Summary:
The retreat was held July 21-22, 2011 and was held at Texas A&M University Galveston Campus. Targeted goals and objectives of the retreat included: review of our mission and vision statements; review of current goals with specific objective development; conduct a business continuity and disaster recovery brain-storming session in support of a current sub-committee charge; conduct break-out sessions for IT best practice metrics and identity management, again in support of sub-committees’ charge; establish, plan, and schedule events and activities pertaining to retreat elements; and lastly, to conduct a team-building exercise. All planned goals and objectives were met and completed.

The overall take-away message from the ITAC retreat is: “we are maturing as a committee, but progress still needs to be made in recognition, engagement, and communication”.

Following this summary is the “next-steps” scheduled for August -February as it relates to retreat discussions, a revised mission statement, and discussion highlights of current goals which included each goal’s status, challenges, and next steps. With respect to the brain-storming and break-out sessions of the three sub-committees listed above, separate sub-committee reports will be provided to ITAC by their respective chair.

In attendance were: David Sweeny, Michelle Osterholm, Willis Marti, Allison Oslund, Jim Rosser, Andy Bland, Stephanie Leary, Adam Mikeal, Steve Balfour, Steve Conway, Bill Chollett, Jim Bouse, Fred Fisher, and Ron Szabo. Also in attendance was Merna Jacobsen, a professional facilitator.
Next Steps Schedule:

August –

- Develop final wording on mission statement.
- Identify external individuals from whom we want endorsement.
- Separation of executive steering committee and formation of communications subcommittee announced.

September-

- Approve changes to constitution
- Willis begins to vet IPC updates by ITAC
- Members provide framing and context paragraphs when forwarding annotated minutes to constituents.
- Communications subcommittee provides minutes and annotated minutes
- First meeting of newly formed executive steering committee
- Get external endorsement of the mission (letter from president and year beginning memo)

December-

- ITAC members utilize best practice metrics committee recommendations to communicate strategies
- Subcommittee on best practice metrics bring recommendations to ITAC relevant to exploring ITACs role in IT governance
- Policy creation presentation for ITAC by representative from Willis’ shop

February-

- Communications subcommittee will finish brochure and website
Mission Statement:

Suggestions for a re-wording of the mission statement were suggested by members. The executive steering committee suggests the following mission statement be brought to the committee for approval.

The Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) identifies information technology issues that affect Texas A&M University, proposes shared strategies, and provides recommendations to the Vice President and Associate Provost for Information Technology (VPAPIT). In addition, the ITAC serves as a liaison between the units represented on the committee and the VPAPIT.

The retreat attendees decided to eliminate the vision statement because it was redundant considering the mission statement.
Goal #1:

Mature the IT/ITAC organization to become more proactive and cooperative by proactively addressing IT solutions and trends.

Maturity:
Overall mature

Key Events:
IT career ladder, impacting central IT, subcommittee reports and recommendations, awareness by management, strong leadership, 2010 retreat, strides in cooperation, IT training white paper, email retention white paper, audit/best practices relationship

Challenges:
Big: Limited external recognition, being proactive, historical resentment against CIS, two-way communication, full participation, not a full-time job.

Small: depends on people not process, subcommittee participation, role of the communications committee, cooperation between central and non-central IT is hard, rogue/lack of authority, silos

Next Steps:
• Define Executive Steering Committee – made up of officers, Ron will chair, Willis serves as a rep. Committee will set agenda (upcoming trends on agenda items) and address member issues (formalize sub-committee assignment process, charge subcommittee letter to supervisors). Committee will begin meeting in September.
• Communication sub-committee – Becky will request members to serve on committee. Charged with minute dissemination.
• Formalize sub-committee assignment process
• Allison and Michelle split duties, come once per month (Ron to formalize with Becky)

Ideas that were discussed, but no action items were identified.
• Determine a means to identify upcoming trends in IT.
• Increase full participation.
• Review infrastructure and processes to determine effectiveness.
• Examine our relationship with other senior organizations.
• Explore IT governance.
• Include ITAC participation in job descriptions.
• Ensure ITAC will be ongoing regardless of people involved.
• Pursue recognition of higher ups.
Goal 2:

Improve and influence the process for how IT policies are created, changed and implemented.

Maturity:
Overall mature

Key Events:
IPC representative, email retention white paper, password subcommittee, best practices subcommittee, influence procedures for virtualization

Challenges:
- Lack of university IT unified vision
- Policies lag technology innovation
- IT policy group needs to give more lead time (short window for response)
- Limited discussion in meetings about IPC agenda items
- No systematic way to feed items to IPC committee
- May not be enough of a focus or priority for ITAC
- Committee members and their managers unaware of ITAC’s role in policy formation

Next Steps:
- Willis vet IPC updates by ITAC – make this a standing agenda item for ITAC based upon IPC meeting schedule.
- Subcommittee on best practices should finish their work on IT governance and bring to committee for discussion in the fall semester.
- Define what we want ITAC’s role to be in policy creation.
- Policy creation presentation by someone (Willis?) in the fall semester.

Items that were discussed but no action items were identified.
- Become the voice of our customers with data.
- Broaden goal to include policies, operations and practices

Note –
ITAC was concerned that they don’t have enough influence in policy creation at state level. After discussion it was recognized that Texas A&M does have several representatives at this level (Dr. Cantrell, Willis Marti, Jeff McCabe).
Goal #3:

Improve and influence IT communication channels with our organization.

**Maturity:**
Overall immature

**Key Events:**
IT Forum presentation, letters to deans, hints of a wiki, creation of minutes

**Challenges:**
The committee is concerned that non-IT staff are often not interested in IT issues and that it is difficult to share meaningful information with your entire unit. Strategic decisions within units are often made without IT personnel having a seat at the table.

- Different levels of expertise in our units (can’t use one set of simplified bullets)
- Different perspectives on IT issues
- Effort to develop communications
- Finding a mechanism for sharing with whole unit
- Getting a seat at the table
- Hard to achieve at committee level, may be individual
- Identify correct audience
- Engaging employees with information provided
- Apathetic constituents
- Lack of interest by business units

**Next Steps:**
- ITAC members utilize best practice suggestions to take back to units.
- Communication sub-committee will provide minutes and annotated agenda by September.
- Communication sub-committee will finish brochure and website by February.
- Members provide framing/context paragraph when forwarding annotated agenda to their department constituents.

Items that were discussed but no action items were identified.

- Annual strategy session with apathetic constituents
- ITAC Roadshow – formal presentation written for non-technical audience
- Annual party with deans and VPs for roadmap and opportunity for feedback

**Note** –
During discussions, some thought that there was no benefit in annotated minutes, however, it was decided that both full and annotated minutes would be distributed to ITAC members.