

**COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION SERVICES (CIS)  
ANNUAL REPORT TO THE ACADEMIC SENATE FOR 2015-2016**

**I. The committee identified the following discussion topics for the year:**

- Campus unification
- The transition of staff from the Center for Scholarly Technology to the Center for Excellence in Teaching
- The roadmap for Blackboard
- Campus-wide software licenses
- IT best practices for faculty and students
- Cybersecurity, including data storage and sharing, mobile device encryption, and authentication
- Personal websites for faculty and students
- Faculty email (Microsoft Office 365)
- Support for statistics software
- Future directions for ITS
- An assessment of IT federation—10 years later
- Video capture, video streaming, and visualization technologies
- USC's wireless networks

**II. During the FY16 session, the CIS discussed:**

**a) The need for “campus unification,” or ways of facilitating collaboration and communication across USC’s campuses.**

- The committee invited A/V technology specialists from ITS and the Marshall School of Business to review available audio and video collaboration technologies. As part of these discussions, the committee recommended creating a matrix of web conferencing technologies to help faculty identify the best product for their needs. This matrix was created and is now available on the ITS website at [itservices.usc.edu/files/2016/02/Comparing-Web-Conferencing-Options.pdf](http://itservices.usc.edu/files/2016/02/Comparing-Web-Conferencing-Options.pdf).
- The committee held a joint meeting with the USC Technology Council (UTC), a representative council of USC’s IT leaders, to discuss recommendations that would allow faculty to easily identify the best technology for various collaboration needs.
- The committee suggested creating a database of spaces across the University Park and Health Sciences campuses that contain web or video conferencing equipment. ITS is currently working with schools and units to develop this database and is investigating ways to make it available to faculty, including integrating it with the ITS Room Finder database (<http://web-app.usc.edu/web/its/spaces/room-finder>).

**b) USC security initiatives.**

- The committee discussed the impact on faculty of a number of information security initiatives, including the requirement for staff and administrative faculty to enroll in Duo two-factor authentication, mandatory cybersecurity awareness training, and new email security features.
- In response to these discussions, ITS created a video tutorial on using Duo and a resource page with instructions on how to use Duo two-factor authentication while traveling, which are available at <http://itservices.usc.edu/duo>, as well as documentation describing how to send encrypted email (available at <https://itservices.usc.edu/security/email-encryption>) and explaining the Targeted Attack Protection (TAP) email security feature (available at <https://itservices.usc.edu/security/tap>).
- ITS staff presented security best practices, including tips for securing accounts and hardware, how to recognize and deal with phishing campaigns, and recommendations for secure backup, storage, and collaboration. The committee recommended sharing a similar presentation to the Academic Senate.

**c) Ways to promote awareness of statistical software resources.**

- Committee members suggested that the USC Libraries link to the statistical software download information available on the ITS website.
- In response, the USC Libraries created a new “LibGuide” for statistics, available at [http://libguides.usc.edu/ITS\\_stats\\_software](http://libguides.usc.edu/ITS_stats_software).

**d) The merging of instructional designers from the former ITS technology-enhanced learning group into the Office of the Provost’s Center for Excellence in Teaching (CET).**

- Ed Finegan, director of the CET, spoke to the committee about the roles of CET fellows and the instructional designers, noting that the CET would offer the events previously offered by the Center for Scholarly Technology, including the annual Teaching with Technology Conference.
- The committee feels that the consolidation of academic resources in the CET is a promising move and recommends ongoing assessment to determine if faculty have sufficient access to resources to support integration of technologic tools to support excellence in teaching.

**e) The roadmap for Blackboard.**

- Wendy Chapman, ITS director of learning technologies, led a discussion about the Blackboard (Bb) learning management system. She discussed current Bb usage statistics and plans for developing Bb over the next year. The ITS enterprise learning technologies group, in partnership with the CET, will explore ways of

helping faculty use Bb more effectively and will report back to the committee in FY17.

- In a second meeting, Chapman discussed work toward allowing continuing education students to access courses in Blackboard. The project would require a partner school to fully pilot the idea. Several committee members indicated that their units would be interested in collaborating on this pilot project.

