

Report to the Academic Senate from the Senate Advisory Committee on Information Technology (SACIT)

Submitted, 12 March 2019, by David P. Goldenberg, SACIT Chair

Committee Charge and Overview of Activities, 2017–2019

The Senate Advisory Committee on Information Technology was established in the Spring of 2016, and its role is defined in University Policy 6.002 III D.1.k, which includes the following summary¹:

The primary role of the Committee is to ensure ongoing robust communication among representatives of the University’s academic users of information technology (especially faculty and students), and administrators responsible for planning, acquiring, employing and operating information technology resources. Such administrators shall regularly inform and consult with the Committee regarding information technology resources. The Committee should regularly consult with information technology user constituencies and convey input to relevant administrators.

In addition to being a standing committee of the Senate, SACIT is part of the university’s Information Technology governance structure².

During the 2017–18 academic year, SACIT, chaired by Prof. Julio Facelli, carried out an extensive review of several aspects of the university’s IT structure, resources and services; resulting in a detailed report that was submitted to the Senate office in May 2018. Because this report was not completed in time for the final Senate meeting of the 2017–18 academic year, it has not previously been reviewed by the Senate. We are, therefore, including last year’s report as an attachment to this year’s, and a brief summary of its conclusions are provided below.

During the 2018-19 academic year, SACIT has met three times, in October, January and February. In addition, the committee membership has been consulted regularly by e-mail. Among the issues that have been discussed, particular attention has been given to proposed new university policies regarding web sites, new state policies for data security and a initiative for improving student access to software required for their courses. These issues are discussed later in this report.

Recommendations from the 2017–18 SACIT Report

Based on its review of IT resources and services at the university, the 2017–18 SACIT concluded its report with the following set of recommendations (slightly rephrased here):

1. Support should be provided to the Information Security Office (ISO) in its efforts to create University wide security awareness training.
2. Faculty should be represented on the Integrated Student Team (IST).

¹ <https://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-002.php>

² <https://it.utah.edu/cio/it-governance-committees/index.php>

3. Standardization of AV equipment across all learning spaces should be improved.
4. Developing a path to sustainability for research computing services is imperative.
5. The university administration should provide SACIT with a white paper outlining policies and procedures detailing faculty data access and review policies.
6. The university administration should outline parameters of appropriate use criteria in an effort to generate successful requests for using the Tableau visualization server, a new resource for university data analytics (<https://bi.utah.edu/tableau/>).
7. The university administration should consider the establishment of a Chief Technology Officer (CTO) position within the Presidents Office³.

Issues Addressed in 2018–19

The topics discussed by SACIT during this academic year include the following:

Proposed revisions to university web policies

On 22 October 2018, members of SACIT met with a subset of the group⁴ charged with redrafting University Policy 4-003, World Wide Web Resources Policy, and accompanying rules. Since that meeting, there have been numerous exchanges between the drafting group and the SACIT chair (David Goldenberg), who has consulted with SACIT members via E-mail. The major issues that have been raised by SACIT with respect to the web policy are the following:

1. **Copyright of material posted on web pages.** A major motivation for the policy revision is to ensure that the university is in compliance with federal copyright law, including the Digital Millenium Copyright Act (DMCA). At the October SACIT meeting, there was extensive discussion of copyright issues, including questions of whether posting of material on a university web page could alter copyright ownership and whether university permission was required for posting of material created by a faculty member. The committee was assured that none of the existing or proposed web policies affect existing copyright policies, which stipulate that faculty members own the copyright to materials that they create (with some rare exceptions)⁵. The committee has recommended that these points be made explicitly in the revised policies, with reference to the relevant copyright policies, even at the risk of some redundancy.
2. **Accessibly of material on web pages.** The version of the revised policies submitted to SACIT in October 2018 included an accompanying rule on Web Accessibly, which

³ The university does already have an officer with this title (currently Mr. Jim Livingston), but the duties of this individual are focused entirely on operational matters, rather than the strategic planning role suggested here for the CTO role.

⁴ The full drafting group includes Patricia Hanna, Paula Millington, Chris Pfeffer, Paul Burrows and David Hill

⁵ <https://regulations.utah.edu/research/7-003.php>

stated that “The University subscribes to the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA.”⁶ SACIT strongly supports the goal of providing access to university web pages to people with disabilities, but the committee has raised concerns about the resources necessary, for faculty especially, to fully comply with the WCAG. Major concerns raised by SACIT include:

- (a) Many faculty web sites include documents that may be very difficult to make fully accessible, especially to individuals with visual impairments. Adobe Portable Document Format (pdf) files may be especially challenging in this regard. The Microsoft Word and PowerPoint programs do include tools for making accessible documents, but these tools still require considerable effort by the author.
- (b) Some faculty members make frequent updates and additions to their course web pages over the course of a semester, and requiring that the updated material be compliant with accessibility standards may significantly delay the availability of these materials to all students.
- (c) The proposed rule included provisions for supplying materials in an accessible form upon a specific request, but it is unclear how much of a web site would have to be directly accessible to all users, and how much of it could be provided in an accessible form only on request. This appears to be an evolving legal issue.
- (d) The Canvas learning management system provides some tools for checking and enhancing the accessibility of pdf documents, but limited testing of these tools by SACIT members indicates that their effectiveness is limited. As of 10 March 2019, the tools no longer appear to be available on Canvas.

