University Council – Information Resources Committee
Minutes from the September 16th, 9:30AM meeting

The meeting opened with the following attendees:
Anna Scheyett, Mark Johnson, Timothy Chester, Trey (?), Tripp Lowe, Marni Shindelman, Chip Woods, Stuart Ivy, Susan Smith, Lynn Wilson, James Warnock, Michael Schmidt, JP Schmidt, Scott Nesbit, and Allan Tate

The initial discussion was around when to have our meetings - how often, what days and times work best. It was stated we must have meetings once a semester per bylaws. Doodle polls will be the mechanism of choice for scheduling future meetings.

Discussion continued about having Dr. Chester present to the committee the background and current organization of EITS. It was suggested that a meeting in mid to late October have time set aside for this presentation

The next topic was about system-wide user device management applications such as JAMF and Ivanti. Reports were made of problems with JAMF in particular and how it negatively impacted users' work in certain situations. The point was made that there seemed to be insufficient communication between the users and support staff that lead to these user productivity issues. This area could be addressed to provide better service and use on both sides.

Dr. Chester spoke to the history and some of the possible reasons for so many end user issues with these management applications being their newness and the push by the Board of Regents to get a better handle on end user devices to avoid negative events such as the Colonial Pipeline compromise. Also, the units have been trying to work on these issues without a campus-wide standard or level of support.

Discussion continued on the need for better end user device management and not having users with the ability to make changes because of the security vulnerabilities that brings. And that there does need to be more clarity on why these changes needed to be made. Dr. Chester offered to be the conduit to UGA IT groups such as UGANET and ITMF for better communication between IT support and end users.

Discussion at this point turned to using OneDrive as a backup solution. It was said that for desktop backup uses it is a good tool for the file level. But that solutions like OneDrive and iCloud should not be used for raw data backups. OneDrive is a very good solution for users to save their data and have it persist for the length of their career at UGA. And it gives the user the ability to manage the frequency of backups and the ability to recover their data without having to wait.

It was also mentioned that one thing that is probably needed is more consistent messaging/communication for tools like OneDrive for backups and just backups for user data in general.

OneDrive was then discussed as a collaborative tool. There were some pluses and minuses discussed. The plus side including the availability to all UGA users and the ease with which access can be managed and sharing of data can occur. The downsides were reported to include significant delays on data synchronization resulting in lost time while researchers waited for the most current data to become available. The question came up about why there has been a de-emphasis on local file server data storage which does provide the level of security desired as well as the speed for everyone with access to current data.

There was then a discussion about UGA central subscription services. Examples include the Microsoft Volume License Agreement and the paid for Google services. It was noted that on some the costs continue to rise as value/features are added and some lose existing features that had been free but would then need to be added to subscription costs. And that some features that certain areas need would have to be funded just by those areas as the cost justification for making them university-wide is not there.

Returning to the backup discussion it was mentioned how many employees at the university are under the belief that their data is being backed up when in fact it is not. One attempt to address this within the libraries was by hiring a research data archivist including running a project to better back up library's research oriented data. There is also a push for significantly increased storage for GACRAC. It was said that some "good clean policy" is needed to address the user backup situation. There needs to be communication to the user community and to the IT community as to where the responsibility for user data backup lies. There is a solution at the university called Code42 heavily used by the College of Ag. The solutions chosen need to be flexible to meet the needs of individuals.

In relation to the backup discussion the timelines for making some central user backup service purchase were discussed and how Dr. Chester could advocate on the behalf of the units similarly to how the push for Zoom was done. Zoom acquisition grew from a single unit's usage to become a university-wide service. And collaborative

administration discussion led to cutting back of some unused central services to fund the Zoom service. But it would need to be pushed with close attention to the university's budget cycle.

One point of discussion was about software licensing on campus and the lack of any documentation or information as to all the software licensing purchased between all the units and how much each covers. An example was given of there possibly being multiple units who have purchased site licenses for software when just one UGA license would be needed and the money spent on the redundant ones could be better spent elsewhere. There should be a central information source for users and IT staff to find out just what licenses are available on campus, what units use which products for comparison purposes, and where collaborative use could lead to cost savings. It was suggested that Procurement would be the best source to compile this information for the university as they have to sign off on all software contracts so data mining there should leave to a comprehensive list of campus software. And maybe this could be a web page for ease of access to this data.

Dr. Chester offered to have cross communication between the ITMF group and this committee as that could provide good feedback.

There was a brief discussion of VLab and the issues around that access where improvements could make for a better student technology experience. Log out timing for class period lengths and being able to save their own files so they persist between sessions would help. Also, increasing the speed of VLab would be beneficial. It was reported that VLab was the lowest student rated service in the annual EITS customer satisfaction survey.

Some closing discussion came up about the efficiencies or lack thereof within certain financial business processes at both the university level and the USG level. A re-imagining of systems could be helpful but would have to involve the Finance and Administration unit as well as the VP for Research office when relating to grant processing.

Closing talk included a recap about more communication needed between users and their IT groups and how the Faculty/Staff IT Guide could be improved to address some of this.

Motion was made for the UC IT Committee to encourage campus IT resource users and unit IT to increase their levels of communication and cooperation. Amendment was agreed to make the motion that the committee make one of its goals for this academic year, assisting faculty, staff and IT departments, and increasing community. Motion seconded and passed.

Some discussion was made about scheduling the next meeting and then the meeting was adjourned at 10:28