

CAMPUS IT INITIATIVES

IT Guidance Committee Recommendations. At UC Davis, Vice Provost Peter M. Siegel and University Librarian Marilyn Sharrow have teamed up to coordinate campus input for the six areas the ITGC has identified where strategic planning and/or coordinated action promise to benefit campuses and/or the system, including with regard to economies, efficiencies, and innovation. Those areas are: IT in student experience, instructional technology, stewardship of digital assets, high performance research computing, advanced networking services, and common IT architecture. Feedback will be shared with Office of the President in March. (www.universityofcalifornia.edu/itgc)

Administrative Computing Policy. In early December, the Office of the Vice Provost-IET initiated a broad consultative process to collect feedback from the campus community about a new administrative computing draft policy. The policy defines clear oversight for review and coordination of campus administrative systems that meet one or more specified criteria. The policy also outlines a process by which the project sponsor and the Vice Provost-IET will jointly determine whether a proposal for a new system (or a significant modification of an existing system) warrants further discussion. By ensuring that existing and proposed administrative IT investments benefit from timely review and evaluation, the policy is expected to promote a long-term integrated systems approach for the campus.

Campus Cyberinfrastructure Workshop. In early April, UC Davis will host a two-day cyberinfrastructure workshop, an event co-sponsored by IET and Office of Research. The program will kick start a dialogue between UC Davis researchers, IET, Office of Research, Office of the President and cyberinfrastructure service providers (e.g., Open Source Grid, TeraGrid, Internet2, CENIC). The event will be the first in a series of steps to identify and address researchers' cyberinfrastructure needs.

Banner 7. Banner was upgraded to the new Web-based Banner 7 version in November. Over Veterans Day weekend, the technical team worked with representatives from each of the core offices—Student Affairs Office, Office of the University Registrar, Financial Aid Office, Undergraduate Admissions, Office of Graduate Studies, and Student Accounting. In preparation for the upgrade, users and technical support staff received various communications, and training sessions were available. Because upgrading such a highly customized system is complex, the process for implementing the change began several years ago and required extensive coordination. (sis.ucdavis.edu)

Electronic Research Administration. The implementation of the “proposal development” phase of the Electronic Research Administration (eRA) system, which will provide for system-to-system submissions of federal grants, was due to start in November but has been delayed two months for further evaluation. Recent changes with grants.gov, and delays in creating a system-to-system process for all federal granting agencies, have prompted a re-evaluation of the project's cost/benefit ratio. The pause also creates an opportunity to evaluate alternative solutions, such as Kualii. The project's first phase, “proposal tracking,” replaced the campus Contracts and Grants database maintained by the Sponsored Programs Office. Work proceeds on developing a decision-support interface to the application, which will give departments simpler access to information about proposals both before and after grants are awarded. This project is sponsored by the Office of Research.

ERS. In February, the Effort Reporting System (ERS) will replace the Personnel Activity Report (PAR) system of reporting employee effort on federally funded projects. ERS, a Web-based tool developed by the Office of the President and implemented at UC Davis by Accounting & Financial Services, will help the campus keep up with new regulations on reporting requirements—and its streamlined processes will cut the time, and cost surrounding the paper-based PAR. (accounting.ucdavis.edu/projects/ERS/)

Faculty Merit and Promotion. Led by Academic Personnel, the project team has been piloting an online system based on MyInfoVault, the application that creates faculty digital portfolios in support of academic merit and promotion actions. The team is gathering requirements for functions and features that faculty and administrators need in the application, and development work has begun on two of the eight phases of the ‘refactoring’. As of January, 2,700 accounts had been established and 116 departments were participating. (*myinfovault.ucdavis.edu*)

GradSMAART. The Office of Graduate Studies has launched an initiative, called GradSMAART, to install three major systems to improve the management of graduate student admissions, evaluation, and tracking. IET is providing technical support. The components will include an online application process (Embark ASP service); a custom-developed admission review and evaluation system (GSOAR or GARP); a data mart for tracking students, and an alumni tracking database (this might become part of the data mart). The near-term goal is to implement Embark, plus GSOAR or GARP, by the start of the 2007-08 academic year. The data mart will be developed later. The campus signed an agreement with Princeton Review, which owns Embark, right after the winter holidays, and is evaluating GSOAR and GARP.

