



User Services Constituent Group Meeting Minutes

Session: Thursday, October 3, 12:45 – 2:05 p.m. (64 participants)

Facilitator: **Carolyn Livingston**
Director of Financial Systems
Tufts University

General Discussion

1) HelpDesk Problem Tracking/Ticketing Systems

What HelpDesk problem tracking/ticketing systems are currently in use?

- Footprints (Kenyon)
- GWC (Phillips Academy)
- HEAT (Eastern Kentucky, Bentley))
- Magic (New Jersey)
- Remedy 4.0 (Indiana State, UCSF)

It was noted that various levels of system access are provided from full user availability to IT staff only.

2) Mission Statements for User Services

Has anyone created a mission statement for User Services?

A couple of schools have created mission statements for User Services, including Clark and Lesley. It was noted that a mission statement does not necessarily prevent mission creep.

3) Service Level Agreements

Is anyone using Service Level Agreements?

Several schools are utilizing service level agreements (SLAs) or published service levels, including Detroit Community College, Windsor, Kenyon and Barry. Suggestions for schools considering SLAs included:

- Set expectations and publish priority levels to protect IT staff
- Focus on key factors/metrics, like “all calls will be returned in 20 minutes 90% of the time”
- Remember to include student and faculty groups when creating SLAs or defining service expectations
- Conduct staff assessments to support need for additional resources
- Develop system where you don't have to say “No” (for example, define the disk storage space available for each user and then indicate they may have more if they are willing to pay for it)
- Read [Managing User Expectations by Naomi Karten](#)

4) User Services Staffing

How are schools managing to do more with less in light of hiring freezes and reductions in IT budgets?

Solutions discussed included:

- Cornell, Notre Dame, Tufts, and Asbury are utilizing more student employees to fulfill IT staffing needs
- Notre Dame is using a hierarchy of managers, team leaders and workers among its student employees to improve retention
- Barry is using computer liaisons, located in the units and schools, to serve as the first line of support
- Others are using task management, calendar appointments, remote control access, and knowledge bases to provide user support with fewer staff

A second issue related to staff was raised regarding the ratio of support staff to users. Interested attendees were referred to the cost project completed by Hamilton College.

5) Integrating the Support Needs of Different Constituent Groups

How are schools managing support for administrative versus academic users?

Solutions discussed included:

- Having all calls come into one support line and utilize a menu system to route accordingly
- Utilizing electronic entry and status tracking of problem report tickets
- Leveraging the web for documentation, knowledge bases, training, etc.

6) Tiered Support Model

Is anyone using a tiered support model to provide user support?

Several schools are utilizing a tiered support model, including Atlantic, Colorado, and Louisville. It was suggested that the HelpDesk Institute may be of value in establishing a tiered support model.

Support/Action Needed from EDUCAUSE

Attendees felt strongly that the visibility of User Services needed to be raised within the EDUCAUSE organization. It was suggested that a User Services track be added to the program for future conferences.

Prepared by: Sande Johnson-Byers
Director, IT Projects Administration
University of Louisville

Submitted by: Carolyn Livingston (carolyn.livingston@tufts.edu)
Director of Financial Systems
Tufts University