

Educause 2006 CIO Constituent Group

Thanks to all who attended and made this session a success. Thanks to John Campbell, Director of Academic Computing, Northern Arizona University, for his notes, on the Patent session. – Theresa Rowe

The meeting was convened at 1 PM, Oct. 9, 2006, in Dallas. We had 88 attendees sign-in, and more attendees passed through over the course of the meeting.

Agenda:

Update on Government Relations for the CIO – Mark Luker

Mark covered the following points:

- CALEA
History of the issue was provided. Deadline date of May 14, 2007 still stands. Educause has provided an explanatory letter from the Network Policy Council. The CALEA working group is proceeding with the status of trusted third party providers, equipment vendors, standards, and how best to communicate with law enforcement. Check the web site: www.educause.edu/calea
- Network Neutrality
This is defined as the concept of keeping the Internet open to all lawful content, information, applications, and equipment in a non-discriminatory manner (no prioritization of packets for the benefit of one vendor). If allowed to prioritize packets, or to discriminate for the benefit of some high-paying customers, we in universities could see our traffic slow and costs increase. This fundamentally alters the nature of the Internet. The Educause community is responding and the web site for this issue is www.educause.edu/netneutrality. Another interesting web site is <http://savetheinternet.com/>.

- **P2P File Sharing**
There is new pressure in Congress to stop file sharing, and comments have been made that higher education is not doing enough to stop the traffic. Educause is pushing back.
- **Data Retention**
More discussion in legal circles is occurring on all types of data retention, particularly about saving logs of Internet connections. Much of this effort is linked to efforts to block child pornography. This is an emerging issue requiring a “wait and see” watch.
- **Patent Reform**
This is also under discussion, with the backing of major coalitions including the library community.

Reminder that Policy 2007 – The Educause Policy Conference – is scheduled for May 16-17 Hilton Crystal City, Arlington, Virginia.

Message from the Internet2 Board

Marilyn McMillan spoke briefly about Internet2 board perspectives. She will post an email to the CIO list to solicit feedback about important issues the board should consider.

IT Leadership Round-table

We discussed, as a group, ideas around 3 questions:

1. How do we retain good staff members?
2. What can we do to reduce stress?
3. What kinds of leadership training and professional development activities are working?

Our brainstormed responses follow at the end of this document. The posted items seem to fit in 5 categories: training and professional development, support, career ladder, exposure and culture.

The Impact of Patents

The presentation on “What can and should we do about patents in higher education?” was facilitated by Richard Katz. Our panelists were Polley Ann McClure, VP-IT, Cornell; Wesley D. Blakeslee, Associate General Counsel, The John Hopkins University; and David Lassner, Chief Information Officer, University of Hawaii.

Richard Katz expressed the concerns from the Educause perspective: thinning software market due to consolidations. Wes Blakeslee presented on Understanding Patents, noting that for an invention to be patentable, it must be “useful, new and unobvious to a person skilled in the art.” Method patents are patentable, but ideas are not. Software is generally protected by copyright, not patents. Troublesome patents that were reviewed included Acacia Media Technologies, Test. Com and finally Blackboard (in depth). Polley McClure reviewed the development history of course management systems at Cornell and link to Blackboard, emphasizing the open, collaborative nature of the project. David Lassner discussed the impact on innovation and the potential chilling of the market. Given the collaborative product history, there was little expectation that ideas for improvement freely given used to back a patent that constrains the marketplace. It is difficult to imagine any vendor entering the market, and it would be risky to purchase a different system for our campuses given the state of the patent. There is also a risk for open-source development. Wes then reviewed the options, including Blackboard not enforcing the patent, the patent office reexamining the patent, and potential court case. Richard noted that Blackboard is a member in good standing of Educause, but more needed to be done. Educause has done legal research and engaged in community dialog, and is encouraging Blackboard to consider their customer and business case, to consider placing the patent in the public domain or using zero dollar licenses. There is another set of issues for open source consideration.

Michael Chasen of Blackboard stood and offered statements on the Blackboard position. He acknowledged concern about the type of disruption around the patent.

Closure

The meeting came to a close at 4 PM.

IT LEADERSHIP ROUND-TABLE RESPONSES

Training and professional development

- Partner with business school and/or human resources to provide campus-wide management and leadership training for staff.
- Bring training to campus.
- Support one certification a year by paying for the test.
- Provide leadership training.
- Provide professional development funding.

Support

- Be a mentor.
- Provide innovative mentoring strategies, including reverse mentoring (new to experienced, experienced to new) and community-based mentoring.
- Provide good equipment and tools.

Career Ladder

- Gap fit analysis for new job responsibilities, provide training on gap area.
- Think of this as a national, not just a local obligation.
- Recruit alumni and recent graduates.
- Study equity and provide retention dollars.

Exposure

- Send CIO direct reports and next level managers out to campus – meetings, visits, etc.
- Give control of projects to potential leaders, then provide resources and mentoring to ensure they succeed.
- Get staff involved on the national scene.
- Assign cross-departmental project head.
- Provide assignments with project leadership.

Culture

- Have fun!!
- Carefully provide public recognition and praise for successes. Be aware of teamwork and individual preference for recognition.
- Give control – empower the employee.
- Provide the vision and context for directions and decisions.
- Outsource appropriately.
- Praise success and don't punish failure.
- Provide self-help services for constituents.
- Play up the advantages of the institution and community.
- Build a strong communications culture; hire good communicators for all positions.