ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL

FOR

ACADEMIC YEAR 2015-2017

Presented at the
772nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
November 16, 2017

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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Steven Brewer, Co-Chair (2015-Present)
Julie Buehler
MJ Canavan, Chair (2015-2016)
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Table of Contents

Accomplishments ................................................................. 4

Enabling Communications .................................................. 6

Fostering Collaborations ................................................... 8

Working Together to Improve Processes & Find Efficiencies .... 10

Membership ........................................................................ 12
In alignment with UMass system and UMass Amherst campus strategic goals, the University of Massachusetts Amherst first information technology (IT) strategic plan was published in 2016. The culmination of a year-long, campus-wide collaboration, the plan provides a roadmap for information technology at the Commonwealth’s flagship campus and a guide to decision-making, priority setting, and action for IT in five key areas: Teaching and Learning, Research, Engagement and Outreach, Enterprise Systems, and Infrastructure.

The Information and Communication Technology Council (ICTC) was instrumental in the creation and publication of the plan. We provided leadership, insight, and support to the five planning committees (corresponding to the key areas outlined above), and collaborated across departments and disciplines to ensure the plan’s publication. The ICTC will play a critical role in the implementation phase of the plan, including developing the IT governance framework for UMass Amherst.

www.umass.edu/it/itstrategicplan

First IT Strategic Plan Published in 2016

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Instructional Innovation: Improved Support for Faculty

The ICTC has an enduring commitment to faculty development and the use of technology for teaching and research. To this end, ICTC members have been actively involved in the development of the Teaching and Learning section of the IT strategic plan as well as providing critical input to the Instructional Innovation team. Recent milestones include the launch of a new, robust website on instructional innovation (innovate.umass.edu), the successful rollout of the Innovate@ Symposia and Fellowship, and the move of the Instructional Media Lab, the team’s faculty support arm, to a more central campus location.

Optimizing Infrastructure: Network & Data Center Progress

Through its members, the ICTC has provided leadership and expertise to two significant campus technology initiatives: the network modernization project, which seeks to upgrade the campus network and enable fast, seamless internet connectivity for the campus community as the technology needs and number of devices used on campus continue to grow.

We have also provided feedback and support for the new data center project, a high-impact initiative that aligns with system strategic goals for infrastructure optimization and improved delivery of administrative and technology services across UMass campuses. The data center is the ‘technical heartbeat’ of each campus: many critical services, such as email and calendaring, and learning management systems, are hosted in the data center. The new center was completed on time, in scope, and within budget in August 2017.

Information Security: Strengthening Our Defenses

We have provided ongoing strategic and communications support to various information security initiatives, including communications deliverables such as the ‘My Name is Not a Good Password’ awareness campaign and information security videos. We have also provided assistance at the department, school, or college level for the rollout of several critical information security controls.
Enabling Communications

Mobile Add/Drop (SPIRE) for Students

The ability to access the campus student system (SPIRE) with mobile devices was a leading technology request from students, also supported by ICTC. In response, UMass Amherst Information Technology (IT) introduced a new mobile-friendly interface for SPIRE in spring 2017. UMass Amherst’s 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students can search, add, drop, or swap classes on the go, from their smartphones, tablets, and other mobile devices. No app is needed.

By providing members of the campus community with more flexibility in accessing course management functions, UMass Amherst is delivering on key goals outlined in the IT strategic plan: enabling students, faculty, and staff to use technology more effectively and improving operational efficiency in support of the next generation of teaching and learning.

spire.umass.edu

Information Security Videos Increase Awareness of Current Cybersecurity Issues

ICTC members provided strategic direction and feedback to a series of short video clips on critical cybersecurity issues. UMass Amherst Information Technology developed and made these videos available in response to requests from students and faculty for more information on the latest trends in information security in easy-to-access and concise formats.

Faculty, students, staff, and members of the broader community can learn more about current information security topics, such as phishing, and other current threats. Featuring UMass Amherst faculty and staff with specialized knowledge in this area, the videos illustrate specific, easy-to-follow steps viewers can take to protect institutional information as well as their own.

www.umass.edu/it/securityvideos

Innovate@UMass Website Launched

In response to requests from the campus community, a new interdisciplinary website supporting instructional innovation was launched in 2016. The website offers a broad range of instructional innovation resources and provides targeted ongoing support for teaching and learning. Faculty members of the ICTC provided critical input into the strategic direction and development of the website through the Teaching and Learning Committee of the IT Strategic Plan.

innovate.umass.edu

Awareness of Software & Hardware Discounts

The ICTC has been conduit for raising awareness of existing site licenses and other competitive discounts that the university negotiates for software, hardware, and cellular products from major vendors (e.g., file storage, survey platforms, online portfolios, cell phones and plans). By taking advantage of existing discount programs, individual departments, faculty, and staff do not have to negotiate their own contracts, with significant yearly savings.

www.umass.edu/it/discounts
IT Strategic Planning

The ICTC was actively involved in the creation and publication of the university's first IT strategic plan in 2016. Committee members led planning efforts or served on one or more of the five planning committees, corresponding to the five key strategic areas: Teaching and Learning, Research, Engagement and Outreach, Enterprise Systems, and Infrastructure.

