FY-15 ACADEMIC COMPUTING AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS (ACEC)

Chair: Perry Alexander, EECS, (2015)
Faculty Senate Rep: David Fowle, Geology, (2015)
Allison Reeve, Wheat Law Library, (2015)
Eric Deeds, Bioinformatics (2016)
Charlotte Tritch, Business (2017)
Zach George, Student, Vice Chair senatedvlp@ku.edu
Michael Walker, Graduate, smwalker@ku.edu
Paul Espinosa, IT, Unclassified Staff (2015)
Jennifer Talbott, Spencer Museum of Art, Unclassified Staff (2017)
Brad McClung, IT, University Support Staff (2017)
Ex-officio: Easan Selvan, IT Services, Jeff Chasen, Director of Institutional Compliance

Standing charges:

1. Monitor current and proposed policy concerning security of information, intellectual property rights and responsibilities, and other matters relating to information technology. Identify issues for which policy should be developed or revised. Report issues and any recommendations for action to SenEx. (ongoing)

ACEC met twice during the academic year to discuss computing and communication infrastructure. We summarize our discussions related to specific charges below.

Specific charges:

1. Working together with RGS, create a recommendation on how Information Technology could better accommodate research. The following should be among the issues addressed:
   a. Support
   b. Archival file storage
   c. Grant accommodation and development

Members agreed that KUIT continues to improve campus-wide support for computing infrastructure and continues to provide new services to the community. While we will never agree completely on what services should be provided, we can agree that KUIT is moving forward successfully on several fronts.

The committee agreed that for many units centralization – servers and support – has been successful. Server centralization and new site licenses were mentioned specifically as a success stories to build upon. Research computing support is improving, but lags support for general purpose computing on campus.

Archival file storage remains an unfulfilled KU need. When we refer to archival storage, we refer to storage for data that is no longer active. Much like off-campus storage for books, archival storage needs to keep and organize data that is not accessed on a regular basis. Currently, no such system exists on campus. KUIT reported discussions about requirements and ongoing system designs, but without deadlines or specific progress. This is a hard problem and must be done right. However, support for

data management is no longer an option and is required for many grant applications. ACEC recommends that this be given priority and that progress be monitored.

Grant accommodation and development is largely a research computing and resource sharing issue – research computing to support ongoing grants and infrastructure to support proposal development and execution. Collaboration infrastructure (discussed further below) is lagging, but solutions are being proposed and developed. A number of positive developments have occurred including Lync rollout, but we need to progress to a far better collaboration environment than HawkDrive. KUIT is working on this, but we do not yet have an enterprise-wide solution.

As noted, research computing support continues to improve with the CRC and ACF leading efforts to provide general research computing support and high-performance computing support respectively. There is a continuing effort to improve connectivity to campus and establish a research demilitarized zone for information exchange both within KU and amont our research collaborators at other institutions. We are moving in the right directions, but research computing support continues to lag computing support for campus as a whole.

2   Monitor the continued progress in installation of the ubiquitous wireless initiative.

We discussed the ubiquitous wireless initiative and received updates from Paul Espinoza and Brad McClung. The committee believes the ubiquitous wireless rollout to be a success thus far. Specifically, we all felt coverage is excellent and improving across campus using JAYHAWK wireless. Members of the committee commented on the professionalism and efficiency of KUIT staff installing and maintain the network. Several members commented on the usefulness of eduroam for accessing campus networks while away from KU.

KUIT representatives expressed concern regarding ongoing funding for the initiative in times of tight budgets. This issue should be monitored by ACEC going forward.

KUIT representatives expressed concern regarding long-term maintenance of the wireless infrastructure, much of which is already aging. This issue should be monitored by ACEC going forward.

3. Continue monitoring the progress of the "one campus" initiatives for IT such as "One Network" and "Single Identity."

We discussed the single identity and single network issue at both our semester meetings focusing on implementation and timeframe. Paul Espinoza and Easan Selvan provided updates on where we are in this process and what should be expected. Single Identity moving forward with KUIT working to unify name spaces for KUMC and KUL campuses. Traditionally these organizations maintained separate IT infrastructures that must be unified. Two problems on being addressed moving forward: (i) user name clashes; and (ii) shared infrastructure differences.

User names are being reconciled between campuses with clashes resolved in favor of the medical school due to issues related to controlled data. This is simply a matter of working through our existing identities and changing names where a clash exists. Work is ongoing. The ACEC committee strongly recommends abandoning the automatically generated "alphabet soup" approach for assigning user names. Addresses such as a123b456W@ku.edu convey no information and accomplish nothing from a security or identity perspective. Members complained of difficulties relating email identities to students

and staff. The practice of using these identities rather than a user selected or otherwise meaningful usernames should be abandoned.

Shared infrastructure is an ongoing concern. KUMC uses the same identity management system at KUL, but different versions. Both campuses use an outdated identity management system that needs to be replaced before adopting a single software solution for both campuses.

KUMC uses a proprietary, dedicated system for sending privacy enhanced email (PEM). KUL uses the S/MIME standard for PEM. It is not practical for KUL to adopt the KUMC solution making PEM an challenge moving forward. The simplest solution would be for KUMC to adopt the S/MIME standard, but there are workflow issues that make this somewhat difficult.

4. Consider how to address the issue of members of the KU community using alternative tools (e.g., Dropbox) to those provided by KU (e.g., HawkDrive).

Use of non-KU infrastructure for KU business was discussed extensively by the committee. Specifically, faculty and staff make heavy use of Google Docs, Dropbox, Doodle, GMAIL and other non-KU systems for performing their work functions. In some cases this is due to preference or convenience and other than forbidding KU employees from using such services, there is little we can do to prevent this. KUIT acknowledges this and is working to make use of such systems more systematic with specific KU policies for their use. In some cases such as Dropbox, use is so widespread that KU should consider a formal relationship with those services.

KUIT staff discussed the emerging Microsoft OneDrive for Business and myCommunity infrastructure. The biggest use of non-KU infrastructure is for information sharing across departments and centers. HawkDrive is antiquated and inappropriate for this purpose. Thus, faculty use Google Docs or other infrastructure. KUIT is rolling out Microsoft solutions that will provide similar functionality providing 1T of shared storage for all KU users as well as collaboration tools via myCommunity. Unfortunately, there are issues with OneDrive for Business that prevent its widespread implementation across campus at this time. Members of the committee reported OneDrive for Business is simply not ready for daily use. These issues are not related to KUIT or our use of OneDrive, but are problems with the Microsoft systems.

ACEC needs to continue monitoring the Microsoft system rollout. We agree the best way to get KU faculty and staff to stop using non-KU infrastructure is to provide better KU infrastructure that is competitively with other available solutions. The Microsoft solution is an excellent step towards that goal if it provides a good solution. KUIT must maintain pressure on Microsoft to fix their infrastructure and provide solutions as promised.