Kuali. Last July, UC Davis joined UC Santa Barbara, UC Irvine, Indiana, Arizona, Cornell, and other universities in the development of Kuali, an expanded version of Indiana University’s Financial Information System (FIS). At Davis, Kuali will replace DaFIS – both systems share the same structure, and Kuali offers a transition to a system that is architecturally maintainable. As a community source project, Kuali gives UC Davis the opportunity to collaborate with other campuses, both during the development phase and after the system is implemented. The Accounting & Financial Services Division is now examining the differences between DaFIS and Kuali. In addition, staff from UCD, UCI and UCSB are providing development services to the Kuali project. (*accounting.ucdavis.edu/projects/UCDKuali*)

MyTravel. A new, online system of reporting travel and entertainment expenses is on its way to official implementation at UC Davis. Sponsored by Accounting & Financial Services, the system will streamline approvals and capture receipts electronically. MyTravel was purchased from Concur Technologies following requests in 2003-2004 to improve the current paper-based travel and entertainment reporting system. Feedback from the various campus departments that joined the pilot in the last half of 2006 has been positive. (*travel.ucdavis.edu/mytravel/*)

“White Pages”. In January, IET officially opened the self-service online directory application to the campus. This application lets all faculty, staff and students update their information in the database that feeds the Web-based UC Davis People Search directory and the print UC Davis & UC Davis Health System Directory. The soft rollout in December followed several months of testing and training with people from the campus and the UC Davis medical center who review, approve and maintain directory listings for faculty and staff in their departments. These “approvers” will use special features of the application to help ensure that the information individuals submit is accurate. The White Pages application now functions as the integrated system of record for both online and printed employee directory listings. (*listings.ucdavis.edu*)

‘Frontiers’ TV/webcast. Last fall, IET partnered with University Communications to produce “Frontiers,” a new university television and webcast program that highlights the contributions that UC Davis faculty make to research, teaching and public service. Each program is 30 minutes long, features two interview segments, and is recorded in Wyatt Pavilion using five cameras and a mobile production truck. Frontiers began broadcasting on UCTV in January. (*frontiers.ucdavis.edu*)

TECHNOLOGY AND TEACHING

Sakai implementation. SmartSite (UC Davis’ instance of Sakai) attracted more than 2,000 new users during the fall quarter. As of November, it had registered 2,945 unique log-ins (+ 200% from July), 585 project sites (+27%), and 227 course sites (+81%). SmartSite also gained new features in the fall quarter -tools for podcasts, blogging, handling email, interfacing with iTunes, a discussion forum and SiteStats (a tool to collect data in real time by user, event or resource). The Gradebook and Quiz & Test tools

continued to improve, making them more suitable for large classes. SmartSite will replace the more limited set of course management tools in the MyUCDavis portal starting in 2007-08, followed by the retirement of the MyUCDavis course tools a year after that. (smartsite.ucdavis.edu)

Wireless printing. A pilot was conducted in the fall that allowed students to print remotely to printers in selected campus computer rooms. The pilot started October 30 with the ability to print to machines in two computer rooms, and then expanded during winter break to include three more rooms. The service was well-received and is being expanded. (wirelessprinting.ucdavis.edu)

Med School's new home. In December, UC Davis medical students gained a large new home, the Education Building and F. William Blaisdell, M.D. Medical Library. At more than 121,000 square feet, the building has become the center of activity and education for the School of Medicine. The building's classrooms share a versatile video communications network and help the school shift its instruction toward interactive learning done in small groups. IET advised the school on what A-V equipment to buy, helped choose the contractor who installed the complex system, and continues to act in a consulting and support capacity. (technews.ucdavis.edu/news2.cfm?id=1421)

Connect Pro and Elluminate Live. IET is wrapping up a set of pilot programs using Adobe Connect Pro (formerly Macromedia Breeze) and Elluminate Live. Testing will be conducted in January; it will complement anecdotal experience gleaned from participants in the pilot during the fall. A report on these synchronous presentation products is expected in late January.

NEW SOFTWARE

CDigix & music downloads. The number of DMCA notifications of illegal filesharing totaled 311 at UC Davis in 2005-06, more than double the previous year's total (130). And it continued to grow this past fall; a surge from mid-October has 2006-07 on track to shatter the previous record of 392 notices for 2002-03, despite the rollout in October of the music service Ctrax at no cost to registered students. Notifications for the last quarter of 2006 totaled 194, up from 61 a year earlier. UC Davis students are encouraged to remove peer-to-peer software from their computers and to instead use Ctrax to obtain and enjoy copyrighted content legally. Ctrax is free to registered students and available at a discount to UC Davis staff and faculty. (www.getlegal.ucdavis.edu/section4_Register.htm)

Sophos anti-virus. Thanks to a campus licensing agreement finalized in December, the Sophos anti-virus software is now available for free to all departments, faculty, staff and students for use on their home or university-owned computers. Sophos, selected through a formal competitive bid process, will help protect servers, desktops, laptops, and handheld devices for five years. (The agreement does not cover the UC Davis Health System, which uses anti-virus software from McAfee.) Sophos can be downloaded from the campus software Web site (my.ucdavis.edu/software) and will be available on the next release of the campus Internet Tools CD, due in the coming weeks.

