

PRATT Information Technology

To: Pratt Community
From: Joseph M. Hemway, VP of Information Technology & CIO
Date: May 22, 2008
Re: Technology Advisory Committee Summary – Spring 2008

This document serves as a summary of the Technology Advisory Committee's (TAC) activities during the Spring 2008 semester. The TAC was formed in early 2008 with a kick-off meeting that took place on January 29, 2008. Representatives from each academic and administrative area where represented in the membership. A total of 29 representatives were invited and 26 attended the first meeting. Five subcommittees were formed and each member of the TAC was asked to join the committee(s) which most interested them or related to their day-to-day work at Pratt.

Below are the details regarding the mission, charge and work of the TAC and its subcommittees during Spring 2008.

Mission of the TAC

To provide advice and recommendations to the Vice President of Information Technology & CIO in support of the Division of Information Technology's Strategic Plan.

To advise the Division of Information Technology regarding the development of IT initiatives and ongoing maintenance and enhancements of technology infrastructure, which are designed to deliver efficient and effective centralized information technology services to the multiple constituencies of Pratt Institute. To function as the entity of the Institute community that reviews, evaluates, and makes recommendations about information technology services issues to the Vice President of Information Technology & CIO in support of the Strategic Plan.

The specific elements of the TAC's mission include:

1. Identify strategic directions, capabilities, and objectives for campus IT support, including learning technologies.
2. Identify opportunities where IT can help achieve campus goals and recommend priorities.
3. Ensure a coordinated implementation of campus IT projects and initiatives.

Charge of the TAC

With representation across the Institute, the charge of the TAC will be to:

1. assist with guiding the development and maintenance of IT's long-term plan for services;
2. advise on the development and maintenance of an Institute-wide strategic plan for IT;
3. advise on the development of IT policies and procedures;
4. advise on the establishment of mechanisms to coordinate services between IT and operating units in order to meet campus needs;
5. identify and prioritize IT services needed by students, faculty, and staff; and,
6. advise on and assist with the dissemination of information to constituent users; and
7. advise on and assist with processes or mechanisms which offer convenient opportunities for constituent users to submit comments and recommendations.

Provided below is a summary of their function and activities of each TAC sub-committee.

Emerging Technology Initiatives

Chair: Charles Mattiello, Assistant Director of Technology Services

Co-chair: Michael Szivos, Visiting Assistant Professor, Graduate Architecture

The ETI committee is experimental in scope. They will develop ideas of collaboration within the Pratt community on ideas that revolve around technology. The Emerging Technology Initiatives (ETI) will serve as a "Funnel" for the Pratt community to "Dream Big."

This spring, the discussions revolved around finding ways to facilitate student and faculty convergence, a meeting place of individual specializations, interests and knowledge and a "think tank". In order to accomplish this, a collaborative location is needed to develop academic pursuits. The collaborative space can be either a physical and/or virtual space. The space should not be limiting with regard to the "idea" it can deliver. There is also a possibility for a corresponding virtual community space. The committee members will brainstorm for locations. Some ideas were somewhere on the quad, in the student lounge or in the Pie Shop. Similar spaces should be set up in Higgins Hall and in Pratt Manhattan. An event for publicity should be planned in order to raise awareness.

The committee also wants to facilitate an interaction between expertise and need by compiling a pool of graduate assistance for school-wide proposals. This will take the learning out of the classroom and into the professional realm. In addition, it could increase opportunities for research and/or broader creative activities to come up with innovative, creative solutions that are both interdisciplinary and Institution-wide.

Enterprise Systems

Chair: Patricia Ciavarelli, Manager of Systems Integration

Co-chair: Tuan Vu, Assistant Director, Residential Life

The purpose of this subcommittee is to continually improve the student information system and related databases for the maximum benefit to all departments. Additionally it shall work to foster a "write once, use many" approach to centralized data so that students and employees can benefit from the efficiencies of practices like pre-populated forms and paperless processes.

This committee focused on setting up a list of priorities for the group.

Pending Projects

There was concern that Pratt should **standardize the range of hardware and software choices** for administrative offices to simplify the purchasing process, ensure a high level of service and garner the best pricing.

The group felt strongly that there needed to be an **institute-wide solution for calendaring**. There was discussion that this software should provide vehicles for administrative staff to share calendars to ease scheduling. There was discussion that a large platform could also have "special" accounts like departmental calendars so that students, faculty, and staff could opt in to academic calendars, departmental calendars, admissions calendars, and events calendars. Ellery Matthews, Academic Computing, was invited to speak to the group in April regarding the products currently under consideration, their capabilities, and the intent of the implementation.

Develop a **scheme for training** that accommodates the needs of large groups of people during an implementation and also the needs of new hires and students over time. VP Hemway attended our March 20 meeting to discuss IT's plans in this area.

Paperless Efforts

Move to Paperless Forms and Processes

There are many processes on campus that are paper based and signature based. With the understanding that workflow redesign will be a part of any move from paper to automatic process from or paper to web-based form, items have been identified as processes that are cumbersome, slow and paper-based that most on the committee would prefer to automate in some way.

Document Imaging

While moving to paperless processes is the priority, once the processes are paperless, older paper should be archived using an institute-wide document imaging solution. This is a broad impact item that will affect at least Registrar, Purchasing, HR, AR, faculty evaluations.

Electronic Communication Lists

Establish method for communicating information by email (ex. Benefits, orientation) to targeted groups of Pratt's community.

Policy Efforts

It is necessary to create and enact a policy of coordination of new IT roll outs with the academic/administrative calendars and the IT calendar. There have been some roll outs that have coincided with the start of a new processing period which is confusing for faculty and staff and their confusion and frustration is transmitted to students. It is important to note that some processes are used once or twice a year and do not become second nature, so any changes are potentially more unsettling to operations.

