University Council for Academic Technologies (UCAT)
January 22, 2010, 9:30-11:00 pm
ITC Room 226
Meeting MINUTES

Members:
Walker Anderson – Undergraduate Student, Lance Askildson - A&L, Ed Bensman – Engineering, Mark Dehmlow – Library, Rob Easley – MCoB, Ed Edmonds – Law School, Patrick Flynn – Engineering, Mike Hildreth – Science, Nathaniel Hollingsworth – Graduate Student, Michael Kirsch – Law School, Ted Mandell – A&L, Bill McDonald – MCoB,

Members Absent:
Olaf Wiest – Science, Krupali Uplekar –Architecture

Ex-Officio Members:
Kevin Barry – Kaneb Ctr., Craig Brummell – OIT, Dewitt Latimer – OIT, Jarek Nabrzyski – CRC, Harold Pace —Registrar, Peggy Rowland — OIT, Mark Stadtherr, Paul Turner – OIT, John Sejdinaj – OIT

Guest:
John Affleck-Graves – Executive Vice President

1. Welcome

John Sejdinaj welcomed members and introduced himself. With First Chicago Bank for nine years, he was hired by Scott Malpass in August 1994, and he has held a number of positions at Notre Dame. In 1996 he assisted in creating and reorganizing the Finance division, becoming the first budget director and then overseeing Student Financial Services. In 2002 he became Vice President for Finance, and now, in 2010, John Affleck-Graves has asked him to fill the interim CIO position while a search is conducted for that position.

Sejdinaj said OIT held an All-Hands meetings last week. At this meeting Sejdinaj announced that the planned reorganization of the OIT would be delayed giving the new CIO an opportunity to design her/his own structure.   The staff has been particularly supportive in helping him understand customer needs and how the OIT operates. Sejdinaj said his goal for the interim period is to 'make sure people are in place and things keep moving' so that OIT can continue to make progress. Some decisions will need to be postponed until the new CIO is in place.   He invited UCAT to provide advice in identifying IT initiatives that should continue while we work to find a new CIO

 2. Approval of December 10, 2009 Minutes
The minutes of the December 10, 2010 meeting were unanimously approved.

3. Comments from John Affleck-Graves

John Affleck-Graves apologized for being unable to attend the meeting in person; he was unavoidably out-of-town. He said he would like to speak on three issues: 1. The CIO position, 2. An update on the CIO search, 3. The external peer review report.

1. CIO position: Affleck-Graves offered the university's thanks to Gordon Wishon, who resigned as CIO in January, 2010. In his eight years at ND, Wishon accomplished a great deal, Affleck-Graves noted. He oversaw a number of hugely successful projects, such as Renovare, which have transitioned the university into the 21st century. Affleck-Graves included the staff of OIT in his thanks for the outstanding work. It was the right time for change for Wishon, he said, and he left the university on good terms; the university wishes him success.

Affleck-Graves said that John Sejdinaj stepped promptly into the difficult position of interim CIO. He is an outstanding leader with much experience, who thoroughly understands the campus view. His varied experience include the budget, planning and investments sides of campus which give him a uniquely broad perspective of the University. Affleck-Graves called on members to provide support and advice to Sejdinaj, noting that UCAT is an important committee for OIT. In this interim phase, Affleck-Graves asked for positive support and advice that will assist in seeking solutions.

Affleck-Graves echoed Sejdinaj's earlier words, that the first priority is to maintain 'business as usual.' In the areas of technology, research, administrative functions, and classroom services, it is imperative to maintain a high level of service. While there will be some limitations on decisions until the new CIO is in place, Affleck-Graves expressed confidence in the OIT team to continue to perform successfully.

2. CIO search: Affleck-Graves said that the choice of CIO at any university is a critical one. For Notre Dame, the highest priority will be to get the right person for the position. While time is an important factor, still it will not trump the importance of finding the right person. Affleck-Graves named the search committee which he has assembled to provide him advice in this important task. They represent both the research and administrative sides of the university as well as faculty interests. The group is composed of a mix of senior administrators, faculty and staff members.

