

UC Irvine Information Technology Consolidation

Dana Roode
UCI Office of Information Technology
July 8, 2010 (*updated 7/2012*)

UCI “Big Ideas” Workgroups (Early 2009)

Established to look at key areas where fresh approaches might result in significant efficiencies and cost savings, including IT

IT Workgroup suggested consolidating administrative IT:

- ▶ Administrative Computing Services (Adcom)
- ▶ Network & Academic Computing Services (NACS)
- ▶ Small (1-12 FTE) IT groups in:
 - University Advancement, Office of Institutional Research, Office of Academic Affairs, Parking and Transportation Services, Document and Delivery Management, Office of Research, Graduate Division, Student Housing, Admissions, Office of the Registrar, Financial Aid, Student Affairs Technology, University Communications, Athletics, University Extension, and the UCI Libraries

Commodity IT services would also be made available to academic units through the new consolidated unit

June 22, 2009 Announcement

Provost Gottfredson: “Information Technology plays a critical role in all campus activities. As UCI evolves, we must adjust our approach to IT support and services to gain greater efficiencies and economies of scale, and to provide a rich, integrated and secure electronic environment in which to educate our students, carry out research, and conduct university business.”

Created the Office of Information Technology:

- ▶ Effective July 1, 2009 (8 days after announcement)
- ▶ Comprising AdCom, NACS, Academic Affairs Computing Services, and Office of Research Computing Services
- ▶ Graduate Division IT joined shortly afterwards

Established IT Oversight Committee

Initial Reaction to Decision

AdCom and NACS staff generally took it in stride

- ▶ Had been working together cooperatively for years; most jobs would not change significantly
- ▶ Mark Askren had decided to move to the University of Nebraska as CIO

General disbelief common elsewhere: *Worries of the Worse*

- ▶ IT Staff: I'm going to lose my job! *[No one in OIT has been laid off...]*
- ▶ IT Staff: I'm going to get a new job I don't like, working with people I don't like, in a new location I don't like, removed from the units I joined UCI to support
- ▶ Units: My IT staff are going to be moved away, reassigned to other duties, I'll have to take a number and wait in line for the "tech of the day" who won't know anything about me, my needs, or my unit's applications

IT Oversight Committee

Significant engagement from campus leadership

- ▶ Associate Chancellor, Deans of Undergraduate Education and Graduate Division
- ▶ Associate Vice Chancellors of Administrative & Business Services, Budget Office, Office of Research, University Advancement, Student Affairs, Enrollment Services
- ▶ Office of Information Technology: AVC/CIO, Director of Business Services
- ▶ From the Schools: Social Sciences Assistant Dean, Cognitive Sciences faculty, Information and Computer Science Computing Director

Consolidation Goals

- ▶ Improve the overall efficiency of delivering campus IT services -- not immediate new cost savings
- ▶ Not replacing staff who leave saved significant expense, and the consolidation helped maintain service despite losses
- ▶ Remove duplication of effort to avoid future costs and ensure maximum return on IT investment
- ▶ Guide investments through a campus-wide view of needs and priorities and make them in the context of an integrated technology environment

Consolidation Phase I

Unit	Staff	Function
AdCom	58	Administrative application maintenance, development and operations
NACS	90	Network and telecommunications; campus-wide email, file sharing; campus IT coordination; educational computing; research computing
Academic Affairs Computing Services	4	Desktop, file and email service, programming support for Chancellor, EVC, Counsel, Academic Personnel, Equal Opportunity, Ombudsman, Academic Senate
Office of Research IT	7	Desktop, file and email service, software maintenance and development for Office of Research (Research Administration, Sponsored Projects, University Lab Animal Resources, Technology Transfer, etc.)
Graduate Division IT	1	File service, software maintenance and development for Graduate Division

Challenge

Keeping operations running smoothly and maintaining project progress while working on consolidation

Approach

Changing only what has to be changed to achieve helpful integration; we could not afford to start from a “blank piece of paper” and come up with the “ideal” IT organization from scratch. We needed to make changes incrementally over time.

