

# Duke Office of Information Technology

## Minutes

### August 18, 2005

Members present : Pakis Bessias, John Board, Shailesh Chandrasekharan, Angel Dronsfield, Ed Gomes, Brian Eder, Nevin Fouts represented by Stephen Galk, Tracy Futhey, Michael Gettes, Billy Herndon, David Jamieson-Drake represented by Bob Newlin, Deborah Jakubs, David Jarmul, Kyle Johnson, Gregory McCarthy, George Oberlander, Lynne O'Brien represented by Jim Coble, Mike Pickett, Dalene Stangl, Molly Tamarkin, Robert Wolpert

Guests: Kevin Miller, OIT; Dan McCarriar, OIT; John Simon, Provost's Office; Todd Orr, ASM

Start time : 4:03 p.m.

#### **I. Review of Minutes and Announcements:**

- ? John Board says this is the last meeting of the 2004-2005 year. The next meeting in September will be the first with new ITAC members.
- ? I want to publicly thank OIT for the help they've given the Pratt School over the last couple of weeks. Our main user file system has been down for a month, so all of our users have been unable to get to any of their data for about 4 weeks now. We've had various groups in OIT helping, and we have recovered most of the data. We'll have a full post-mortem later, but we did have full recovery from this.
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#### **II. Update on SAP Initiatives: iForms, BW, etc. - Todd Orr, Billy Herndon**

Todd Orr says before we get into the main thing we're going to talk about, I want to talk about the initiative last year around faculty access system. As of today there are 52 active users among the faculty, and 18 have logged in over the last 30 days. We're looking at a next phase for that (you may remember it's built on top of the business SAP warehouse). We're going to perform an upgrade that will include features like being able to see who is currently funded on a grant.

John Board asks did the performance issues ever get sorted out?

Todd says they are generally sorted out, depending on how much data you have it can be a little slow.

Todd continues, the main thing we want talk about is iForms. Instead of paper transactions, it provides simple access to view people, positions, and applications; has

a simple approval process; and a transparent routing process. We looked at the old processes and tried to make it simpler.

The project has three phases. Monday we're going live with phase one, which will allow people in departments to view a position and employee data and do terminations, personal data changes, and cost distribution changes. We've been in pilot all summer on phase one transactions. Phase two will be position management transactions, transfers from one department to another, and pay rate and staff change transactions. Phase three: we left the hardest phase for last, which is new hires. As part of that we will be implementing a new applicant tracking system that will be fully integrated with the iForms environment. We still have a lot to do, but we really put the infrastructure in place for this.

The iForms phase one pilot began Memorial Day 2005. We piloted in select departments in the university, medical school and DUHS. Over 2,300 transactions were processed during the pilot. Full rollout begins the week of August 22 for phase one transactions.

Phase two will go into pilot mode with the same set of pilot departments in October. We are projecting full rollout of this phase for Q1 2006. BrassRing (applicant tracking) implementation begins in October 2005.

Technically, authentication on iForms is through Webauth. It has full capability for the Web and browser support on IE, Mozilla, and Firefox. Routing is based on the standard SAP workflow software. We want to move the end-user community to the Web, so this is our first foray into Web transaction processing.

Molly Tamarkin asks how do you see this impacting the various schools? As we get more tools to manage ourselves, it always concerns me as to what our relationship is with the business office. Are we shifting away from them towards us or towards you?

Todd says I don't see any work shift, because one is submitting a Web form instead of a piece of paper. Work isn't distributed any differently.

[A demo of iForms is shown.]

Shailesh Chandrasekharan asks is there a mechanism to educate the staff to learn about these changes?

John Board says his group just had training this past week.

Todd says there is a lot of communication among people who are in the trenches. Although we don't do in-front-of-the-computer training, we don't think that's necessary and we do have some demos to go through things more in depth than did here.

### **III. University Academic Strategic Planning Effort - John Simon**

John Simon says I decided to start with the false premise that infrastructure will be there and be there when we want it. The corollary to that is when it isn't there we'll do what we need to do to make it work, whether it interfaces with the university well or not. I thought I'd tell how we're going to try to prevent that: what we did last year, this year, what roll we see ITAC having in planning process this year.