Search committee: John Affleck-Graves, Chair, Bob Bernhard, Greg Crawford, Pat Flynn, Bill McDonald, Bob McQuade, Dan Myers, Jarek Nabrzyski, John Sejdinaj, Jay Steed
(Note: Subsequent to the UCAT meeting, Chris Maziar was added to the Search Committee).

Affleck-Graves said in terms of the timeline, he hoped to be aggressive in the search. An ideal completion date would be July 1, 2010, but there is no guarantee this target can be achieved. He emphasized that finding the right person is the most important priority. He has engaged a search firm to aid in the search, and is currently in conversation with them. He invited UCAT members to make suggestions of criteria for an ideal CIO candidate, and invited members to nominate both internal and external candidates to cast the net widely.

Affleck-Graves observed that searches at this institutional level require absolute confidentiality. He asked for members' understanding about this, noting that he will arrange on-campus talks between candidates and members when possible, but that it might prove impossible because of the confidentiality measures. Again, he said, these restrictions will be justified if they result in hiring the right person.

3. External Technology Review report: Affleck-Graves said the review was arranged as part of a larger project to institute a regular process of review of service units, similar to the Academic process review, because it is a 'useful exercise.' Inviting a 'fresh set of eyes' from other institutions to look at operations, review successes and identify gaps can be highly informative. This review process was begun with the academic support of Information Technology; in the Spring, 2010, the Controller's Office will be reviewed. Affleck-Graves noted that the review team was a well balanced team, from Purdue, Northwestern and Duke, all peer institutions with major administrative functions as well as academic functions, and thus a good match with Notre Dame.

The report has been distributed to members. The review team noted a number of positive factors that were gratifying to OIT: in particular the dedication of the staff was noted, and a number of core services were identified as strong, which validated the data collected in the ND Voice II survey conducted in October of 2008.

Some of the concerns identified by the report include an observation about the general university environment, an issue for Father Jenkins and other officers to address: namely, the review team observed a general institutional aversion to risk. The team believes this attitude will need to be adjusted for the university to accomplish its goal of becoming a major research university. Another macro factor identified is the policy approach of 'one size fits all' aversion to risk, examples that include applying a uniform legal review process to licensing agreements for all software acquisitions, from major packages to shrink wrapped software; this policy may impede the growth in a major research institution.

The report noted some concerns about internal OIT functions. Most of these issues will be tabled until the new CIO is in place. Among them, the team noted that the layers of management in OIT are perhaps unduly complex. Here too, there is a prevalent risk averse attitude, under which failure is unacceptable. The team noted the tendency for this approach to stymie innovation. In addition, the team recommended the establishment of clear access points into OIT, enabling customers to more easily identify the go-to people for OIT assistance. In all, Affleck-Graves said, the report made 18 recommendations. He noted the validity of most, and said all were worth considering, while it is likely that not all will be executed. Many of the recommendations were previously identified in OIT's strategic plan. Affleck-Graves said that the interim CIO, in conjunction with OIT and UCAT, will need to identify which, if any, of these recommendations to address prior to the installation of the new CIO. He invited members to review the report's recommendation and to share their thoughts with him and Sejdinaj on this issue.

Affleck-Graves invited questions from members. Prof. Lance Askildson asked Affleck-Graves to give his thoughts on the recommendations specific to UCAT, given the context of today's meeting. Included among those recommendations, he noted, was the recommendation to

reconstitute UCAT. Askildson asked if Affleck-Graves could speak about the direction UCAT might be going.