In response to the various questions regarding the accessibility rule, raised by SACIT and others, the drafting group has removed the rule, with the expectation that the issue will be revisited once a more general university policy on digital accessibility has been established. It should be noted, however, that the current draft (as of 25 February) stipulates that “Web Site Owners must ensure that Web Pages and resources are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, Title II and the Federal Rehabilitation Act, Section 504.” In addition, the draft policy states that “Web Sites must contain a link to the University’s ‘Nondiscrimination & Accessibility Statement’ which contains information on how to request an accommodation.”⁷

3. **Clarification of the scope of the policy.** The proposed policy covers two broad categories of web pages: Those that support official university programs and those that are hosted on university servers (or by university contractors). The latter category, defined as “Unofficial Web Sites”, includes personal web pages of students, staff and faculty, and there has been some confusion about the possible impact of the policy on personal web pages, in general. Importantly, the policy only covers personal web pages that are university hosted or support a university program. Discussions between the drafting committee and the SACIT chair have helped to clarify this issue in the policy and its presentation to various groups.

⁶ These guidelines can be found at <https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>

⁷ <https://www.utah.edu/nondiscrimination/>

The proposed new policy was presented as an information item to the full Senate at its meeting on 4 March, with very little resulting discussion. Pending scheduling by the Senate Executive Committee, it is expected that the policy will be presented as a debate item at the April Senate meeting.

Recent Changes to Utah System of Higher Education (USHE) IT Security Policies.

At a November 2018 meeting, the State Board of Regents adopted revisions to USHE Policy R345, Information Technology Resource Security⁸. The revised policy requires encryption of data on institutionally owned computing devices and places restrictions on the use of personally owned devices for certain classes of information (especially Personally Identifiable Information, PII). Although a memorandum⁹ summarizing the changes indicates that no “restricted/confidential institutional information” is to be stored on personal devices, the actual policy indicates that much of the data that faculty are most likely to use and store (student grades, letters of recommendation, *etc.*) can be stored on personally owned devices, provided that the user takes “reasonable precautions to secure the data.” (See section 4.3.5 of the policy.)

Current university policies on data security base the requirement for encryption on the kinds of data involved, categorizing data as “Restricted”, “Sensitive” or “Public”. Data in the Sensitive category includes, among other types, research findings and student data, and the current policies specify that encryption is “strongly recommended” but not required for this category¹⁰. Thus, the new USHE requirement that data stored on all institutionally owned computers be encrypted represents a significant increase in security requirements for many faculty, staff and departments.

On 27 February, SACIT met with Chief Information Officer, Stephen Hess, and Chief Security Officer, Randy Arvay, who provided updates on a number of campus IT issues, including the new USHE security policy. We presume that the revised state policy will require revision of the university’s own policy, and Hess and Arvay indicated that implementation of the policy will be incremental. For instance, required encryption of department and faculty computers will likely be limited to new purchases, but strongly encouraged for existing computers. UIT is currently working to sort out how all of this will happen, and faculty input is sought. SACIT will be meeting with Hess and Arvay again, on 27 March, to continue these discussions.

Software Anywhere Project

At the direction of the Strategic Information Technology Committee (SITC, not to be confused with SACIT), UIT has formed a taskforce to formulate specifications for a system to help students easily access software that they need for their courses. The goal of the taskforce is to write a request for proposals for this project. The proposed system would consist,

⁸ <https://highereducationutah.org/policies/policyr345>

⁹ https://highereducationutah.org/pdf/agendas/20181115/TAB0_2018-11-16.pdf

¹⁰ See Policy 4-004 and Rule 4-004C:

<https://regulations.utah.edu/it/4-004.php>

<https://regulations.utah.edu/it/rules/Rule4-004C.php>

at least in part, of a web-based catalog, from which students could identify the software that they need and obtain the software through links to other sites, which might include the Office of Software Licensing (OSL) site or external sites. The system is also expected to facilitate the management of licenses required for some software. The catalog might also include mechanisms for running the software on virtual hosts or downloading virtualized versions of the software to run on the student's computer.

As an example of the kind of product that might be adopted, the Marriott Library has implemented AppsAnywhere, by Software2¹¹ for some courses. Although this product has a number of attractive features, it has the serious limitation of requiring an internet connection whenever the software is used.

The SACIT chair is serving on the task force as a faculty representative. In the discussions so far, he has stressed that any successful solution has to be friendly to faculty users, especially when the faculty are adding the software for their courses to the web catalog. He has also noted that a system that requires students to be connected to the internet when using the software, as with AppsAnywhere, would be very problematic.

¹¹ <https://www.software2.com/appsanywhere>

Committee Roster

Name		College/Organization
David P. Goldenberg (Chair)	Elected, Faculty, Tenure-line	Science
Kelly W. Broadhead	Elected, Faculty, Career-line	Engineering
Thomas E. Cheatham	Elected, Faculty, Tenure-line	Pharmacy
Peter A. Jensen	Elected, Faculty, Career-line	Engineering
Lauri A. Linder	Elected, Faculty, Tenure-line	Nursing
Kim Martinez	Elected, Faculty, Tenure-line	Fine Arts
Phoebe B. McNeally	Elected, Faculty, Career-line	Soc. and Behav. Science
Jeremy J. Myntti	Elected, Faculty, Tenure-line	Libraries
Amy E. Thompson	Elected, Faculty, Tenure-line	Libraries
Trisha L. Weeks	Elected, Faculty, Career-line	Soc. and Behav. Science
Alexey V. Zaitsev	Elected, Faculty, Career-line	Medicine
Yin-Shun (Sindy) Chiu	Student	ASUU
Christopher E. Clinker	Student	ASUU
Thomas G. Richmond	Ex officio, Senate Pres.	Senate
Julio C. Facelli	Ex officio, Senate Pres.-elect	Senate
Margaret F. Clayton	Ex officio, Senate Past Pres.	Senate