Planning actually started last fall in a silent phase where we looked at several things. We evaluated every department, institute and center through a self-evaluation process. We got back more information than I ever wanted to know about Duke University and got a report that set the foundation for where we are today. We did a comparative study

of things at other schools. We looked at a lot of infrastructure committees, such as the one Mike Pickett put together on the state of IT on campus. We looked at space issues, had series of “blue sky” discussions where we asked individuals questions like “Will there be tenure at Duke in 20 years, and what will that be like?”

The schools have received charges to develop their initial thoughts about strategic plans for the schools and how tie them into big issues that still need to be defined. Duke is very interested in the arts, in trying to give some coherence to its undergraduate experience, moving forward with endeavors where it is socially involved, and then the big build project called Central Campus. Major institutes got similar planning charges. Over the last five years there has been an evolution over where power for future intellectual directions sits. It is our intention that all of these plan outlines come here to ITAC. The reason for that is quite simple, and an example is the imaging initiative. If you think about all the technologies that could be mounted to address this, it is a technology issue and requires technology infrastructure to make it happen. We are concerned in the Provost's Office that this is discussed while the programmatic planning is being done. We hope to have representation on all relevant committees where programmatic planning has an impact on infrastructure.

There are specific questions that can be asked in ITAC. We are off to great start with the Duke shared cluster resource. What is the next step? There are issues coming up in conversations with Mike Pickett about what the university's role is in providing back-up storage for digital research.

The last item: I'll begin this by saying we understand this costs a lot. In the last plan technology got its own chapter and its own priority. In this next plan the chapter and themes are tied more around Dick Brodhead's visions for the university, most of which are related to technology. We don't see ideas being balkanized where we pursue technology for technology's sake. This doesn't mean we are going to be cutting its budget; it just may not have its own chapter head.

John Board says I think that's an interesting and exciting approach, as almost everything that goes on here has some connection to technology.

John Simon says the goal is to have a draft of the university plan in May. The schools' reports are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. Between then and March will be a lot of back and forth between committees and schools. I think everyone on our side is prepared to do an awful lot of creative writing from February 1 to May. The representation from OIT is necessary because many of them will have tremendous infrastructure needs for technology.

Tracy Futhey says if there are a large number of working groups, we may have to enlist help from people from ITAC to be engaged with the process to at least help us to raise the red flags.

John says the partnering of the campus to the medical center is as complicated for planning as it is for technology. I did manage to go to a basic sciences retreat to get some idea what they are thinking about. They're also on a different planning clock. There are ramifications of that. There are some things we will partner with them on, but we won't have such a role in defining. It is difficult, but I think it's much better now than five years ago.

Robert Wolpert says you mentioned the proliferation of institutes and other similar structures. These groups tend not to have the infrastructure that departments do and tend to leech from departments in ways that cause them concerns.

John says there is going to be an administrative working group to try and address that. We have heard in the last couple of years that this is a real problem. When you have money, you have two choices: you can expand or can deepen. What we need to look at is did we find an appropriate balance there or not? There are a lot of departments that feel faculty is being pulled toward centers, resources are being put there, and it has hurt the departments.

Molly Tamarkin says one of the things we see at the Nicholas School has been a desire of faculty to work with non-Duke faculty and researchers. Supporting that from an IT perspective is hard right now. One of the challenges we have in IT is expanding pools to allow access and authentication to non-Duke folks. If we could do that more easily so we could use Webauth and other tools more broadly, that would be a really nice feature.

John says that's interesting, we haven't thought about that kind of collaboration.

Deborah Jakubs says we have had the same sort of issue with the Venice International Library: we want to grant access to students, but costs go up pretty quickly. I want to be cooperative, but publishers aren't keen on us opening up access unless we're paying for it.

John Board asks how are administrative and support units being involved in this, like Admissions?

John Simon says they'll be involved in different ways. When we talk about "undergraduate experience," we think about attracting kind of student that wants to participate in an active experience. The one thing I think Dick Brodhead is really good at is seeing that connection. If I think about the Provost's management center, I view this as a true university planning exercise where we incorporate as many people as we can.