Affleck-Graves said this was an important issue for discussion, one on which he invited members' views, whose experience with UCAT provides unique perspective on its role and functionality. He said that in considering the report's recommendation for a reconstituted UCAT, he would 'look to UCAT for advice.' Affleck-Graves said that his reading of the report linked this recommendation to several others, and he reviewed the connections. The report supports OIT's plan to move to a 'distributed support system,' meaning to decentralize the college level of technology support, while maintaining most of the infrastructure and the administrative computing services centrally. This plan still needs the feedback of other concerned units, of course. Affleck-Graves said that under such an arrangement, the role of UCAT would necessarily grow, as decentralization means that coordination becomes even more critical. UCAT could be charged with making some of the decisions that will be distributed through decentralization. The report recommends a more specific charter for UCAT and a stronger role, and Affleck-Graves said he would be comfortable with those changes. In addition, he noted that UCAT could have a role in other recommendations, such as when new technology is allowed to be implemented and in experimentation.

He said that the system needs to be more flexible and willing to experiment, although care must be taken not to allow one unit's experimentation to jeopardize other units. Achieving an acceptable balance is vital, and Affleck-Graves said UCAT could usefully adopt a more consultative role, and even one with a higher level of governance.

Prof. Rob Easley asked another question: he noted that the report indicated the potential for an increased role for the Provost. In light of the recommendation for decentralization at the institutional level, Easley asked for indications of the Provost's thoughts on this recommendation.

Affleck-Graves said that while he and the Provost had broadly discussed the report's recommendations, he could not speak for the Provost on this specific point. He noted that he and the Provost were both comfortable with the idea of decentralization. In terms of university structure, Affleck-Graves said that the CRC is an absolutely critical element under the Provost as is also the Office of Research, under the leadership of Bob Bernhard. While the Provost's specific role under a decentralized shift was not discussed, it is likely that the Provost would delegate much to Bob Bernhard.

As there were no further questions, Affleck-Graves thanked the members for their time and apologized again for not being present. He thanked them for their hard work and noted that he looks forward to working with them as partners in the CIO search as well as in evaluating and then implementing some of the recommendations in the Review report. He urged them to send their comments and questions directly to him or to John Sejdinaj.

Sejdinaj also affirmed that he would be happy to meet with any member to get feedback on the Review report or to discuss any aspect of the CIO search. He welcomes all advice, criticism, help and support. Sejdinaj complimented the OIT team for its assistance to him, as they all work together to do 'what's best for Notre Dame.'

4. Committee reports

Course Management Systems, Rob Easley, Chair
Prof. Easley reviewed the committee's decision to slow down the timetable on the process of identifying and testing course management systems. Blackboard has extended the projected end of life for the current system and additionally offered a very reasonable increase over the next couple of years, leading to this decision. In addition, the open source alternatives under consideration are undergoing major changes; Sakai, for instance, is developing version 3 which, it is hoped, will address some of the concerns ND has identified with version 2. Therefore, the slowed timetable is to run the selected parallel systems in the 2011-2012 academic year. Meanwhile the budget requests are being pushed through the proper channels.

The process is currently focused on developing a list of core needs. Since the aim is to distribute some services, identification of core needs, such as synchronization with the student registration database, grade book functionality, tasks such as online quizzing capability, and file space integration with transparency, should be a central part of the selection criteria for a new CMS. Another concern is the ease of integrating other services, to create a unified access point for students. To facilitate this goal, Paul Turner is conducting a survey of students' use of the CMS.

Prof. McDonald asked the status of setting up a file system outside of the CMS, such as the old 'Idrive,' which, McDonald noted, was easy for faculty to use.   Dewitt Latimer agreed it would be desirable to have two entry points for faculty, a direct file access and also CMS. Easley said this question of the file drive needs to be addressed as a parallel project to the selection of a new CMS.

Learning Spaces, Lance Askildson, Chair

Prof. Askildson said the committee is preparing the proposal for a technology-enhanced classroom space in the basement of DeBartolo Hall. Data collection, as suggested by UCAT, is the focus currently.

