Campus Information Technology Plan (CITP) Committee

Frequently Asked Questions

As the Campus Information Technology Plan Committee visits with stakeholders around campus, there are a number of questions that frequently come up in the conversations. This document aims to capture questions and answers to those frequently asked questions. As questions and answers about the project evolve, we will add new questions and add or modify answers to this list.

Some questions we have heard thus far are:

**Question:** The letter from the President charged Gerry McCartney <http://www.purdue.edu/sustaining/documents/president_letters/100126PresLetter.html> with preparing a “campus-wide plan for Information Technology” that will grow cost savings to $15M over time. What is meant by “Information Technology” in this charge? Will the savings all come from ITAP?

**Answer:** Information technology includes academic computing, administrative computing, and central IT (ITaP). The savings will come from a combination of all of these entities and will include savings generated through decreasing energy consumption and employing strategic sourcing techniques. The sub-committee that is focusing on IT governance will help us clarify Purdue’s definition of IT and a corresponding governance structure.

**Question:** It is not clear to me if the $15M target is recurring, non-recurring, or some combination. So, when do we need to achieve the $15M target, and how do related targets for energy and strategic sourcing savings relate to the target?

**Answer:** The charge from President Cordova states the target as, “to reap savings of $5M in FY 2011 and recurring cost savings of at least $10M every year thereafter with an expectation that this can subsequently grow to $15M per year” (http://www.purdue.edu/sustaining/documents/president_letters/100126PresLetter.html). The intent is reflected in the figure below:
For FY 2011, the savings may be captured as either recurring or non-recurring savings. However, by FY 2012, we must achieve recurring savings of $10M. Savings achieved through IT related energy initiatives or IT related strategic sourcing initiatives will count towards the $15M recurring target.

**Question:** Why is information technology named first as one of the areas targeted for budget savings?

**Answer:** Indiana is one of the last States to cut higher education as a result of the significant economic downturn. This has given Purdue the advantage of looking at how other institutions have responded to the challenge. When we studied other institutions similar to Purdue who have undergone extensive organizational assessments, each had identified IT as an area with significant savings opportunities. We have also reviewed the approaches suggested by reports such as the Bain report studying UNC Chapel Hill, Cornell and UC Berkley as well as reports from trade publications and professional organizations (EDUCAUSE, etc.).

In addition, the governance subcommittee has been asked to benchmark our governance model with Purdue’s peers as defined in the New Synergies strategic plan. As a result, they have reviewed all of the governance models of the public Big 10 programs and several other peers. The following links provide examples of organizational structures that demonstrate the wide range of options that we are considering:
Minnesota:
http://www.oit.umn.edu/external-review/index.htm

Texas:
http://www.utexas.edu/vp/it/itgovernance/

These studies, along with the MORT reviews undertaken this past fall, have positioned us to move forward with a more targeted IT review for our campus. IT also presents great opportunities for energy conservation, strategic sourcing, and effective and efficient IT governance.

Question: Is there an assumption that the current ITaP organization is appropriately structured?

Answer: No. All parts of the organization will be considered equally in forming the optimal governance and organizational structure for Purdue.

Question: Are there plans to consolidate IT departments?

Answer: The Management Operation Review Team (MORT) report on IT Structure made recommendations on a new organizational structure; however, the CITP committee has not formulated a recommendation at this point. We are currently gathering information (internal and external) and discussing the governance models that are most appropriate for Purdue. Some level of consolidation remains a viable possibility.

There are hundreds of IT staff outside of ITaP. Right now, only about half of all IT staff on the West Lafayette campus are employed by ITaP. There are another 30 percent who work in academic departments, and the remaining 20 percent are in administrative areas.

Up to a point, having both centrally managed and distributed management of IT staff makes a great deal of sense. Academic departments and administrative areas may have specialized equipment or software that require local, specific knowledge and very agile response times.

However, many of these areas also provide scalable "commodity" services, such as firewalls; networking services; file services; or communication technologies, such as telephones and email. These services can be delivered with lower costs by a single campus organization.

Likewise, ITaP contains some examples of staff providing specialized services.

We are looking at re-aligning IT provisions to place IT staff that provide scalable services in a single organization (along with the services themselves), and leave specialized staff at the frontlines where they can be close to the client.
**Question:** Will these changes result in job cuts?

**Answer:** The overall employment situation is not much different than it has been at other times. Technology changes and we have differing needs depending on those changes.

For example, we are hoping to hire several new people in research computing; we are looking for programmers to help build research hubs. There are other areas of technology, such as social media and mobile applications that also look to grow.

However, other areas of IT are now able to be supported with fewer resources. In those areas fewer staff may be needed.

