

DRAFT

Overview

This document provides input and recommendations from the Faculty Senate Information and Technology Committee (FSIT) to the Provost related to the role of the CIO in the institution, in anticipation of the University moving forward with a national search for a new CIO.

Process Used

The committee used a structured and facilitated approach to its discussion, with the intent of the process being to capture the broad range of opinions across the committee members, so that common themes and values could be identified. To help align the scope of the group's discussion, the committee was first asked to answer two questions: What does the UA currently do well in relation to information technology, and where is the UA most challenged in relation to information technology.¹ Following this discussion, the committee utilized a brain-storming process of writing down on sticky notes key characteristics, functions, and desires of the CIO function. Once all of the notes were finished, the group organized the data into like themes, which allowed the specific inputs to be discussed and clarified as appropriate.² The committee then followed-up via email to draft this document based on the developed data.

Key Points

As detailed in the appendices of this document, the committee developed a detailed set of data in its discussions. The six themes (*strategic thinking, operational excellence, faculty specific criteria, security, accountability, and collaboration and communication*) provide a level of insight into what the committee believes are areas of importance in consideration of the CIO's role within the institution.

In addition, the chair of the committee noted the following points of emphasis that emerged during the discussion:

- Consideration should be given to the scope of the portfolio of responsibility under the CIO. There is some feeling that the current breadth of responsibility may be beyond the ability of a singular position, though that may also depend on the structure of the organization under the CIO. Two specific scenarios were expressed: 1) Move research computing support responsibility to another part of the organization, perhaps ORD; 2) Separate the strategic and operation functions of the current position and have the CIO focus on one or the other.
- Likewise, the committee was in agreement that the institution's expectation of a CIO has evolved over time, and is likely not well understood (and therefore likely not agreed

¹ See Appendix A

² See Appendix B

upon) across the organization. As much as possible, there should be as much explicit definition of the UA's expectation of the role of the CIO within our institution, so that the person in this position can better understand their role and how to determine priorities of that role based on those expectations.

- There was also agreement that our next CIO have extensive academic experience and great familiarity and comfort with a higher ed academic environment.
- The role of the CIO should be highly visible on campus, and should be positioned for optimal communication with upper administration as well as the university's technology community. A focus on communication and collaboration is vital to the success of the position.
- As per the themes, strategic vision along with operational focus and effectiveness are seen by the committee as functions critical to the success of the position.

The committee hopes that this document and associated data will be useful to the Provost and the search committee as a valued set of input to consider as we look to hiring our new CIO.

On behalf of the Faculty Senate Information and Technology Committee,

Jeremy Frumkin, University Libraries, Chair

Appendix A

The committee scribed the following in relation to the two listed questions:

What does the UA do well in regards to information technology?

- D2L and support of Learning Management Systems
- Online course support
- Research computing facility
- A lot of good things that are often invisible because they just work
- 2-factor authentication
- IT security seems to be trending in a positive direction, at least attention to it
- Attention to data visualization (perhaps not yet realized)
- iPlant and research data services
- Instruction support, and innovation in support of instruction
- Administrative systems
- Collegiality of UA staff to “make it work”

Where is the UA most challenged in regards to information technology?

- Integrated student awareness (services available to students)
- Sponsored projects management (proposing, administrating)
- Communication on D2L and teaching related to IT integration
- Adoption of new services / technologies (support and adoption barriers)
- Learning analytics and privacy
- Overlap and lack of understanding in organizational structure and service / technology responsibility
- Complexity of faculty support and research support, including the coordination of support across units, as well as the understanding of what unit is responsible for elements of support (who runs what?)
- IT security
- Data networks, with an emphasis on research data networks
- Unified portal of available services
- Shadow IT
- Assessment and Metrics of success related to IT investment

Appendix B

The following are the specific characteristics, organized into identified themes, that the committee developed:

- **THEME: STRATEGIC THINKING**
 - Lead on new technology / innovations on campus
 - Strategic thinker
 - Innovation evangelist (internal)
 - Nimble in adopting new technologies
 - Risk taker in terms of innovations in technology
 - External proponent / advocate
 - Clearing house for trends / opportunities
 - Make the UA more competitive for students / grants / donations
 - Keep the UA competitive
 - Innovative progressive thinking
 - Resource for evaluation of technology (ROI)
- **THEME: OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE**
 - Oversight of all IT services on campus
 - Process efficiency (thru technology)
 - Can provide a focus and priorities
 - Good sense of business planning
 - Foster / develop a cohesive IT support community
 - Concrete goals to increase faculty productivity (research \$, scholarship and impact factor)
 - Effect seamless integration of all information services for university users
 - Focused on quality but also cost driven
 - Know how to leverage current technology assets and future technology trends
 - Provide learning technology ecosystem
 - Keep the lights on
- **THEME: FACULTY (specific to faculty needs)**
 - Develop and support robust research networks, including secure networks
 - Accessibility / visibility from faculty perspective
 - Understand the faculty role @ institution
 - More direct and ongoing faculty input
 - Matchmaking
- **THEME: SECURITY**
 - Provide for and maintain high quality secure computing environment for research, teaching, service
 - Security – especially research
- **THEME: ACCOUNTABILITY**
 - Accountability
 - Demonstrate accountability and openness
 - Is accountable
 - Metrics and assessment

- THEME: COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION
 - Proactive communications
 - Academic background
 - Enable communications across and among IT support
 - Collaboration with all colleges and departments
 - Someone who partners
 - Capable of creating collaborative environments
 - Transparency
 - Multi-dimensional leadership
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Students
 - Contracting

One additional item was brought up and discussed with some emphasis, but did not fit easily into any of the themes – the concept of having two positions, one being operationally focused while the other was more strategically focused. Another delineation that was proposed was that the research computing elements of the University be placed under another part of the organization (such as ORD), as research computing support has a particular importance of focus and uniqueness of requirements.

Appendix C

Additional feedback from committee members

Provided by email from a committee member:

It seems like CIO should be viewed much like a Dean's position in terms of attributes. As I see it, issues change (this year it's LMS and security, next year it will be cloud, or something else), so we shouldn't chase specifics, but focus on how they view their role contributing to the organization. Here's what I see:

- 1) Organizational vision
 - a. What are the top 3 ways in which they envision their organization will meet the needs of faculty in the next 1-5 years?
 - b. How will they set an internal agenda for their team to operate in a customer oriented, collaborative, collegial manner with the faculty?
 - c. Do they have the necessary expertise to define a technical agenda to support the needs of a research-oriented, land-grant university?
 - d. What functions do you see as being best provided centrally and what functions can be de-centralized?
- 2) Operational excellence
 - a. How would you recruit, motivate, and retain the right key personnel to execute the team's mission?
 - b. What approach would you take to organize the operational areas into functional areas that are effective?
 - c. How would you balance innovation and agility with operational stability (world-class business processes)?
 - d. How would you leverage faculty expertise in the management of the organization?
- 3) Communicating with key constituencies
 - a. How would you effectively represent the faculty's needs the external (ABOR, Legislature, etc.) and internal (budgeting, RCM units, etc.) funding stakeholders?
 - b. How would you facilitate faculty collaboration among the UofA and its partner (academic/private sector) partners?
 - c. How would you implement a management / governance style that is inherently collaborative and inclusive with faculty (TT/NTT)?
 - d. How would you position your organization to support the faculty's research mission?
 - e. How would you position your organization to support the faculty's instructional mission?
 - f. How would you position your organization to support the faculty's outreach mission?

- g. In a federated computing environment, how would you encourage key stakeholders to work collaboratively to achieve common institutional / cross-disciplinary research and instructional goals?