Summary of ITS Advisory Committee Meeting (Guru Rao)

The ITS Advisory committee met on November 19. Through a previous Qualtrics survey a priority list of 17 projects was rank-ordered and the top 3 selected for discussion during the one-hour meeting.

- Jim Davis first gave a “big picture” overview of current IT workload that included a continuous redefining of the operating plan because of changing priorities and having to please many constituents. The current inertia is optimizing Kuali. Much time, effort and money is taken up in upgrading fiber network and routers (never really spoken of much because it is ‘boring’). They are preparing for expected changes in how outside vendors will provide software support i.e. moving to Cloud based operations as opposed to CD/DVD based upgrades.

- Priority 1. WIRELESS UPGRADE ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY. Jim reiterated that funding was a big problem but everybody on campus, especially the students, expect this. They are moving in stages. Currently the focus is on student residence halls because that’s where the students reside and do much of their work. The Athletic department has a priority to address access in the stadium, Hilton coliseum etc. because poor/lack of connectivity affects attendance and revenue. For the rest of the campus, technical evaluation is in progress. Need ~3500 access points as opposed to the current 1200 across campus. It is expected to take about 2 years to complete this and will be outsourced. Once in place, it is expected that in addition to a one-time upfront charge for the access point, it will cost about $10 per user as opposed to $50 (I am not quite sure about the breakdown and who pays etc.).

- Priority 2. MORE SUPPORT FOR MAINTAINING GENERAL UNIVERSITY CLASSROOMS AS WELL AS NON-GENERAL, TECHNOLOGY-RICH CLASSROOMS (Jim Tweeten). A better picture is expected to emerge once the “Needs Assessment” report comes out in January. There are 215 general classrooms (maintained by FPM) and 400 College/Dept. media-equipped rooms but it is not transparent to faculty and students and is very confusing as to who is responsible. There were no guidelines as to who should be contacted in case of a problem and the need for appropriate instructions. The concerns ranged beyond just maintaining the audio/video electronics and included items such as dry-erase markers, batteries etc. A suggestion was made to hire students in the particular class/course who would be able to attend to technical and other problems.

- Priority 3. CAMPUS WIDE SOFTWARE. WHAT SHOULD BE OFFERED CENTRALLY ETC. (Jim Davis). The website lists licensed software available for students and faculty. General office software (Microsoft) is available. ITS should broaden the availability of software but there is always going to be specialty programs that only faculty are aware of and tailored to individual disciplines. A recommendation was that ITS should at least have links to websites to download software. As always, ITS is continuously looking into widely used software at reasonably negotiated license fees. Most departments seek advice from their IT rep for purchasing software. Again, budget limitations dictate what can be accomplished.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 2014 and will go down the list of other priorities [phasing out legacy systems; third data center for backup; additional capacity to continue to improve administrative processes through streamlined electronic work flow solutions; improve the competitiveness of IT compensation on campus; more collaboration and integration of ITS and college activities; purchase and maintain student-owned computers; updated road map with milestones for Kuali; more support for student machines centrally; miscellaneous others]