



# MINUTES

## Technology Architecture Committee

**Objective:** Guide the direction of information technology across the enterprise, making recommendations as appropriate to the ITS Executive Leadership Team and the IT Governance Council

**Date:** April 26, 2021

**Participants:** Shawn Banner, Alex Birkovsky, Louis Brooks, Andy Bucior, Trace Cooper, Tom Doughty, Matthew Earhart, Mary Eichen, Matt Hohmeister, Fred Jordan, Chuck Kemeny, Jason Lammert, Ray Marky, Michael McDonald, Tom Morgan, Johnny White

### **ACTION ITEMS**

- Develop an “official” SaaS Vendor Assessment Questionnaire for the TAC’s review and approval (working group)

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Call to Order, Introductions, and Opening Remarks**

1. Chuck called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He asked everyone to document their attendance via the Zoom chat.
2. Chuck reviewed the agenda.
3. Chuck reminded everyone that Tom will post the draft meeting minutes in Teams and the TAC will have one week to review it for potential edits prior to the minutes being posted on the website.

#### **Action Items Update**

4. Chuck reported the following:
  - Participation guidelines voted on and approved in a prior meeting have been added to the TAC Charter.
  - All meeting minutes and agendas have been updated and added to the TAC website.
  - The DRaaS recommendation has been added to the Completed Assessments.
  - The Student Technology Fee project proposals recommendations have been added to the Completed Assessments.
  - The DRaaS recommendation has been given to Bobby Sprinkle to review and share with the ITS Executive Leadership Team.



## **Tech Fee Proposal Recommendations**

5. Chuck reminded the group that the process improvement recommendations for the administration of tech fee proposals was distributed last week for advance review.
6. Chuck profusely thanked the working group members – Dave, Tom D, Mary, Jason L, and Matt H – for their hard working in reviewing 52 proposals that had been recommended for funding within a less than two-week window.
7. Chuck presented the recommendations report. He commended Dave for developing a list of technology categories that enabled the proposals to be organized into logical groupings, which made the review process easier and more efficient. Chuck explained that the report included seven sets of observations and recommendations.
8. Re: the first observation and recommendation, Chuck explained that it dealt with the documentation / disclosure of recurring future costs such as life cycle replacement and maintenance. He reported that most proposals were deficient to varying degrees in providing this information and that the recommendation is that the proposal instructions be updated to include more specific and stringent instruction for defining future costs and how they will be funded.
9. Re: the second observation and recommendation, Chuck explained that a few proposals were characterized as innovative, meaning that successful completion would increase the department’s competitive posture or would place the department ahead of its higher education peers. The recommendation for the future is that innovation proposals be rated higher than those focusing on sustainability such as life cycle replacement.
10. Re: the third observation and recommendation, Chuck explained that several proposals were requests for technology upgrades or life cycle replacements. He expressed concern that as technology continues to proliferate through tech fee funding, there is the potential for an increasing portion of tech fee revenue being directed to upgrades and life cycle replacements, thereby diminishing the tech fee funds available for innovation and major enhancements. The recommendation for the future is that a cap be placed on the amount of tech fee revenues that are directed to upgrades and life cycle replacements, or that an approach be developed that will prevent upgrades and life cycle replacements from eventually consuming most of the tech fee revenue.
11. Re: the fourth observation and recommendation, Chuck explained that there is no status / accountability post-award reporting by project owners to verify that awarded funds are being utilized as intended and that projects are making appropriate progress and deliver the intended benefits. The recommendation for the future is that a status / accountability reporting process be developed that includes identification and reclamation or repurposing of unutilized funds.
12. Re: the fifth observation and recommendations, Chuck explained that several proposals included request for commodity equipment such as laptops, desktops, AV equipment, etc. The recommendations for the future are to (1) where possible, standardize brands and models and place bulk orders to realize cost



savings, and (2) ask the requestors within the proposal submission process whether the mandatory per-computer FSU software licensing cost is included in the ask, and if not, how the requestor plans on funding this cost.

