could be in the same space. There have been two other possibilities for machine rooms but the spaces have both been reallocated. GSC II might be a possibility. There is also space in Teague (the old tape center) that has been reclaimed for machine room purposes. A number of members of the IT Advisory Committee are interested in a new Data Center. The Data Center could primarily be for disaster recovery and then possibly departments will use the space for machine room connections also. Willis said one thing that may drive us to push for a new Data Center would be the Energy
Management Policy by the Physical Plant and what they do after hours. Virtualization is doable and should be discussed.

a. One option could be cage space in Dallas where LEARN POP is. The yearly cost per rack would not be much cheaper than $12,000 - $13,000.

b. Alternatives need to be discussed to be put in place before new Data Center is built.

4. Dr. Cantrell would like to plan and possibly partner with research folks (VP Research Office). From the research perspective there are a lot of shared clusters that need space; a centralized facility is needed.

a. Negative feedback on the prospect of a centralized facility are:
   1. Some users express that CIS can’t provide reliability for users.
   2. Some users might think this would be out of the department’s control and that was the issue instead of actual down time. Dr. Cantrell noted that the total downtime for Teague last fiscal year was only a few hours.

5. Dr. Cantrell said the FAMIS and BPP will possibly replaced and that a decision would be made by the end of the year. There might be Data Center space shared between UT and A&M. This space will not be cheap, but should be done for the system. All system members could put things there.

6. Dr. Cantrell welcomes recommendations or complaints.

7. Other things to add to the list:

a. Move toward computationally intensive sciences. Discussion was that there are a lot of opportunities for space, virtualization, etc. Many departments think they are all different but in the same way. One problem is that A&M is a big campus and many departments do their own thing that may not be compatible with others. If departments do go together, how to accomplish getting everyone on the same page? This should be in the beginning discussion stages now. Now is the opportune time and if it is missed it may be another 5 years or so before that time comes around again.

b. ITAC has an opportunity to talk about common infrastructure support as IT professionals. This could be a big contribution to the Academic Master Plan and could give them an idea of what the roadmap should look like.

c. Willis is working on a cyber infrastructure plan and would like to bring before ITAC.

**Item 3: October IT Forum Plan and Discussion over Future Topics**

1. List of topics to be prioritized and discussed.

2. Willis welcomes discussion topics and speakers for the IT Forum.

   a. One suggestion was for topics to be e-mailed to the IT Forum for discussion at the next meeting.
b. Another suggestion was for the IT Forum to take topics from the folks in attendance and give them 10-15 minutes for discussion. Willis indicated this might be tried in March.

3. Kirk Hausmann possible speaker for IT Forum. Alan Kurk might have speaker. Dr. Becky Carr said possible speakers could come from Professional Societies.

Item 4: Review of ITAC Share-point site.

1. Dr. Fred Fisher walked through Share-point site.

2. Steve Conway suggested putting the ITAC agenda and minutes on site instead of e-mailing so that folks would look at the site regularly.