

STATEMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON COMMUNITY REGARDING IT ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Effective July 1, 2006 I have begun to make changes to the organization of information technology resources on campus. The purpose of this memo is to brief you on the rationale for these changes along with some of the specifics.

As many of you are aware I spent considerable time after arriving at UO listening to faculty, administrators, staff and students regarding their needs for information technology (IT) services. I documented what I heard in these exchanges in a paper titled "Prelude to an IT Strategic Plan"¹ and shared this broadly with campus constituents. The input I received prior to this paper being written, as well as after the paper was made public, was invaluable to me in thinking about how IT could be better organized to address the needs of our campus.

After completing this review process three areas warranted immediate attention. First, the name and orientation of the IT organization had to change. Second, we needed to address the staffing issue in the systems administration team. And third, attention needed to be paid to offering new services to the academic community.

The first change seemed obvious, the name Computer Center had to go. For many the computer center label put the focus on technology rather than on services to the UO community. While we certainly need to be competent in our use of computer technology, we also need a service orientation in addressing the information technology needs of the university. To start us on our new path the Computer Center label will no longer be used. To be consistent with the title I was given when taking this position the name Information Services (IS) will now be used.

The second change that was desperately needed was to broaden and deepen the resources in the systems administration group. While this group currently services administrative systems for the university, it was clear that it was not adequately staffed for what is currently required, let alone for what is desired by faculty and administration. In the coming days I will therefore seek to add to this group as resources become available. My desire is not only to create a team that is larger but also one that has needed skills in middleware and advanced applications that are required to support major projects.

A third change that was highly desired was the creation of a new unit that would focus on the support of academic services for the campus. The "Prelude to an IT Strategic Plan" document identified several services currently being offered for faculty and students, as well as new services that could be offered. Subsequent conversations with the teaching and research faculty have uncovered additional opportunities should personnel be available. Given the emphasis on academic quality being brought by our new Provost it seemed prudent that we seek to rearrange our resources to better address this area. I have therefore announced the formation of a new Academic Services unit within Information Services to focus on this area.

In keeping with my broader use of the Information Services label my desire with this new unit is to have a team effort with personnel within the schools as well as with other academic support areas. A new Director will be sought to help lead this new unit and his or her ability to work with all members of the academic IT community will be vital. Likewise, new members of this team will only be chosen if they have demonstrated their ability to work with campus IT leaders in the schools, as well as with our faculty and students. I expect that this new director and the staff under his or her supervision will work closely with schools, the Library, and areas like International Affairs, Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, Student Services, Institutional Equity and Diversity, and many other areas in the days to come.

The expansion of the systems area and creation of an academic services group did not come without a price. In order to free up resources to accomplish these goals I have decommissioned the User Services and Network Applications unit within Information Services. In the coming months I will be working with individuals from this former unit to explore whether their skill sets and interests line up with either the systems team or academic unit described above. In some cases I expect that employees will transition to one of those two groups. In other cases I expect that there will not be a suitable match. Where new positions vary substantially from existing positions open searches will be conducted.

Change is a difficult thing. And organizational change can be particularly upsetting for those who are affected. Yet I took these actions because of a commitment I have to build an Information Services organization that is focused on the needs of our faculty, students, administrators, and staff. I am pleased to report that many within Information Systems are excited to be moving with me in this new approach. Likewise the response to the reorganization from the campus has been overwhelmingly positive, especially from the academic units.

During the transition to a new organizational model we hope to minimize confusion over who to contact for particular service needs. If you have any questions about this please call Beth Sprague at 6-1702, for assistance.

As we move forward to build a stronger IS organization I continue to value the input I receive from the campus in this process. I anticipate that new venues to discuss issues of importance with regard to IT services will be made possible in the 2006-07 academic year. And of course my email address (cio@uoregon.edu) is always available for those who would like to drop me a note. Thank you for your continued support as I seek to maximize our IT resources to be more effective in addressing your needs. I look forward to working with you in the days to come.

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1 A copy of this document is available on the web at: <http://cc.uoregon.edu/cc-planning/ITStrategicPlan.pdf>