ID theft prevention. A campus directive (06-116) released in late October outlined several steps that members of the campus community should take to protect personal information—and encouraged individuals to work with their technical support staff to prevent identity theft. In support of this goal, two security tools, Cornell Spider and PowerGREP, are now available. These tools, free to campus users, make it possible to search systems for files that contain personally identifiable information such as Social Security and credit card numbers. Spider runs on Windows, Macintosh and Linux. PowerGREP runs only on Windows, and a limited number of licenses are available. (my.ucdavis.edu/software)

Encryption. Two encryption products are now available under systemwide contracts: Pointsec (whole disk encryption) and Credent (folder encryption). UC Davis will subsidize Pointsec for personal computer licenses for individuals and departments that show they need this service. With input from campus constituents, the project team is finalizing deployment, training and support strategies. Campuswide communications to announce the availability of Pointsec for PC, and the process for obtaining encryption services, are expected to begin in early February. (security.ucdavis.edu/encryption.cfm)

Vista, Office 2007 and IE 7. IET formed a project team last fall to prepare for Microsoft's release of Vista to the general consumer market on January 30th. The team was asked to identify and test commonly-used applications and online services for compatibility with the three Microsoft software programs. In December, a campus KMS server was set up and tested. In January, a 10-station lab was made available to the campus community to test the compatibility of their local applications with Vista. The team also has been working closely with Office of the President's Technology Acquisition Support (TAS) group, as well as an ad hoc group of technical campus representatives, and Microsoft on a license management strategy for our campus. An informational Web site was launched on January 30th. The site features an overview of each software program, a compatibility matrix, FAQs, licensing and security information, etc. UC Davis does not advise an upgrade to Vista quite yet—but students, faculty, and staff who plan to buy a Windows-equipped computer are advised to buy a system designated "Vista Premium Ready." (*iet.ucdavis.edu/Microsoft*)

COMPUTING AND NETWORK SECURITY

Cybersafety program. IET continues to monitor and enhance cyber-safety at UC Davis. The UC Davis Cyber-Safety Oversight Committee is being established to periodically review program enhancements and reporting efforts. Also, IET is working with Internal Audit Services to develop an information technology auditor position. The auditor will report to Internal Audit Services and will periodically review and validate the annual cyber-safety progress reports submitted by colleges, schools and large administrative units. In addition, the IT Security Coordinator is meeting with senior technology staff from colleges, schools and large administrative units to review financial measures that could assist units which were previously precluded from complying with campus cyber-safety security standards. In February, the IT Security Coordinator and the Vice Provost-IET will provide campus administrators with a UC Davis information security status report. The discussion will include a brief overview of the UCLA security breach, highlights from the 2006 campus security reporting process and surveys, and an outline of 2007 initiatives to help units enhance compliance. (*security.ucdavis.edu/cybersafety.cfm*)

Endpoint testing. After integration issues arose during the 60-day testing of one endpoint security product, the campus started testing a second one: Cyber Gatekeeper from Info Express. Endpoint security solutions, also known as network admission control systems, can verify that a computer meets campus security policy. Non-compliant computers can be temporarily isolated to receive proper updates. The campus is investigating endpoint security tools to help prevent vulnerable systems from accessing the campus network and introducing new threats. The plan is to identify a product that integrates well with the campus architecture, and then to implement the tool—first on campus residential networks.

Identity management report. IET has enlisted the Burton Group to help define business and functional identity management requirements, and to recommend an identity management architecture, for UC Davis. In December, the identity management workgroup created to oversee Burton Group's efforts issued its recommendations for a multi-year, multi-phase identity management project. The report will be discussed with campus constituents in January and February. (*security.ucdavis.edu/id_mgmt.cfm*)

CAS sign-on. The new Web single sign-on service that IET piloted last June, called CAS (Central Authentication Service), was released in December. CAS provides a robust security architecture and various client modules, and is used by more than 50 universities and organizations worldwide. CAS will eventually replace DistAuth, the current Web single sign-on service for UC Davis. Meanwhile, CAS has been modified to accept valid DistAuth authentication information in place of its own authentication. The CAS team is expanding the cluster of CAS servers and implementing client modules for legacy Web servers. Later, CAS will expand to provide new methods of authentication for clients, such as automatic Windows single sign-on and RADIUS authentication. CAS was created by Yale University and has since become a JA-SIG project co-developed by Yale and Rutgers universities. (*middleware.ucdavis.edu*)