Initial Organizational Structure

AdCom and NACS Directors became OIT Directors, all reporting to OIT AVC, keeping existing duties for the most part

Changes made focused on integration of “commodity” services, moving each under a single OIT Director to begin integration:

- ▶ Desktop Support
- ▶ Help Desk
- ▶ Windows-based System Administration and Services
- ▶ Data Center Services
- ▶ Information Security

OIT Directors - From AdCom

- ▶ Marina Arseniev: Administrative computing, architecture, security
- ▶ Cheryl Ast: Mainframe applications and services, Help Desk
- ▶ Carmen Roode: Administrative computing, Quali, financial system futures, Office of Research and Graduate Division apps

OIT Directors - From NACS

- ▶ Shohreh Bozorgmehri: Academic and Network Applications (Including educational technology, DUE, Academic Affairs)
- ▶ Brian Buckler: Network, Desktop and Windows Services
- ▶ Steve Franklin: Academic Outreach
- ▶ Marie Perezcastaneda: Business Services
- ▶ Allen Schiano: Research Computing and Data Center Services, Academic Computing Director Liaison

Desktop Support

- ▶ New OIT Team based on AdCom's desktop team
- ▶ Merged NACS, AACCS, and OR-IT desktop into it

Help Desk

- ▶ Moved AdCom and NACS help-desks organizationally under the same OIT Director and co-located them
- ▶ Adopted Footprints as OIT-wide request tracking system
- ▶ Started fielding calls for Academic Affairs, AdCom, Grad Division, NACS, and Office of Research
- ▶ After settling time, encouraged, but did not *require*, individuals to call help-desk instead of their favorite IT contact (increased emphasis on help-desk over time)

Consolidation Beyond Phase I

- ▶ Provost mandate:
 - Change reporting of all administrative IT into OIT by the end of summer 2010
 - Academic unit strategy deferred to 2010/2011
 - UCI Libraries and University Extension considered along with academic units
- ▶ Assessed IT situation in remaining administrative areas
 - Meetings with leadership, questionnaires, etc.
- ▶ Approximately 70 staff in 20 units:
 - 9 with just 1 or 2 staff
 - 8 with 3 to 7 staff
 - 3 with 8 to 12 staff

Academic Personnel	1	Application support
Design & Construction Services	1.25	Commodity support and software applications
Distribution & Document Management	5	Specialized applications and other application support
Parking	3	Application Support
Institutional Research	3	Institutional data analysis and reporting
Enrollment Services (4 groups)	19	Application support for enrollment functions
Student Housing	10	Residential network support, applications
Student Affairs - Other (7 groups)	13	Commodity, software application, and other
Athletics	4	Commodity and software applications
University Advancement	10	Commodity and application support for donor management, alumni, UCI foundation accounting, etc
University Communications	2	www.uci.edu support

Feedback from Departmental IT Questionnaires

Some clear opportunities for improving efficiencies such as:

- ▶ 6 Exchange e-mail servers that could be integrated
- ▶ Individual staff that had to balance programming, desktop, and server support obligations

Units had concerns

- ▶ Responsiveness of a large central organization
- ▶ How local priorities will be viewed from a campus perspective
- ▶ The role IT staff play in functional operations
- ▶ Physically moving IT staff away from units

Units saw potential benefits

- ▶ Improved commodity IT support
- ▶ Greater help-desk coverage for end-users
- ▶ More clearly defined IT job responsibilities
- ▶ Application development standards

Announced Post Phase I Approach

- ▶ Based on information collected from units, reviewed by IT Oversight Committee and Provost
- ▶ Administrative IT staff to become part of OIT by September 30, 2010, while also maintaining strong ties to functional units
- ▶ IT staff roles to remain largely unchanged pending development of detailed integration plans in each area
- ▶ Units and unit IT staff to have a significant voice in building UCI's integrated IT environment and governance mechanisms
- ▶ IT staff joining OIT to have a significant role in defining OIT's eventual organizational structure, values, technology portfolio, and service catalog

Incremental Reporting Changes

- ▶ An OIT Director was assigned to work with each area
- ▶ While maintaining existing reporting, established dotted-line reporting to OIT, started to build ties between unit IT staff and OIT
- ▶ OIT Director worked with unit to assess IT situation and frame integration strategy
- ▶ Several months later, converted dotted line to solid line reporting, with integration just starting
- ▶ With some exception, “business as normal” for IT staff, even after reporting changes

Consolidation Phases

Phase 1

- ▶ Initial July 1, 2009 consolidation: Academic Affairs, AdCom, Graduate Division, Office of Research, and NACS

Phase 2

- ▶ A&BS Distribution and Document Management, Student Affairs outside of Enrollment Services, University Advancement
- ▶ Dotted line: December 1, 2009; solid April 1, 2010

Phase 3

- ▶ A&BS Design and Construction Services, A&BS Parking, Athletics
- ▶ Dotted line: January 11, 2010; solid: May 3, 2010

Phase 4

- ▶ P&B Office of Institutional Research (affiliated reporting); SA Enrollment Services (moved to OIT after ES IT Director Recruitment completed September 2010)

Physical Location of IT Staff

- ▶ Most staff to remain in current office space for the immediate future
- ▶ In the long run staff will be located where they can best serve their clients: co-located with functional units, in “regional” support locations, or in a central OIT location