Software Acquisition and Distribution, Olaf Wiest, Chair
As Prof. Wiest was unable to attend, Peggy Rowland reported that the committee is currently reviewing a spreadsheet of software provided by OIT's Budget Administrator, Craig Fitch. The committee is working with the colleges on discipline-specific software, with the aim of transferring to the colleges the funding of discipline-specific software, which leaves core software funding to be provided centrally. In addition, the committee is reviewing current licenses of software. These tasks are pressing, as the OIT continues to be significantly over budget on the costs of software.

CRC Faculty Advisory Committee, Mark Stadtherr, Chair

Prof. Stadtherr reported that of the variety of topics under discussion on the Council, the highest priority is the development of a resource allocation policy for computing resources. The discussion began in the last semester; currently the Council is gathering data and expects to

move forward at the next committee meeting. This is a pressing issue for CRC as currently usage is on a first come-first served basis, which cannot be sustained.

Jarek Nabrzyski gave a brief report of CRC activity: he reminded about the Notre Dame Cyber infrastructure Days event in late April. The CRC wants to outreach to faculty and students from all the colleges. Talks and presentations at this conference will cover new applications for high-performance computing, including petascale algorithms, tools and applications, high-speed optical networks, distributed data management and sharing, and new software programs for biomedical, science and humanities research.

Nabrzyski updated the committee on CRC's recent system upgrade. New high throughput system with 4440 nodes has been installed in December, and another 1440 nodes are being installed in January. Finally, CRC has recently extended a job offer to a User Support Manager. The candidate comes from a Swiss Supercomputing Center and is a widely known expert in this area. User support should expand in quality and service.

5. Student updates:

Undergraduate students—Walker Anderson

Anderson reported on several ongoing projects.
1. Students are enthusiastically looking forward to the completed LaFortune computing cluster and appreciate the time OIT invested with the students in the design.

2. Anderson will bring forward two resolutions from the Student Senate. The first is to thank Gordon Wishon for his work with students. Anderson said 'his support made a lot of our initiatives possible and he heard our concerns.' The second resolution is a request for a color printer in the new LaFortune computing cluster. Rowland asked if students would be willing to pay the extra costs of color printing; Anderson thought they would. Rowland indicated that her team will work through the vetting and budgeting process with Anderson on this request.

3. Anderson said his committee is working to draw up a list of characteristics for a student-friendly CIO. He is working with Jay Steed, who soliciting input from the students during the search process.

4. Undergraduate students are expressing a need for a cluster in Jordan Hall. Between classes, faculty and students are without access to public computing. Last year Rowland and her team met with Associate Dean Rich Taylor from the College of Science regarding the installation of 6-8 standing height computer kiosks, similar to those in DeBartolo, for the 1st and 3rd floor hallways in Jordan Hall. One need is for standing high computers, such as exist in DeBartolo Classroom Hall, which enables a 'quick-hit' by students and faculty to check email etc. Students are also expressing need for a sit-down desk type computer station, which provides not simply a work station, but access to science lectures, etc. Anderson and Bensman agreed that further data is needed to clarify the perceived needs.   Rowland noted that there is a lot of computing equipment in Jordan Hall which might be made better use of.

Ed Bensman mentioned that faculty are pleased with the mobile computing devices in use at Stinson-Remick. Rowland and Bensman will work on a joint proposal for Jordan.

5. Student government is about to roll out 'RentND,' which is a tool that gathers off-campus housing evaluations. This idea was student-driven, and originally developed as a student project in a database class.

6. The student committee website is also undergoing a complete overhaul.

7. iTunesU is also still in progress, with the support of Paul Turner's team.

8. Harold Pace also noted that the Registrar is working on a centralized syllabus access process, something students have requested. Currently, syllabi posted on Concourse can be accessed by students during the registration process via a link on the Class Search page. While this tool is limited primarily to courses that are ongoing and that have stable syllabi which change infrequently, yet a core of courses should soon be accessible for students during registration.