2007 security symposium. Planning continues for the third biennial UC Davis IT Security Symposium, scheduled for June 20-22. Meeting a major milestone, the planning team lined up Marcus Ranum as the keynote speaker for the event. (Ranum is the chief security officer for Tenable Network Security Inc. of

Columbia, Md.) A call for lecture and hands-on lab session proposals went out to technical professionals at every UC campus. (*itsecuritysymposium.ucdavis.edu*)

Security video contest. Educause is conducting its second annual Computer Security Awareness Video Contest seeking short videos developed by and for college students. To boost awareness of computer security issues on campus, IET is offering additional prizes—up to \$500—to UC Davis students who enter a particularly noteworthy video in the Educause competition. Entries are due March 15. (*security.ucdavis.edu/videocontest.cfm*)

EMAIL ENHANCEMENTS

Spam filtering measures. On November 29, after consultation with campus constituents, IET implemented new spam filtering measures to give users more control and flexibility with their spam filtering settings, and to reduce the amount of spam processed and stored by the campus email servers. Changes to the filtering service included: automatically rejecting high-scoring spam (SpamAssassin scores of 15 or higher); filtering low- and moderate-scoring spam to UCD-spam folders (scores of 5 to 14); reducing the spam folder storage time from four weeks to two; and eliminating quarantine folders, which previously stored high-scoring spam. (*email.ucdavis.edu/secure/spamfilter.php*)

UC Discussion of Gmail. Recent months have seen renewed interest, throughout the UC system, in the topic of outsourcing student email. To assist this important discussion, UC Davis held a systemwide meeting on the topic on January 24. Google presented its service, Gmail, and Arizona State University shared its experience converting its 65,000 students to Gmail. The discussion covered a broad range of topics, including technical details, service impacts, stakeholder perspectives, and a preliminary assessment of UC interest in the product. UC Davis plans to re-evaluate Microsoft's current offerings as a next step.

Cyrus back-end email architecture. During fall quarter, IET successfully tested Cyrus, a new back-end email architecture product. Cyrus was found to meet the technical specifications that had been outlined by a campus email architecture workgroup, including being able to integrate with the campus authentication system, operate with the new proxy service, integrate with other services such as SMTP, and manage a large volume of email. Cyrus is a highly scalable, open-source email system designed for use in enterprise environments using standards-based technologies. It was developed at Carnegie Mellon University and has been deployed at UC Berkeley, Stanford, Columbia, the University of Michigan, and others. Cyrus would replace the campus' existing UWash system. Deployment is expected during spring quarter.

Email proxy service. A major improvement to the UC Davis email system—the addition of a proxy service—was completed during fall quarter. The proxy service now lets administrators balance UC Davis' increasingly heavy email loads without users having to change any settings, and technical staff can simply use the setting “mail.ucdavis.edu” for all incoming POP/IMAP mail server settings. Except for some brief periods of downtime, moving the servers to the proxy service was invisible for most email users. One exception was for people using older versions of Eudora, which did not recognize the new proxy's security certificate (and didn't satisfy UC Davis' cyber-safety standards). Campus technical staff were notified to update their users' email software to newer, supported versions. (*email.ucdavis.edu/*)

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND NETWORKING

Indoor cellular coverage. UC Davis is improving cellular coverage by allowing cellular carriers to place cell sites on the main campus. Each carrier will have at least one new cell site on the main campus by the end of 2007. Campuswide indoor coverage on the other hand remains spotty. To address this concern, IET is assuming responsibility to manage and install indoor systems. A team is investigating indoor

antenna systems (to enhance the signal of all carriers), developing standards for indoor cellular coverage for new construction, and investigating funding models to install indoor antennas in existing buildings.

Voice over IP. UC Davis is researching the possibility of offering VoIP as a standard phone service to campus. The project team is investigating service requirements (e.g., enhanced 911 auto-location for emergency services, quality of service monitoring and control, phone number format transitions, and ADA compliance).

‘On demand/always on’ distribution of video broadcasts. Planning is under way to explore a comprehensive service to distribute video broadcasts to TV broadcast networks, venues on campus, and the UC Davis Medical Center. Broadcast venues would have either “on demand” or “always on” connections, depending on what they need. This service would support the campus’ growing need to educate, promote, compete and communicate through video broadcasts, both internally and globally.

For more technology news, see <http://technews.ucdavis.edu>