We should publish the access policies for online services and enact procedures that ensure unfettered access for appropriate individuals (MyPratt, Colleague, VPN, Course Change Form, etc). Additionally, we should publish (even internal only) non-secure portions of the Disaster Recovery plan (so people are aware that there is one) and augment the plan to include recommendations for departments and individuals in administrative offices. It is further recommended that we create a password change policy that enforces secure passwords and publish it.

Institutional Data & Research

Chair: David Corbino, Systems Administrator, Enterprise Systems

Co-chair: Vladimir Briller, Director of Strategic Planning & Institutional Research

Our purpose is to make recommendations regarding assets such as data warehouses and data marts for commonly needed reports and other institutional instruments. This sub-committee will work to develop standards for reporting and for agreed upon data reports.

Data Warehousing Reports

The group discussed what data should go into the warehouse. It was agreed to share ideas for the warehouse via the LMS forum or via email. The purpose that the warehouse should have and the types of reports members feel should be in the warehouse was of significance to the sub-committee

Data Entry Manual

Dave Corbino and HR met on April 4th to run through basic employee data entry processes. This effort was undertaken to discover workflow of information into colleague by HR. It also allowed us to identify

process of data entry and which fields we actually are using for information. This will lead into the creation of the central data dictionary for the Institute. (This can serve as a model for other areas as well.)

There are concerns about data entry in general at Pratt:

- data entry issues are key
- creation of templates to help maintain clean data entry
- members will look into posting simple examples of there data workflow to the LMS
- identify crucial reporting needs
- Informer reporting tool is not meeting needs
- reporting not an easy task at present

Creating a Central Data Dictionary for Pratt Institute should involve the following:

- o files needs to be translated into understandable names
- o perhaps will come about through creation of data mapping
- improve data dictionary
- Admissions data – batch uploaded utilizing ELF
- problem list of bad data can be created will entering through batch
- creation of data entry manuals, first step
- o HR will help to create the first prototype
- o will use sample data entry -> test account
- o will analyze HR workflow in the process, see which fields are actually being populated
- o uncover potential issues
- security concerns for availability of data

Teaching and Learning Technology

Chair: Johel Brown-Grant

Co-Chair: Donna Moran, Chairperson, Department of Fine Arts

Our purpose is to engage in discussions that will shed light on strategies and resources to further integrate technology in the classroom and into the teaching practice. Discuss trends and innovations in educational technology and their application at Pratt. Discuss the impact of technology on teachers and students; and propose or recommend best practices and standards for technology integration according with the background knowledge and experience of teachers and learners.

The discussions this semester touched up several important topics. The first thing that can be done is to begin a needs assessment on the role of technology in teaching and learning. In terms of technology, a standardization process to acquire and install software programs for faculty members needs to be adopted. Along those lines, technology-enabled/SMART classroom standards need to be developed and distributed to all academic departments.

Other topics included the privacy concerns of students using the LMS (Learning Management System) and the room reservation system. Some students have issues with privacy and the LMS, more specifically with the “now online” feature of the LMS which shows if you are in the classroom and with the ability of other students to see your posts to the faculty members. These concerns should be addressed in a more formal way. The room reservation and request process for lab space should be reconfigured for greater efficiency and simplification.

The committee was able to coordinate Pratt’s first Teaching and Learning Brown bag lunch for faculty this Spring. The aim of the guest series is to host informal gatherings of faculty to learn from each other. The brown bag lunches will center on the use of technology in the classroom. The first presenter was Ellen Scott, a faculty member from the Foundation department. During the lunch, she discussed using Garage Band as a teaching tool.

Digital Communications and Webspace

Chair: Michael Gee, Director, Web Group

Co-Chair: Peter Patchen, Chair, Department of Digital Arts

[Note: Michael Gee is no longer with Pratt as of 4/15/2008. A new chair will be named after a replacement is hired.]

To provide feedback and direction for the creation, design and usability of both internal and external web assets, enabling Pratt Institute to maintain the best possible standing among peer institutions from the standpoints of design, style and function.

Procedural Items

- After preliminary discussions, the sub-committee will identify two or three key issues to focus on.
- The broad nature of the sub-committee and the large membership necessitates the use of the LMS to continue discussions and make the process productive.
- The members proposed a tentative date of Wednesday, March 5, 2:00 pm for the next meeting.

Topics of Discussion

- Identify the process for developing and extending online departmental presence for internal and external audiences
 - Areas within myPratt for departmental information
 - Using and extending the CMS for content on the main site and admissions site
 - Provide departments with logos, style guides, and templates to optimize the presentation of their content
 - Discover common requirements and features to create institutional resources
- Development of targeted, opt-in communication presented to the user and managed by the provider thru myPratt
- The need to develop a facility to document and archive student work

Procedural Items

- The sub-committee agreed the participation using the LMS needs to be improved
 - Members will post questions to the forums to elicit responses
 - Automatic email notifications will prompt members to participate
 - The online discourse will enhance and direct the meeting discussions
- The members proposed a tentative date of Wednesday, April 2, 1:30 pm for the next meeting

Topics of Discussion

- Peter introduced the idea of creating a framework to help the committee introduce, evaluate, and advance projects
- Enhancing online course descriptions was selected as a project to model the framework
 - Increase the courses displayed within a section to represent all courses offered by the department
 - Create search and browse features to present alternate methods to access information
- Other topics
 - Improving the people search function on the main site by modeling it on the myPratt directory search

- Exploring the search criteria on the main site to improve results

Tasks

- Peter will draft and distribute a proposal for course display for sub-committee review
- Lisle will find and share examples of other schools course search and online catalog
- Michael Gee will post the web space diagram and link to the myPratt roadmap presentation