

Committee on Priorities and Resources  
Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2021

In attendance: Professor Javier Corrales; Professor Andrew Dole; Professor Jill Miller, chair; Professor Monica Ringer; Library Administrative Assistant/Bookkeeper Susan Bradley; Interim Director of Human Resources Chris Casey, *ex officio*; Retail Dining Assistant Peter Charron Director of Financial Planning Thomas Dwyer, *ex officio*; Provost and Dean of the Faculty Catherine Epstein, *ex officio*; Chief Financial and Administrative Officer Kevin Weinman, *ex officio*; Allie Ho '24; Sydney Ireland '23; Steven Hegarty, recorder

Not in attendance: Jae Yun Ham '22, *ex officio*;

Guests: Chief Information Officer David Hamilton; Director of IT Analysis, Planning and Budget John Manly

The meeting came to order at 8:33 am.

Proceedings

1. David presented an overview of the IT division, services, and locations on campus.
  - a. IT has 45 employees divided into three main areas:
    - Academic support: Providing curricular and research support, accessibility services, and coordination with other curricular support units;
    - Operations: For enterprise applications and infrastructure; and
    - Services: The public face of IT, answering phones and IT tickets, as well as purchasing, configuring, and supporting computing hardware and software for faculty and staff. Also in this area are media services, and classroom and lab support.In addition, the CIO office oversees the strategic direction and budget for the division.
  - b. IT anticipates upcoming staffing changes due to the retirement program and other turnover.
  - c. Reviewed the scope of IT activity, from devices to help requests. Activity has increased between two and five times during the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - d. David shared the challenge of requesting additional funding for IT needs and growth. He also remarked that IT has come to touch everything at the college in a way not everyone has realized. The primary areas of expense are:
    - i. Computer replacement;
    - ii. ERP licensing (this currently does not include the Workday project);
    - iii. Cloud based software and services;
    - iv. Software licensing;
    - v. Five College Network and internet bandwidth costs;
    - vi. Hardware replacement and maintenance of the on-campus network;
    - vii. Hardware maintenance contracts; and
    - viii. Server and storage growth.

## 2. Questions from CPR

- a. Javier asked if there was a wish list or an area of IT that is underfunded? Three areas:
  - i. Investing in cybersecurity, through staffing and increased spending on software and training
  - ii. Accommodating flexible work arrangements at the college. For example, purchasing laptops instead of desktop computers.
  - iii. Finding and retaining staff, and the need to rethink the compensation structure for positions in IT.
- b. In response to questions about printers, desk phones, and other legacy systems, David indicated that IT is looking to gain efficiencies over time.
- c. Jill asked in reference to the 8 areas of spending, will the Workday costs go into the IT budget, and will it result in a savings. It is likely it will move to the IT budget. The Workday license is overall more expensive than Colleague. Savings are in data center needs and the efficiencies in how the college does business.
- d. Jill asked how decisions around software get made. The Faculty Computing Committee (FCC) brings suggestions. IT licenses software that is used broadly. Individual software is purchased with research funds or through departmental budgets.
- e. Javier asked if the FCC includes students and staff like CPR. Currently it is only faculty and staff. IT is looking for a more representative feedback loop, and a communication strategy for input from the larger community.
- f. Javier asked if AC is equipped to provide technology for shared offices, if we move into that model. To a certain degree, yes, and the planning process will be based on who is coming back in the fall. IT is securing laptops for the upcoming replacement cycle.  
Consideration of flexible workspaces is a campus conversation. Kevin added that we are in the early days of figuring out what work will look like at Amherst, post-pandemic.
- g. IT has been involved in planning for the new student center. Discussions have begun while the project is still in design phase.
- h. Sydney asked if Duo push notifications are here to stay, and if devices and locations can be remembered. Yes, it's here to stay because Amherst needs to be better at security. There are security models using heuristics, but they are outside AC's means.
- i. Jill noted that Duo push notifications are not universal across systems. AC Data, which holds secure data, for example, does not require two-factor authentication, whereas Duo push authentication is necessary to gain access to course resources on Moodle. While recognizing the need for security in our systems, the necessity for faculty to teach with their phones at hand, for students to use phones during class, etc. changes the classroom dynamic and experience. It was requested that IT consider of how security decisions could affect faculty and students in the work of the college.  
Two-factor is more secure. Prior to the rollout, David presented at a faculty meeting and ran a deliberative process. However, he also noted that security is irritating, and that higher education is a vulnerable industry.

3. CPR approved the minutes from April 27 following a visit from Human Resources focused on benefits and compensation prior to open enrollment. Javier added that he is unsure what is to be made of the presentation at that meeting since decisions had already been made and there seemed to be no opportunity for CPR feedback. Jill replied that, in her opinion, this seemed to be a common thread in CPR meetings with presentations by various units at the college. She suggested that the CPR should hear longer term ideas to have the opportunity and time to comment on the proposals, prior to final decisions.

Adjourned 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,  
S Hegarty