

IT Project Governance Committee Meeting  
February 19, 2004

Attendees:

R. Michael Beals	Area Dean
Peter Bennett	Director, Business and Administration-University Police
Deborah Bowles	Associate Provost Enrollment Management
Susan Dallas	Gartner Group
Rick Falk	Department Chair and Professor of Math
Bruce Fehn	Associate Treasurer
Marianne Gaunt	University Librarian
Bernice Ginder	University Director Admin. Information Systems & Planning
Colleen Gordon	Assistant Director, Administrative Computing Services
Don Gordon	Director, Administrative Computing Services
Donald Kibler	Gartner Group
Carolyn Knight-Cole	Associate Director, Business Affairs
Alex Kogan	Professor of Accounting and Information Systems
Marie Logue	Assoc Dean Student Life and Academic Policy (Co-Chair)
Ann Martin	Executive Director Business Affairs
Mike McKay	Executive Director for Computing Information Technology
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Joseph Percoco	Director, Administrative Computing Services
Gary Roth	Associate Provost
Sandy Russell	Associate Vice President for Human Resources (Co-Chair)
Leslie Small	Associate Dean of Academic/Student Affairs
Don Smith	Computer Science
Corinne Webb	Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management
Matt Weismantel	Univ. Director Campus Information Services
Dorothy Williams	RUCS Executive Administrator
Michael Zastrocky	Gartner Group

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Representatives from the Gartner Group provided a full-day workshop entitled “Portfolio Management and Project Prioritization”.

Prior to the full presentation, Joe Percoco provided an overview of ACS’ current structure, resources and workflow process. Some key points included:

- ACS applications development staff, comprised of approximately 40 people provides support to administrative applications. This includes application maintenance, minor and major enhancements, and development/implementation of new applications.
- The staff is currently divided into five ‘project teams’ that support specific application areas.
- The teams meet with their clients to review pending projects and prioritization of same.
- Some priorities are cyclical, University, state or federal mandates.
- Over the past six months, ACS is moving away from the ‘silo’ approach or designated staff for designated applications. This is challenging because of ‘cultural’ issues at the

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University. This committee will help ACS to move forward in this area.

- As we continue to move forward, we may need to develop new skills sets and position staff for this change.
- Some client areas have allocated IT staff within their own offices. This staff works in conjunction with ACS on projects.

Key Points from the Workshop:

- A key initiative of the committee is to identify a blend of activities that will utilize the resources while benefiting the University.
- There are two types of projects that you should include in the blend of activities:
  - Strategic
    - Are we currently doing any strategic projects?
    - Where do they or will they fit into the blend of activities?
    - Higher risk than tactical. It is very possible that only 6 out of 10 of your strategic projects will succeed.
  - Tactical
    - Lower risk. All tactical projects should succeed.
- Projects typically fall into a 'class'. Generally speaking Payroll and Financial projects at a University are a class 'C', however, student services projects are class 'A'. Gartner recommends that class "A" projects be evaluated against a single measurable criteria like ROI or dollars, so that a decision can be made on an "apples to apples" comparison.
- If departments are allowed to purchase departmental systems, it is important that the University provide them with standards so that the integration process is easier and it doesn't divert other IT resources.
- Gartner projects that the percentage of Universities, where IT drives the University, will increase over time. This is currently at 15% and projected to reach 30% in 2007.
- The role if IT is changing – it is no longer just about efficiencies!
- To evaluate a project, you need as much information as possible. The dialog within the committee and during client presentations of requests could help bring you the information and balance you need.
- When developing a process scoring is very important but you must also trust your "gut". Use scoring and guidelines, but balance them with experience.
- When looking at what other institutions use to 'rank their requests' be sure to only use them as a guide – not as a template. Our needs may differ from other schools.

Prior to lunch break, the committee was split into for working groups. The groups were asked to develop a process, identify criteria and list challenges and risks.

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The results of the four groups were very similar. They were:

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**Group 1:**

***Criteria:***

- Mission critical needs definition (anything that was important for the University to do the business of research/teaching, learning/community service)
- Cost/benefit return on investment (not just dollars but also university reputation)
- Project life cycle
- Impact on ongoing support (shadow systems?)
- Faculty recruitment/retention
- Student recruitment/retention
- Federal and state mandate
- Breadth of impact across university
- Readiness of university for change
- Technical alignment for integration
- External impact on project (budget, emergencies, etc.)
- Project life expectancy
- Emerging technology

***Process:***

- High level strategic planning committee (higher than IT)
- Process that involves faculty/students as well as administrators
- Sub-committees that represent functional areas across the university
  - limit to set priorities to their areas to submit tactical means to accomplish some (people/budget?)
- Process needs to be transparent (around accessibility and how decisions are made) to ensure buy-in
- Sunset review for evaluation