Graduate students—Nathaniel Hollingsworth
The graduate student union website is being migrated from a server administrated by the students to a confluence wiki maintained by OIT. The main advantage of this move is that service will be provided by OIT. The University must give permission for unauthorized access, however, before finalizing the move.

6. OIT Updates
 a. Status on recent OIT cluster initiatives—Peggy Rowland
Rowland reported that the dismantling of the Business School computing cluster was successfully managed during the holiday break. The renovation of the LaFortune cluster is moving forward; furniture is scheduled for delivery around February 15, 2010. Students expressed need to have the cluster open as quickly as possible.

She mentioned that her classroom team is working on replacing the original wood benches in the DeBartolo hallways with more socially inviting furniture by way of the Academic Space Management's survey request process; the change made last year on the 2nd floor in DeBartolo has been very popular with faculty and students. If approved, the new furniture would be funded by Academic Space Management.

In addition, Rowland reported that in the latest Academic Spaces survey, a proposal was submitted by the Registrar's Office, after consultation with OIT, to add technology to the Registrar-controlled classrooms that currently do not have it. The data will be passed onto members as it is compiled.

208 Xerox printers are being replaced on campus over the next two weeks. The brand new equipment is a pleasure to use, but the quickness of the move involves significant logistics. This may impact the availability of support staff, who are assisting in the transition.

Rowland invited Turner to report on the annual Educause Educational Learning Initiative (ELI) conference from which he recently returned. Turner said ND Academic Technologies staff

partnered on a presentation, with staff and faculty from Ohio State and Ball State, on Microsoft Surface technology. The presentation was 'a big hit' with the attendees, who numbered about 500. Turner noted that he has challenged his team to continue to work to get ND included among the institutions featured at the annual Educause ELI conference for their cutting edge learning technology work.

It is at this annual conference that the Horizon Report is released. Turner invited members to engage with senior leadership and faculty on campus around this Report, which presents emerging and cutting edge technologies which have potential impact in the next 1-5 years on teaching, learning and creative inquiry in higher education. On Feb. 11, OIT Academic Technologies, in conjunction with the Kaneb Center, will host a lunch meeting to campus faculty to converse about the featured technologies in the 2010 Horizon Report. This meeting, first held in February 2009, was very successful last year. Turner noted the quality and depth of research behind this annual report is excellent, and most universities value the insights it provides those involved in short and long range academic technology planning. In response to a request, he offered as an upcoming agenda item a review of the 2010 Report's highlights for members, similar to one provided last year. He said the report would be distributed to members electronically for their review – and an invitation extended to the February 11 lunch meeting.

b. Anonymous AFS access from off campus—Dewitt Latimer
Dewitt Latimer said the conversation concerning the Identity Management Project, of which the question of anonymous AFS access is part, is driven with some urgency, in light of the recent security breach. UCAT is asked to function as a sounding board today on this question of access. As configured currently, AFS is meant to be an open type of architecture; it was originally conceived, in the 1980s, as a method of worldwide collaboration among schools. It worked successfully through the 80s, 90s and early 2000s. However, in the current environment, it is necessary to review the notion of someone, without university credentials or authorized access to be able to gain share files remotely.

As a temporary measure, anonymous access was halted in Fall, 2009, after discussion with relevant parties on campus. The impact for individuals, who are primarily faculty involved in research, is that faculty would have to sponsor outside colleagues who would like to access data in the faculty's cell. This sponsorship involves a password to enable authenticated access rather than the previous anonymous status. The goal would be to cause the least amount of disruption to research collaboration; yet the urgency to close security holes is the moving factor here. Task force member Patrick Flynn said he is in favor of authenticated access, and asked if there is an equivalent peer arrangement with other schools, where credentials authenticated at one school can be transfer to ND. Latimer noted that there are multiple ways to effect authentication; which process would be ideal for ND can be explored. An advantage in ND's structure is that authenticated access can be targeted to the AFS research cell without involving the university cell. A streamlined approach is the goal.