#### **IV. Cell Phone Contract Update - Angel Dronsfield**

Angel Dronsfield says in April 2004 we signed a two-year contract with Alltel and Verizon Wireless after a fairly intensive six month negotiating process. Those contracts are set to expire in April 2006. After looking where we are with service and points in contracts, what we have proposed and have been approved to do is negotiate to extend the contracts for another year to see how the industry plays out with Nextel and others. We'll be going to the table soon to try to get better pricing and devices, particularly with devices where we're aware of them coming out before people say they'd like to have one. We'd like to hear any concerns before we go to the table with them.

John Board says would you address the in-building cell phone coverage, or the lack thereof, in places like CIEMAS?

Angel says that was absolutely an oversight for CIEMAS.

Tracy Futhey says if you remember two years ago when there was a review of networking, we never made a change to say the standard thing we need is comprehensive cell phone coverage. Now all new buildings have this as a standard.

Angel says now we only have cell towers providing coverage on campus, no in-building system. We are working on CDMA, but it is not inexpensive or easy - it takes a lot of work to do it. Part of the cell phone coverage issue is the way the CIEMAS building sits. The good news is it's close to the Telcom building, so it will be easier to run a line there than it would be to more distant buildings. Within five weeks we should see improvements on Alltel and Verizon. There are options for enhancing coverage on all

existing buildings that would be less invasive but wouldn't provide same the depth of coverage. The current plans with existing contracts in place are to enhance coverage in the health system and Bryan Center .

Mike Pickett says for example with Verizon adding EVDO, is that covered?

Angel says yes, because that's covered under voice and data. It's just like anyplace where voice is strong, data would be the same but it will be even better.

Kyle Johnson asks at what threshold on renovation projects do we look and say, "Ok, we need to go ahead and do this." When is a renovation large enough that we should consider putting this in?

Angel says we should look at it every time to see if it would work and evaluate cost versus priority.

John Board says I personally enjoy the discount Duke-affiliated people currently get, but it's only for voice and not for data services. I imagine the number of people asking for data devices is increasing, so to the extent we can get data devices on the table would be good.

Kyle Johnson said we announced in terms of IT support purchasing devices for which there is no plan, so IT support groups could get support for an area. It is basically a usage-only phone that would allow us to support them.

## **V. Video Furnace Demonstration - Dan McCarriar, Kevin Miller**

Dan McCarriar says some of you might have heard me talking about Video Furnace and IPTV in general and in the context of the Bell Tower coverage rolling out, so we wanted to show it to you today. You can think about this in the context of the Bell Tower , but also in terms of cable distribution on campus at large, for education classes, etc.

[Kevin and Dan demonstrate Video Furnace]

Kevin Miller says you click a tune-in button, and a small java applet loads. The interesting thing is, the applet lives in memory so it never touches your hard drive. The streaming is in memory, so it also never touches hard drive, and the video stream is encrypted. A lot of groups usually paranoid about content are agreeing to this because of these features.

Dan says this product does have IP set boxes that can be used to set this up to regular TV. We are using the MPEG-4 format, but it also takes MPEG-1 and 2.

Angel asks do you have this only open on Bell Tower Wireless?

Kevin says we're doing the trial just in Bell Tower .

Dan says also think that this works as a video on demand service.

Kyle Johnson says one of the things I wonder about is that we talk about commercial companies making it able to record and that people will come in expecting this. Will we be prepared to do this later?

Dan says it is just a matter of negotiating. You could hook up this up to a TiVo.

Ed Gomes says do you have any recommendations for how PCs should be set up to run Video Furnace?

Kevin says they do have suggested hardware guidelines, for example, as we increase the speed it takes up more and more CPU cycles. One issue we've run into is the Kerio Firewall, where by default it blocks basically everything we're trying to do here.

Angel Dronsfield says as this goes forward it might be a possibility for the health system as they try to convert to a common video platform.

## **VI. Other Business**

None.

End time : 5:30 p.m.

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