**Question:** What are some of the major initiatives that the CITP is working on?

**Answer:** At this point, we are using a number of resources to generate ideas. It is never too late to add good ideas. The following list provides some examples of the types of initiatives that have surfaced and that we are pursuing. This is not intended to serve as a comprehensive list.

- Governance
- Print Management
- Data Center Management
- License Agreement Management
- Strategic Sourcing for IT commodities
- Student Computing Labs
- Revenue generation strategies (selling Signals, selling screen savers as advertisement, etc.)
- Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI)
- Energy efficiency (servers, desktop computers, printers, etc.)

We welcome new ideas. Feel free to send them to any representative on the CITP committee, to the Sustaining New Synergies Steering Committee, or to the Sustaining New Synergies Task Force.

**Question:** I continue to hear the term 'strategic sourcing.' What is strategic sourcing? Is this a corporate way of saying "outsourcing?"

**Answer:** Strategic sourcing means looking at how goods and services are acquired by your institution, and finding ways to improve the overall price or quality for those goods and services. Strategic Sourcing is the foundation for an institutional procurement process that continuously improves the process of acquiring goods and services. It allows for leveraging buying power, reducing the number of suppliers, verifying vendor compliance to negotiated agreements and reducing the number of procurement transactions and cycle times.

Here is an IT example: What is Purdue's preferred printer for departments to purchase? There isn't one, nor is there a preferred vendor.
The result is that we have hundreds of different types of printers across campus. They have their own specific requirements for supplies and service. This forces us to pay retail prices for printer cartridges and maintenance.

If we reduced this to two or three preferred printers, and put the maintenance and supply of the printers out to bid, we expect we could save quite a bit of money and related support effort.

We can apply this same technique to many other technologies across campus.

The MORT report estimated that strategic sourcing of desktop computers and servers on campus could save as much as $3 million per year. As we pursue this recommendation, the Sustaining New Synergies Task Force will assess this estimate.

**Question:** Will these changes in information technology governance or structure mean less capability or less security?

**Answer:** No, not at all. There will not be a reduction in core services, and we certainly are not putting the digital assets of the university at risk in any way. We are attempting to find new ways to provide tools and services more efficiently and effectively.

As we look forward, we are planning for growth in instructional and research computing to outpace growth in administrative computing. We are planning for continued growth in areas with the greatest demand, while still reducing costs.

**Question:** How will results from the CITP be communicated?

**Answer:** The CITP committee will use a number of channels to keep the campus community informed and to allow for input throughout the project. We will use existing media such as Purdue Today, Inside Purdue, the Sustaining New Synergies website, and the Business Services Spotlight just to name a few. In addition, we are in the process of scheduling a number of visits to IT staff, administrative units and academic units. We intend to approach our work in an inclusive and transparent manner. At the same time, we have a very tight deadline. So, we will do our best to keep you apprised of our progress and to provide opportunities for input. We welcome your input or questions at any time throughout the process.

**Question:** What is the timeline for the CITP’s investigative efforts and recommendations?

**Answer:** We had our first meeting on February 2, 2010 and we are expected to submit our final recommendations by March 30, 2010. These recommendations will serve more as a road map for future work than a set of detailed implementation plans.
**Question:** I hear about the CITP group, the Sustaining New Synergies Steering Committee, the Sustaining New Synergies Task Force, combined with a number of cost savings initiatives in different units across campus. How are these activities being coordinated?

**Answer:** There is certainly a lot of activity surrounding operational efficiency and cost savings efforts. The efforts of the CITP and Sustaining New Synergies Steering Committee and Task Force (SNSTF) have been intentionally linked. A member of the Sustaining New Synergies Task Force is serving on the CITP committee and is co-chairing the cost savings subcommittee. In addition, the CITP committee was designed to include representation from all staff groups (faculty, A/P, clerical/service) and students (undergrad and graduate). With respect to IT, the committee includes representatives from academic, administrative, and central IT areas. This was done to help coordinate our activities with those happening in parallel with our work.

**Question:** How can I help?

**Answer:** First, share your ideas with us. Submit your ideas to any of the CITP committee members, members of the Sustaining New Synergies Steering Committee or members of the Sustaining New Synergies Task Force. Second, provide honest, speedy, complete responses to committee members if asked. Third, indulge us with your patience as we manage a tight timeline and a very important, complex task. While we will do our best to provide effective multi-channel communication, it is likely that we will not be able to address everyone’s concerns or questions the first time around. If you have a question or concern that is not addressed, please let us know. Last, stay connected to the status of the project, and provide feedback as information is posted.

**Question:** Where can I find additional information about the CITP committee’s activities?

**Answer:** Updates and additional information will be published on the Sustaining New Synergies <http://www.purdue.edu/sustaining/> and Campus IT Plan <http://www.purdue.edu/sustaining/documents/itplan/ITCharter2010.pdf> committee websites.