Nabryzski asked if federated access is a possibility. Noting that federated access is not currently available, Latimer said that it is possible but not deliverable in the next couple of months. Mark Dehmlow noted that federation has implications for library materials and resources. Easley asked about benchmarking solutions at other institutions, and Latimer said that most institutions are also struggling with this problem; ND has been a leader in voicing the need to modify the base AFS code to prevent this kind of access. He stressed that on-campus use will continue as

usual; this change will only affect off-campus users. The timeline will not be established until after the meeting of the steering committee next week; however, the change will occur sooner rather than later.

c. Web re-architecture—Dewitt Latimer

Latimer reported on the re-architecture of the web being discussed on campus. He noted that in its earliest conceptions, it was reasonable for every user to have a separate web page; indeed, the more the better. This is no longer serving the University well as an institution. Both intentionally and unintentionally publishing data through the web is too easy. It is necessary for the university to rethink the meaning of web publishing, considering who has the right to do so and what are the impacts of institutional publishing. Currently the focus is on administrative groups which can or might publish. The new policy will be the 'click to publish' model, foregoing the old 'drag and drop' model, which too easily facilitated accidental publication.

Many different stakeholders are affected by this policy, and the focus is now on getting them migrated to the new model a quickly as possible. Latimer called on UCAT members to join in the discussion of what it means to publish on campus. Dehmlow asked if this review is primarily focused on www.nd.edu.   Yes, said Latimer, noting that the first area of campus activity to get attention are high risk areas. In answer to a question, he said the goal is not to hinder business which has been long ongoing, but to support the standards and to provide a tool to user to do so. Not all tools will be supported however. While the goal is not to shut off access, this approach is aimed at trying to prevent the accidental and invisible dropping of files onto the internet.

Easley spoke about the barriers which have been in place that prevented students learning to construct webpages from adding dynamics; these barriers existed because the web was insufficiently secure. He asked if these barriers will come down in the new, more secure environment. Latimer said the emphasis will be a renewed understanding of personal responsibility. The tools should be run frequently as a regular check on activity, and the responsibility to do this will be pushed out to the edges, since it is impossible for any central group to oversee the tens of millions of files produced on campus.

Dehmlow noted that the changes have implications around the library domain, which supports their own server and provides its own architecture. He said that while the library deals in some sensitive data, it manages it well. However, what would be the impact of this new approach on programming and tool building for students? Latimer said that OIT will set the bar for acceptable standards and simply require that users do not 'impede the base line.' It will be up to units to maintain accountability as each chooses.

Easley asked for an evaluation of the current data steward structure. Craig Brummell said that there is a review of accountability and responsibility, but not a reconstituting of the whole data steward committee. A parallel task is to evaluate various options for extended and improved user education: how can we help users understand that data has to be used with conscious care. Sejdinaj added that in the last two weeks, Human Resources, involved in the recent security incident, has taken specific action to change and improve the processes surrounding data use. Latimer also noted that in the two colleges that suffered security breaches, response has been serious and thorough. Pace said that a reality is that human error or ignorance cannot be 100% eliminated. He briefed members on an occurrence last week in which data, which had been

properly marked with warnings and notices and properly conveyed to users, was leaked out into the cloud. If the user does not know to look for the lines and warnings, then they cannot prevent improper usage. Members agreed the task is complex, one of ongoing education and oversight.

Flynn asked for members to be briefed on the Identity Management Project at a later meeting.

7. New Business: Askildson requested as an upcoming agenda item a discussion of the short and long term role of UCAT, given the advent of a new CIO for OIT. He recommended as part of that discussion further review of the recommendations for UCAT made by the Peer Review Committee.

Kevin Barry requested the list of search committee members be sent to all UCAT members; Peggy Rowland will take care of this.

As time had expired, the meeting was unanimously adjourned.