13. Louis raised a concern regarding the suggested enforcement of life cycle replacement, explaining that many smaller departments do not have sufficient funding to establish and maintain this process. He cited that FSUPC Library as an example of a small entity that was able to replace its computers via a tech fee proposal when life cycle replacement would not have been viable. He reiterated that in many cases the tech fee is the only revenue source available for upgrades and life cycle replacements.
14. Chuck replied that while it might not be viable or appropriate to mandate life cycle replacement in the entirety, the goal would be to prevent life cycle replacement from consuming an ever-increasing portion of the annual tech fee budget.
15. Matt H asked why tech fee revenues shouldn't be used for upgrades and life cycle replacements, which are recurring costs, when the tech fee is a recurring revenue source. Chuck stated that eliminating these costs is not the objective, but rather striking a balance between life cycle replacements and innovation.
16. Re: the sixth observation and recommendation, Chuck explained that several proposals included equipment for which cabling would need to be done by tech support staff. The recommendation for the future is to recommend to requestors that they consult in advance with ITS and/or Facilities to ensure that these installations are done safely and in accordance with university standards.
17. Re: the seventh observation and recommendation, Chuck explained that many proposals included the same software or licenses, but that this commonality was often difficult to identify. The recommendation for the future is to enhance the proposal submission process so that these software, licensing, and vendor commonalities can be identified and aggregated to determine if enterprise licenses would be feasible and less expensive. Chuck cited the multiple requests for GoReact as an example. A suggestion was made to refine the budget spreadsheet to capture this additional detail.

### **Colocation Service Enhancement Recommendation**

18. Chuck presented the colocation working group's draft service enhancement recommendations that he had sent to the TAC last week for advance review.
19. Chuck explained that the approach included obtaining input from colocation customers, non-customers, and prospective customers. An IT managers survey was conducted that resulted in a 50-50 split in responses between customers and non-customers, with the latter representing possible future customers who were willing to offer thoughts and questions about the service.
20. Chuck pointed out the list of specific recommendations and supporting appendices and asked for any comments and questions. Alex and Matt E expressed their support of the recommendations as presented.
21. Chuck asked for a motion to adopt the recommendations report as presented as the TAC's official response. Matt E so moved, and Andy and Jason jointly seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.



### **Storage Refresh Update**

22. Johnny reported that meetings were held last week with a couple of vendors to review their proposals, and that a meeting is scheduled for next week to decide next steps. He predicted that an award would be made shortly thereafter.
23. In response to a question from Chuck, Johnny stated that ITS has good options, although none offer 100 percent of what ITS is seeking. Johnny explained that the options offered will enable ITS to enhance and expand its storage services.

### **Volunteer Opportunity**

24. Chuck stated that the next TAC initiative would be the development of a SaaS vendor assessment questionnaire. He explained that the Chief Procurement Officer Rosey Murton is engaged in a procurement initiative to replace Hyperion and that she expressed interest in the creation of a standardized set of technology assessment questions that would be submitted to SaaS vendors prior to engaging in agreements.
25. Chuck further explained that Rosey wanted the assessment questionnaire within 48 hours, which prompted Chuck to quickly compile an interim list of questions. Rosey then agreed with Chuck's suggestion to ask the TAC to create an "official" list of assessment questions.
26. Chuck asked for volunteers to form a working group to expand upon Chuck's effort by developing the TAC-approved technical assessment questionnaire. Andy, Louis, Fred, and Matt E volunteered.

### **Next Up?**

27. Chuck presented the following and asked the TAQC to decide which one to adopt as its next assessment initiative.
  - Virtual Lab Service Review and Assessment
  - Web Application Firewall Needs Assessment
  - Web Application Hosting Needs Assessment
28. Chuck provided the following explanations:
  - The Virtual Lab Service Review would be very similar to the Colocation Service Review.
  - The Web Application Firewall would be very similar to the DRaaS assessment. Chuck explained that FSU currently does not have a service to protect public-facing departmental web applications and cloud applications.



- The Web Application Hosting would enable ITS to offer hosting services to eliminate the need for departments from having to acquire and deploy physical or virtual servers.

29. Chuck asked the TAC to vote on which assessment to adopt as the TAC's next initiative. The results were:

- VLAB Service: 43%
- Firewall Service: 21%
- Hosting Service: 36%

30. Based on these results, Chuck declared that upon completion of the SaaS Vendor Assessment Questionnaire, the TAC's next initiative would be the VLAB Service Review and Assessment.

### **NEXT MEETING**

The May meeting will be scheduled by Chuck and held via Zoom.