



IT Retreat

April 30, 2008

Session Summary Notes

Background

IT Retreat Background and Goals

This facilitated retreat was conducted at the request by Chancellor Sung-Mo "Steve" Kang. It was designed to allow an opportunity for campus leaders to reflect on a strategy and desired future for Information Technology (IT) at UC Merced.

Information Technology is a key enabler of the campus mission. As one participant remarked "IT should become the invisible engine that enables success in teaching, research and service."

The goals of the retreat were:

1. Establish a set of principles that inform the definition and development of campus-wide IT services.
2. Align these IT principles with campus goals.
3. Recommend follow-up activities and processes to put these IT principles into action.

Since Information Technology is a pervasive and strategic tool for all organizations at UC Merced, the retreat focused on the value and leverage the university can gain with the use of information technology – irrespective of how it may be delivered or supported by specific organizations.

Retreat Participants

Chancellor Kang opened the retreat and provided his thought on for the importance of IT for the success of the campus and the need for the retreat. The retreat participants, listed below, were selected to provide broad representation of the campus community:

- Monir Ahmed, Assistant Vice Chancellor, Business & Financial Services
- Donald Barclay, Deputy University Librarian
- Kevin Browne, Assistant Vice Chancellor of Enrollment Management
- Alberto Cerpa, Assistant Professor, School of Engineering
- John Elliot, Senior Engineer Facilities Management
- German Gavilan, Assistant Dean, School of Engineering
- Jim Genes, Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor of Administration
- Evan Heit, Professor, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts
- Catherine Fredriks, Web Editor, University Relations.
- Stefani Martinez, Alumni Coordinator

- Nancy Ochsner, Director Institutional Planning and Analysis
- Michael Sprague, Assistant Professor, School of Natural Sciences
- Samuel Traina, Acting Dean of Graduate Studies & Vice Chancellor for Research
- Michael Truong, Faculty Development Coordinator, Center for Research in Teaching and Excellence
- Shashi Panchal, Undergraduate Representative
- Henry Pai, Graduate Representative
- Christopher Volkerts, Manager, Communications and Information Technology Planning
- Faust Gorham, Chief Information Technology Architect - Information Technology
- Richard Kogut, Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Information Officer

This document was prepared by the retreat facilitator: Mel Barracliffe of Barracliffe Consulting, Inc.

IT Customer Vision Development

The group began by discussing what truly great IT capabilities for the campus might look like in 5 years time. This was a vigorous and engaging discussion. The group's thoughts are captured below as a set of IT Vision Statements:

- IT organization is open to my new ideas and willing to explore them.
- There has to be flexibility and agility in the systems infrastructure.
- IT needs to foster and allow for the creativity of its users (IT is about a mindset as well as technology).
- In the future we need to reduce our impulse to always say "What are the other UCs doing?" (we must innovate and lead too)
- We will tie selected research activities of the university to IT innovation (at present we don't take advantage of our own research to innovate institutional IT).
- Provide users with the option of a secure IT environment ("sandbox")
- Enable our students and faculty to drive content creation and disseminate information without roadblocks
- IT Services should be provided from the user perspective
- Create an opportunity to incubate IT/Process improvement ideas in house
- We don't want an IT customer relationship ... we want a partnership!
- IT will empower our business processes
- Any information need, anytime, anywhere.
- Empower people with IT to do whatever they do
- Disseminate research across the institution and across the world
- Extend teaching, recruiting, research and collaboration

- IT should be proactive about researching user needs
- IT should have internal institutional knowledge to help solve problems
- IT should enable and connect our information, processes, and create true decision support capability for the campus
- IT will be a tool that doesn't present barriers to teaching and research
- Ease of use and simplicity of IT
- We want to use IT as an enabler of communities and social interaction

Enablers and Barriers

The participants were then asked to identify the environmental factors that they felt would prevent or enable the customer vision from being fully realized. These are summarized in the table below.

