

Group: Information Technology Council
Subject: ITC Report for AY 2020-2021
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Incoming chair for 2021-2022: Andrew H. Fagg

Key issues that the ITC worked on during the 2020-2021 AY:

- **Standardized Computing Requirements.**
 - Coming into this year, IT required us to purchase computing systems (laptops and desktops) from a small, standard menu. In addition, individuals had been limited to having one device.
 - An exception request process was in place, but it required additional documentation and waiting. There was a lot of confusion about who managed the exception process; we seemed to have individuals not responsible for the exception process rejecting requests and not forwarding them on.
 - We were seeing a dramatic slow-down in the purchasing process, which required much more faculty time to resolve
 - Provost Irvine formed a committee to look at our concerns with this approach. The conclusions, which have recently gone into effect:
 - Externally funded exceptions are automatically granted (though we still need to go through the exception process)
 - One-device-per-person limitation does not apply to machines that are purchased with external funds
 - Start-up packages are internal funds, but purchase requests with these funds will not be held up
- **Other Computing Purchase Issues**
 - We also have a lot more clarity on the “lifecycle” issue. Computers may continue to be used after retirement from their primary role (to labs or to students)
 - The federal government has put in place restrictions on some of the types of computing hardware infrastructure that we can purchase (“section 889” requirements). Purchasing will flag requests that violate this requirement.
- **Computing Policies/Standards in General**
 - IT now has a standard process for new & modifications to existing policies and standards
 - Publically post proposals; available for comment by the OU community
 - Also discuss these in ITC on a regular basis
- **Research Computing Survey**
 - IT launched a research computing survey in the middle of April. Faculty should take time to respond
- **New Supercomputer and Related Services**
 - Components for the supercomputer are coming on line starting this summer, with “friendly user” access this Fall

- Computing with sensitive data: working to bring up supercomputing / storage services that properly handle HIPAA and other sensitive data types. Expect systems to be available end of 2021/beginning of 2022
- OURDisk/OURStore:
 - Disk and tape storage purchasable for use with the supercomputer and other systems (~\$100/TB and \$6/TB, respectively). Hardware has a defined lifetime, depending on what is purchased
 - OU IT will cover maintenance, power, cooling
 - Can mirror disks between Norman and HSC for better data stability
 - In some cases, resources are sharable outside of OU
- **Password Management**
 - Lastpass (a password management system) rolled out during the Spring Semester. We encourage everyone to move over to using it or another password manager
- **Accessibility Technology**
 - ADRC (Chellé Lodge Guttery) available to help faculty and departments develop a more generally accessible online presence.
 - They are looking at services that will automatically check Canvas and web sites for accessibility challenges
- **Authentication**
 - The legacy authentication mechanisms for POP/IMAP access to the OU mail system have been deactivated. This is part of the planned Microsoft phase-out of these interfaces. Faculty having trouble with accessing OU mail should work with IT to move to modern authentication tools
 - Single Sign On: moving to using email address as the standard username (and away from 4x4). But, both work right now in some systems.
- **Faculty with Concerns/Problems/Challenges with IT**
 - Feel free to bring to the ITC
 - We need specific details about the issue and who is involved
- **Phishing**
 - IT at HSC and Tulsa have been sending fake phishing email messages to faculty and staff (one per ~1-2 months). This process will expand to Norman soon.
 - If someone responds to a phishing message by clicking on a link, they will be registered for anti-phishing training and be tested later at a higher frequency.
 - ITC has discussed the process and agrees that this is a reasonable approach, especially in light of the data that were collected at HSC and Tulsa
- **Online Teaching**
 - From the student's perspective: online procedures vary greatly across classes. This is a big source of confusion and stress for the students

Open issues that we are working on for the 2021-2022 AY:

- **Policies, Standards, etc.**
 - In addition to the legal documents that are being put in place, we need human-readable documents. What must be done? Who are the responsible

parties? How do we make processes feasible given that faculty and staff are already over-committed?

- **End-point user device policy.**

- Trying to address security concerns from state and federal agencies, as well as insurance providers
- Originally: all on-network devices must allow admin-level access by IT
- Current discussion: only OU-owned devices must have monitoring software installed.
 - Scanning for malicious code; logging of activity on the machine
 - Still in question as to what information is being logged. Recent email (unclear as to whether it was official) suggested that even browser URLs would be logged (through the CrowdStrike service)
 - We are currently discussing with IT the privacy and performance issues. It is not yet clear where they will come down on this. They state that they are committed to being transparent about the solutions that are chosen

- **Sharing of Data with Other Institutions.** We need secure ways of sharing data with our research collaborators, including HIPAA protected data. OU doesn't have these latter capabilities in-house, and so far there is a lot of friction to signing-up for 3rd party services that provide these protections (One individual recently secured access to Databrary, but this is an exception, not a generally available solution)

- **Gradescope**

- License has been renewed through August 2022

- **Membership**

- Need to make sure that we have a full five faculty appointed
- Currently do not have a representative from the President's office or the Vice President for Student Affairs' office.
- Only one student member has been appointed to the ITC for the last two years. This perspective is greatly appreciated and we need more input.
- Tend not to have a lot of diversity on the committee (we have done better this year).
- The ITC term for the current chair expires at the end of the year.