Software Application Support

- ▶ To dispel worries, emphasized the following:
 - Applications cannot be maintained solely with “pools” of interchangeable programmers
 - Must have consistent core staffing in major application areas to maintain technical and functional knowledge, and strong ties to functional staff
- ▶ Being able to temporarily augment teams with additional programmers will be helpful in focusing on a priority project to get it done

Effort Prioritization Strategy

- ▶ Routine end-user requests fielded by the central help-desk
- ▶ Routine application support assistance (questions, bug fixes, small changes) fielded by staff dedicated to the application
- ▶ Larger requests, such as those that require resources beyond those allocated to an application area, go through a new process that prioritizes requests based on their business impact
- ▶ Still larger requests, such as those that require resources beyond those present in OIT, are reviewed by the IT Oversight Committee
- ▶ Exception: “funded requests” - requests from units who are able to fund required resources themselves (recharge and other funds)

IT Governance

- ▶ IT Oversight Committee provides high level governance
- ▶ Managers of functional areas make functional decisions for their areas and have a strong voice in overall IT decision making

IT Standards

- ▶ A critical part of the foundation on which UCI's integrated IT environment will be built
- ▶ Collaborative processes to define and review standards; exceptions will be made to standards where required to meet unit needs

General Approach to Funding Moves

- ▶ IT staff positions and funding move to OIT, as well as well-defined budgets for server hardware maintenance, software, and other non-desktop expenses
- ▶ Units retain budgets and expense for desktop hardware/software and other items dedicated to them
- ▶ Funds already coming to OIT through recharge for services retained by OIT
- ▶ Units contributing IT staff who are served by newly integrated services will not be charged for those services
- ▶ Funding situation in units varies and OIT/units had to work out IT budget transition details in each case

Academic Units

- ▶ Much worry and internal discussion despite postponing changes to 2010/2011
- ▶ March 2010 Provost Clarification to Deans:
 - Acknowledged unique research and education needs that will continue to require dedicated staffing regardless of consolidation
 - “We must identify needs that are shared among units and address them as a campus so that units need not be burdened with them individually.”
 - “A separate but related aspect of the discussion is identifying the organizational structures that should be put in place to realize the efficiencies of sharing while ensuring unit needs continue to be met.”
- ▶ CIO coordinated campus-wide discussion regarding Academic Units and Consolidation in 2010/12

Academic Units

- Academic Unit IT Workgroup created in 2010/2011 to assist with the first step of identifying opportunities; next step would be campus review of Workgroup conclusions
- Group collected input from School IT Directors, Assistant Deans, and Deans through written mechanisms and in-person interviews, and from others identified by schools through group conversations
- Focused on identifying opportunities for sharing IT services

Academic IT Workgroup Conclusions

- ▶ Focus first on consolidating IT strategies rather than on the more distracting issue of consolidating IT staff
- ▶ Incrementally further deployment of common IT solutions to free unit staff time to focus on unique and innovative local needs and improve the quality and consistency of the end-user experience
- ▶ Common needs include administrative software applications, server deployment and maintenance, instructional computing labs, desktop environments and the behind-the-scenes services computers require
- ▶ Phase in new or enhanced common services over time starting with the highest priorities using project teams comprising central and unit IT staff
- ▶ Define a relationship between unit IT staff and the IT collective that compliments the relationship they have with their home unit

Where we are -- July 2012

- ▶ Organizationally:
 - Administrative IT units report into OIT (through full or “affiliate” reporting)
 - Interim organizational structure in place with incoming units distributed across OIT Directors
 - Commodity team integration moving along, service integration is a long process, as is applications development integration
 - Promoting sharing of information, tools, expertise, and understanding through variety of staff forums
- ▶ More work left to do on end-user and IT standards
- ▶ Visibility of strategic importance of IT is at an all-time high with significant discussion of *campus-wide* IT needs
- ▶ Academic units are engaged in shared services planning
- ▶ Overall perceptions on administrative IT consolidation positive

Some Observations

- ▶ Having strong backing from the Provost is incredibly helpful
- ▶ People tend to expect the worse when confronted with change
- ▶ A little flexibility goes a long way
 - Office location, letting staff maintain functional unit customs, affiliate relationships for small, unique units such as Campus Recreation and the Bookstore
- ▶ Communication, communication, communication

Consolidation Website:

<http://www.oit.uci.edu/consolidation>

Consolidation Plan Website:

<http://www.oit.uci.edu/consolidation/plan/>

Consolidation Overview:

<http://www.oit.uci.edu/consolidation/plan/overview.php>

UCI IT Principles from Oversight Committee:

<http://www.oit.uci.edu/consolidation/committee/uci-it-principles.php>