Enablers

- Breaking down historical assumptions about how we do things
- An enthusiastic and growing community on campus that is willing to partner with IT
- New Center for Teaching Excellence (Teaching technology)
- Leveraging UC wide IT – Federated technologies (The Library is a good example of this)
- Centralization of IT Services
- There are Federal grants available for IT in education that we can take advantage of
- Data warehouse
- The IT organization itself is an enabler (conducting the Listening Tour, being flexible, holding this retreat, etc.)
- Institutional knowledge is growing
- Governance (the larger picture)
- We need a strategic IT road map
- We are still forming our culture as a university – this gives us flexibility and openness to new ideas
- Our “Wizard of Oz” bureaucracy
- Our people have strong commitment
- IT has the power to execute these principles
- Knowledge of the resources that are available to us

Barriers

- Competition for resources and setting priorities for what needs to be done
- Communication – lack thereof
- Over centralization (e.g. of users being prevented from running windows update on their machines)

- Inertia – lag time for getting things done
- Silo ownership of institutional data (administrative culture)
- Conservatism – too many rules
- Not enough resources
- Governance
- We've been busy starting up a campus for the last 3 years
- Federal and state regulations constrain us (or we think so – we have incomplete understanding so we don't try)
- Our campus does not have a culture of sharing
- People have a strong commitment for security
- We created our systems separately as we grew
- Our students have virtually no opportunity for an on-line presence
- IT only supports instructional computing not research – we need to bridge this

IT Principles

IT principles are high level statements about how IT will be used in the organization to create value. They are clearly articulated choices or statements of direction that the organization has chosen from viable alternatives. IT principles provide a foundation for effective IT governance by providing boundaries for decision makers defining the scope of IT Governance mechanisms and creating a shared understanding and expectations on the role of IT (Source Gartner Group).

The group created the following set of IT Principles to guide IT development at UC Merced:

1. IT will pursue cutting-edge solutions and empower users through education.
2. IT, with its guidance committee, will define and prioritize IT core services.
3. IT will routinely measure the success of its services and user satisfaction.
4. IT infrastructure will be energy efficient.
5. IT will provide a secure environment that does not impede the flow of information.
6. IT will be guided by the University community through an advisory community consisting of faculty, staff and students.
7. IT will provide transparent services, policies and principles.

8. IT will look outward to the campus community and internally to measure its effectiveness.
9. IT will be an active player, permeating campus to provide agile, responsive support to faculty, student and administrative needs.
10. IT is a core organization providing leadership, partnership and support.
11. All information shall be public by default, unless specifically restricted.
12. IT shall provide technical support – campus generates content,
13. Remote collaboration will be a priority project to facilitate research and operations.
14. IT shall develop support and update clearly defined technology standards and allow opt-outs.
15. Allow flexibility for incubator and production environments.
16. Data are institutional resources and access will be facilitated.
17. Offer as much self-service as possible without eliminating full service – and all processes will be transparent.
18. Provide multiple platforms for communications that are intuitive and accessible.
19. Align IT investments with campus goals.
20. Easy to comply IT standards.
21. Employ a “Costco” IT Service model of basic and executive IT services with regular migration of executive to basic services.