The planning process, spanning several months, presented a unique opportunity to reach across departmental lines, gain a better understanding of the technology landscape in other areas of campus, and work together to create a cohesive strategy for IT at UMass Amherst. Numerous collaborations have emerged as a result of the IT strategic planning process, some extending beyond the implementation of the plan.

www.umass.edu/it/itstrategicplan

Data Center Design

Faculty members of the ICTC were closely involved in the design of the new data center at UMass Amherst, which supports the evolving teaching, learning, and research needs of the university. The new Data Center is the culmination of a major collaborative effort between academic and administrative departments at UMass Amherst. Faculty and researchers helped design the center to accommodate expanding research needs and to meet modern standards of sustainability.

www.umass.edu/it/datacenter

Innovate@ Symposia & Fellowships

Responding to widespread campus interest in support for faculty who want to adopt an instructional innovation, UMass Amherst launched a symposium series (Innovate@) that provides strategic support of faculty who, in turn, serve as “Innovation Fellows” in a campus-wide “think tank” on innovation. Through the Teaching and Learning Committee of the IT Strategic Plan, faculty members of the ICTC provided critical input into the direction of the program. Between 2016 and 2017, six symposia were offered and over 75 faculty completed the program.

innovate.umass.edu

Information Security Controls Deployment

Since 2015, ICTC members have helped to spread awareness of a critical component of UMass Amherst's information security strategy. Together with IT professionals across campus, the central IT organization has started rolling out critical security controls, including antivirus software, encryption, centralized patching, and firewalling to University-owned computers. This approach enables the university to strengthen its information security defenses campus-wide and minimize potential opportunities for information security incidents.

www.umass.edu/it/security

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www.umass.edu/it/security
Network Updates Enhance Teaching, Learning, Research & University Operations

The ICTC provided critical feedback and support to the network modernization initiative, one of UMass Amherst’s major IT strategic priorities. Optimizing Internet connectivity in academic and administrative buildings responds to national trends as members of the campus community are connecting an increasing number of devices (smartphones, tablets, computers) to the campus network. Nationally, over 60% of students own three or more Internet-capable devices; on our campus, network connections to the internet have increased by more than 40% in the past year.

The network modernization project is a strategic initiative that enables UMass Amherst to provide better, faster connectivity to current and prospective students and their families, faculty, staff, and visitors, and fulfills academic, research, and general communication needs as these needs continue to evolve.

Shorelight Advisory Committee Formed

In 2016, the University of Massachusetts Amherst has joined in a new global partnership with Shorelight Education of Boston that will enable international students to receive a master’s degree at one of the top public research universities in the United States. The joint initiative, UMass Amherst Global, will feature degrees in electrical and computer engineering.

In spring 2016, the Faculty Senate approved the creation of an advisory committee that will monitor and address issues related to privacy and other regulations in the context of this initiative. The committee includes a representative from ICTC. Tilman Wolf (College of Engineering) was nominated in absentia.

Rethinking the Campus Web Presence

To maximize resources and ensure consistent web architecture, branding, and information security standards across campus websites, a subcommittee of the ICTC will be formed to assess the campus presence. The committee will examine core needs, help set up an inventory of existing websites, graded by complexity, and deliver a five-year plan based on past and projected spending.

Instructional Innovation Group Moved To W.E.B. Du Bois Library

In an effort to provide faculty with consistent support and easy access to instructional technology resources, the Instructional Innovation team moved to a new, central campus location on the seventh floor of the W.E.B. Du Bois Library in fall 2015. The team has seen a 30% increase in faculty drop-ins for the Instructional Media Lab in 2016.
Council Chairs

- Lisa Chiodo, College of Nursing (2016 - present)
- Steven Brewer, Biology, College of Natural Sciences (2015 - present)

Council Members

Faculty Members/ Librarians At Large

- Gail Cruise (Isenberg School of Management), 2018 S
- Graham Gal (Accounting), 2020 S
- Chaitra Gopalappa (Mechanical and Industrial Engineering), 2017 F
- Brian Shelburne (Library), 2019 F
- Janine Solberg (English), 2017 F
- Nikki Stoia (Music & Dance), 2018 F
- Timothy Randhir (Environmental Conservation), 2018 S
- David Toomey (English), 2017 F
- Michael Zink (Electrical and Computer Engineering), 2020 S

Faculty Members Appointed by Their Deans

- Steven Brewer (Biology, College of Natural Sciences), 2018 F
- Justin Gross (Political Science, College of Social & Behavioral Sciences) 2019 S
- Bret Holloway (Continuing & Professional Education), 2019 S
- Jon Olsen (History, College of Humanities and Fine Arts), 2018 F
- Marshall Poe (Commonwealth Honors College), 2019 S
- Prashant Shenoy (College of Information & Computer Sciences), 2018 S
- Senay Solak (Operations & Information Management, Isenberg School of Management), 2017 F
- Russell Tessier (Electrical & Computer Engineering, College of Engineering), 2020 S
- Ian Walls (UMass Libraries), 2018 F

Ex Officio

- Julie Buehler (Vice Chancellor for Information Services & Strategy & CIO)
- Claudia Donald (Vice Chancellor for University Relations designee)
- Mike Malone (Vice Chancellor for Research & Engagement)
- Alyson Gill (Associate Provost for Instructional Innovation)
- Simon Neame (Dean of Libraries)
- David Hart (Director of Educational Software Development)
- Patrick Sullivan (University Registrar), 2017 - present
- John Lenzi (University Registrar), 2015-2017
- MJ Peterson (Secretary of the Faculty Senate)

Students

- Eric Gendreau (Student Government Association), 2015 - 2016