***Obstacles:***

- Buy-in for the process
- Definition of what is administrative (academic/admin boundaries aren't clear)
- Relationships between projects chosen and infrastructure to support them (lack of infrastructure)
- Perceived lack of context for a project (alignment?)
- Campus politics (e.g. what should be a university-wide app vs. what is not in the priority setting)
- Campus benefits vs. University-wide benefits may not be well-defined or may be ignored
- Lack of leadership/vision to support some university-wide initiatives
- Lack of understanding of what is achievable (expectations?)
- Track record of execution
- Project scope creep

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**Group 2:**

***Criteria:***

- Service to the university community/value/impact
  - Bang for the buck, magnitude of involvement, service improvement (Student/Faculty/Staff), enhanced decision support
- Risk
  - Leads to reduction of risk, amount of risk for project success, integration points, ability of university to adapt to change, previous experience with type of request
- In-line with strategic goals of university
  - Competitive advantage, University-wide vs. departmental, increased academic responsibility/student outcomes, enhanced tech position of university, central vs. distributed
- Mandate
  - Statutory requirements, IT standards compliance
- Feasibility – resource availability, funding availability
- Cost/benefit – efficiency, productivity, financial benefits, cost reduction, ROI, related policy issues, extension vs. duplication, business process improvement/need
- Operational need

***Process:***

- Sub-committees (business systems, student info systems, academic support, cross systems e.g. portals) Note: better understanding of stove-pipe apps may lead to better decisions for consolidation merging requirements into university-wide decision monitoring of projects

***Obstacles:***

- Stove-pipe mentality
- Lack of leadership to BPR
- Scope creep
- Marketing the process
- Leadership and sponsorship
- Funding
- Marketing the process

**Group 3:**

***Criteria:***

- Number of people impacted
- Constituency (faculty/staff/students/others)
- Builds on existing systems reduces/eliminates redundancy
- What could be replaced?
- Scope of project and how it will integrate
- Risk assessment
- Level of commitment
- Does the project meet mission
- Quantified benefits
- Outcomes assessment plan
- Potential maintenance plan

***Process:***

- Features/concerns
  - Accessibility of process, transparency of process (on-line form?)
- Timeline, establish deadlines, communications strategy
- Committee needs to know when a mandate comes down and impact on IT resources and prioritization process
- Mandates need to be defined beyond executive leadership desires
- What is continuing maintenance vs. implementation
- What is strategic vs. tactical
- Is the process an on-going rolling process or is it an annual process that people plan towards or both?
- Should encourage forethought not just reactive

***Obstacles:***

- Stove-pipe
- Unwieldy processes
- Shadow systems
- Poor communications (User/IT?)
- Coordination of central vs. local resources
- Not understanding/defining what types of projects come to committee

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**Group 4:**

***Criteria:***

- Major business benefit
- Mandates
- Implementation risk
- Reusability
- Enterprise-wide impact
- Cost/benefit analysis
- Improved customer service
- Reengineering business processes
- Active project sponsorship
- Supports academic mission

***Process:***

3-4 sub committees that will bring a designated number of projects to the ITPGC committee for review. The client/requestor will do a presentation for the committee so that viewpoints from other areas can be shared. Cross representation in these smaller groups will be required to avoid silos. Project monitoring will also have to be put in place.

***Obstacles:***

- Scope of committee responsibility
- Murkiness of water between academic/admin
- Lack of coordination
- Stove-pipe mentality
- Business process re-engineering
- History of institution
- Reducing current maintenance requirements
- Who owns data

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Next Steps and closing points:

- The committee will meet to finalize a process and criteria. Throughout this discussion the risks will also be weighed and reviewed.
- Gartner recommends including some projects for emerging technology that may not rank high based on criteria or points, but are very important. You need this 'hook'.
- The committee is concerned that any criteria measuring \$\$ is risky – because this information is hard to identify and is very uncertain.
- Gartner said it is important to remember that IT is not responsible for delivering the benefits of the project – the requestor/clients are.
- Gartner suggests different “hurdle rates” for strategic vs. tactical projects.
- The committee needs a working definition of ‘mandates’.
- Don’t think in terms of ‘academic’ vs. ‘administrative’ – think Enterprise or University-wide.
- If sub-committees are establish – consider the number of people involved – sometimes larger committees slow down a process because of availability of individuals, etc.
- Three things Susan Dallas recommends:
  - What are the principle roles of IT? They should be defined and documented.
  - Management approval, support and buy-in are required. The buck stops here.
  - Think more of process structures so that decisions can be made easy. That is:
    - Limit number of people involved so you can gain a speedy consensus
    - Have cross functional representation in your sub-committees to avoid ‘silos’
    - Organize your groups based on macro business processes
    - Put a ceiling on how much or what your sub-committees can approve.
    - Access your process after 6-9 months and ensure it is working. If not, review what is not working and how it can be fixed.
- Speak to someone at Indian University to get additional information on what they do.