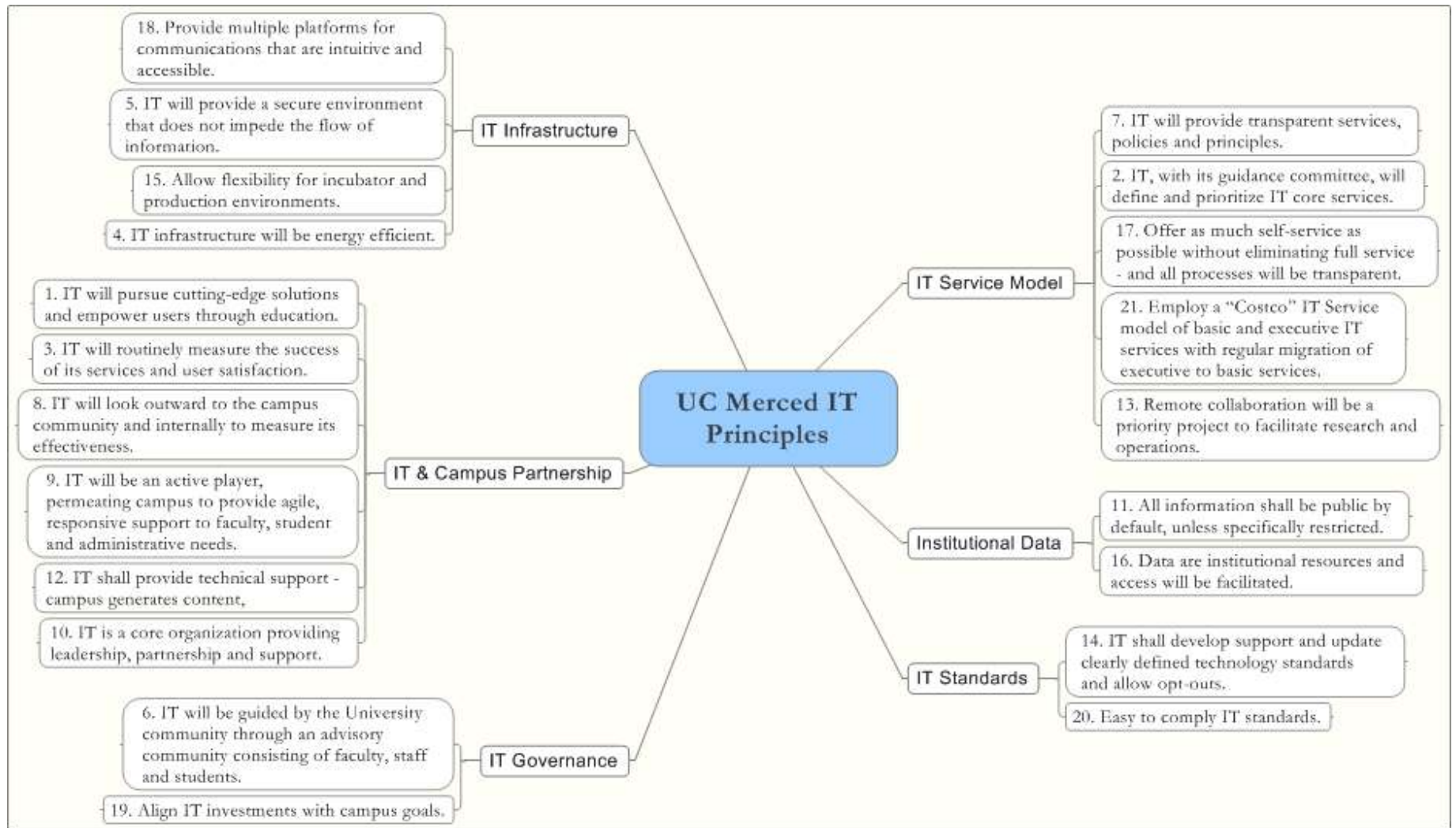


Figure 1 - UC Merced IT Principles

ACTION PLAN & FOLLOW ON NEEDS

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE
1. Create an IT funding model for basic core infrastructure for the campus.	Rich Kogut	
2. Set up “IT Governance Structure 1.0” and evolve from there.	Rich Kogut	
3. Define Core IT Services plus optional “a la carte services” (IT Service Catalog).	Rich Kogut	
4. Translate the Vision statements and principles created today in this IT Retreat into outcomes. This is a first pass that will need to be refined through iteration with others to obtain buy-in for execution.	Rich Kogut	
5. Map the IT Services against IT Service Providers across campus. At present there are multiple providers of IT services across campus (Central IT, Engineering, Business Finance Services, Library, Educational Partnership, Natural Sciences and pockets of IT in various groups). We need to examine this and identify what services can leveraged broadly and what services should be local.	Rich Kogut	
6. Obtain approval or bless from cabinet and the right groups on this vision and the IT principles.	Rich Kogut	
7. Align the IT Vision with campus goals. Note: the Strategic Academic Plan for the campus should be completed June 30.	Rich Kogut	
a. In the absence of a campus plan – we still have a plan! We should develop an Interim IT Plan based on the work of this retreat.	Rich Kogut	
b. We should meet again post June 30th to assess the impact of the campus academic plan on the IT strategy.	Rich Kogut	June 30, 2008
8. Rich Kogut to validate this direction with Chancellor Kang and cabinet.	Rich Kogut	

ACTION ITEM	RESPONSIBILITY	DUE DATE
9. Rich to discuss ongoing IT sponsorship and partnership needs with the Chancellor.	Rich Kogut	
10. Need a communication strategy around this effort so the campus knows what is happening.	Rich Kogut	
11. Complete Action plan responsibility assignments and due dates	Rich Kogut	