**f) Options for personal websites for faculty and students.**

- The committee reviewed existing options at USC for creating personal or departmental websites. The committee also discussed how to create sites using external services and how to obtain usc.edu URLs that redirect to sites with long or external URLs.
- The committee suggested updating the documentation about creating personal websites on the ITS site and investigating ways to help users easily find information about the process. Updated documentation is now available at <https://itservices.usc.edu/web/hosting/facultystaff>.

**g) Faculty email (Microsoft Office 365).**

- The committee discussed new features available in Microsoft Office 365 (O365), including the Clutter folder for lower-priority email, the ability to store regulated or sensitive data in the O365 environment, the ability to share files from OneDrive for Business with students or non-USC colleagues, and the ability to connect via Skype for Business with any other Skype for Business or commercial Skype user. David Galassi, ITS assistant CIO of enterprise infrastructure and services, previewed possible upcoming features, including simultaneous editing of documents in OneDrive for Business.
- At the committee's request, Galassi also discussed faculty use of Gmail. Gmail, though it has advantages in regards to collaboration, lacks features available in O365, such as legal holds, fine control over email retention policies, and the ability to store regulated data.

**h) Improving the USC wireless networks.**

- David Galassi, ITS assistant CIO for enterprise infrastructure and services, discussed plans for improving the USC wireless networks, including installing new wireless access points and upgrading backend software during the summer of 2016.
- The committee recommended that ITS work with campus entities to identify and address wireless dead zones.

**i) Visualization, video capture, and video streaming technologies.**

- Led by Richard Weinberg, the committee discussed the importance of visualization, video capture, and video streaming technologies for research faculty as well as the availability of these services at the university.

**j) Ways to communicate IT services.**

- The committee discussed ways to improve communication about IT services to the USC community. In response to these discussions, ITS began promoting services on its Twitter feed (@USCITServices) and will distribute updated information cards during new student and faculty orientations and at the ITS service center cart.

**k) IT federation – 10 years later.**

- The committee began a discussion of USC's federated model of IT services with the intention of having deeper discussions in the FY17 session.

**l) Reinstating an email retention policy and limiting forwarding of USC email.**

- The committee discussed the impact of and provided input on an initiative to reinstate a university-wide email retention policy. ITS staff briefed the committee on proposed details of the policy, including the possibility of limiting the amount of time that faculty and staff could store email in certain folders and the possibility of limiting or disabling automatic forwarding of USC email to non-USC email accounts. The committee expressed concern about potential impacts to faculty workflow and efficiency.

**m) Collaboration with the University Research Committee.**

- The committee reviewed a report issued by the University Research Committee dealing with academic technologies, and suggested reaching out to the URC to explore opportunities for collaboration in the FY17 session.

**n) Collaboration with the USC Technology Council.**

- The committee discussed the benefits of establishing and maintaining a closer working relationship with the USC Technology Council, including holding annual joint committee meetings and regular cochair meetings.

**III. The committee recommended the following items to the FY17 committee's attention:**

- a) Promoting a relationship with the USC Technology Council, in order to facilitate communication between the university's faculty and IT staff.
- b) Continuing discussion of the Blackboard learning management system, including how to help faculty use it more effectively.
- c) Continuing discussion of the federated model of IT services at USC and its impact on faculty's ability to engage in effective teaching and scholarship.
- d) Exploring opportunities for collaboration with the University Research Committee.

**IV. Committee membership:**

Committee Chairs

Brian Shepard, Iovine and Young Academy

Julie Tilson, Biokinesiology & Physical Therapy

Members

Karen Howell, USC Libraries

Meng Li, Health Sciences Libraries

Lars Perner, Marshall School of Business

Geoffrey Shiflett, Viterbi School of Engineering

Richard Weinberg, School of Cinematic Arts

John Wilson, Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences

Michael Wincor, School of Pharmacy

Ex Officio

Douglas Shook, interim chief information officer and vice provost for Information  
Technology Services

Ainsley Carry, vice provost for Student Affairs

Leyla Ezdinli, ITS director of organizational initiatives and communications

Richard Nelson, director, information processing center, Information Sciences Institute

Catherine Quinlan, dean, USC Libraries

John Silvester, Academic Senate liaison and professor, Viterbi School of Engineering

Committee Support

Matt Bordas, ITS organizational and strategic initiatives

Connie Roque, Academic Senate