

Information Technology Governance Summit

September 9–10, 2007

DISCUSSION TOPIC OUTCOMES

1. Alignment and Strategic Planning

IT governance authorities stress that the goal of IT governance is to ensure that IT contributes effectively to strategic organizational goals. What constitutes “alignability” in strategic goals and how can institutions build alignment review into the ITG process? How can ITG processes influence the strategic planning process in healthy ways?

❖ Truths

- IT must be at the table in shaping goals, however those are articulated.
- Institutional goals are the framework for IT strategic goals.

❖ Trends

- Annual assessment is the test of alignability (goals are actionable).
- Success depends on good communications (including relationships).

❖ Unique Ideas

- Have IT planning co-led by external or non-IT folks.
- IT governance should do IT strategic plan.

2. Executive Responsibilities and Role of the CIO

Many presidents, provosts, boards delegate IT governance to the CIO. What functions should CIOs welcome, and which should they encourage other executives to assume? How can ITG be used to promote the role of the CIO as an institution-wide leader for technology, rather than as the leader of central IT?

❖ Truths

- Accept opportunity and responsibility to participate in enterprise level strategic discussions – not only those limited to IT.
- Encourage other executives to understand the critical role and impact of IT and take joint responsibility for making decisions.
- Resist being the sole decision maker and finder of funding.
- Aggregation and translation of ideas – dream weaver

❖ Trends

- Multi-lingual – speak languages of all constituencies.
- Proactive voice – keep IT issues highly visible before becoming a crisis.
- Welcome opportunity to enhance credibility with qualitative and quantitative data – not just anecdotal.
- IT has achieved of scale, cost, complexity which raises the question about where ITG should begin, end and integrate with other major university governance models.

❖ Unique Ideas

- Think about what it means to be a literate human being in the coming years and the role technology will play in this.

3. Governance Theory and Practical Politics

How does ITG really work in practice, as opposed to theory? How does that reality affect what can be done through governance? Do faculty and non-IT administrators understand the process, and how can their understanding be improved?

❖ Truths

- ITG works, or not, because of relationships between people, not because of structure or process.
- ITG exists in the institutions broader planning, governance processes.
- CIO can't delegate ultimate responsibility and authority to ITG – CIO remains accountable.
- CEO doesn't fire the ITG.

❖ Trends

- ITG co-exists with parallel processes, e.g. faculty autonomy (incentives), legislative items, etc.
- Events (reality) can trump/outpace ITG.
- Strategic priorities can change with executive leadership changes (turnover); ITG is to adapt.
- CIO opportunity to educate ITG and constituencies on IT issues and details.
- ITG can be undermined by “squeaky wheel” takeover and/or lack of funding.
- Campus community needs to trust the process and trust-building is a critical CIO role.

❖ Unique Ideas

- If campus governance works in general, ITG has a higher probability of success. Identify the best non-IT model on campus and adapt it; look at campus culture.

4. Governance Internal vs. External to the Institution

How does the rise of new demands such as cyberinfrastructure and consortial cooperation affect IT governance? How are the governance relationships between central and distributed resources on campus affected by external cooperation? How can institutions effectively interoperate with IT policies and share IT resources across multiple national and international collaborations and funding agencies with different funding and regulatory models?

❖ Truths

- Collaborations strain ITG.
- Collaborations, voluntary and involuntary, are a fact of life.
- Competitive advantage means picking the right partners.
- Mandatory can be a blessing or a curse.
- Resource implications need to be taken into account.

❖ Trends

- CIO may have to educate campus leadership on the value of a particular collaboration (communication requirements are different with external than internal).
- CIO (or governance owner) needs to listen to campus to communicate to collaboration.
- New ITG structure may be needed to deal with collaborations.
- CIOs called on to facilitate non-IT collaborations.
- Professional development in collaboration is an increasing requirement for IT staff.

❖ Interesting Observations

- Collaborations exist in continua—formal/informal, mature/immature
- Knowledge gained from external collaborations can be applied to internal collaborations.
- Attention to power dynamics is key to success in external collaborations.
- Participation in an external collaboration can create cohesion among internal competitors.

5. IT Governance Processes and Mechanisms

Define what an effective IT governance structure looks like. How do you match governance to institutional culture? How should IT decisions be categorized? Who should have input, and who should decide in each arena? What committees, councils, or other structures are necessary to implement IT governance? What characterizes a good outcome in IT governance?

❖ Group 1

- No single one, match institutional culture. Must know what institution wants ITG to do. Is it transparent, simple, does community trust it. Appropriate level of inclusiveness. ITG must provide mechanism for stakeholders to influence process.
- If institute supports governance, select “best practice” governance at the institution use it for ITG.
- Decisions should be categorized. Categories will be institutionally specific.
- Inputs, decisions, councils, etc. will be institutionally specific.
- Transparent, people understand and use ITG, aligned with institutional goals and strategies, decisions communicated to community.
- “Effective ITG links (directly or indirectly)/allocates budget to strategy.”
- Key outcome: Key stakeholders are comfortable with direction of institutions IT and continue to use and support ITG.
- *One size does not fit all*
- People tend to care most about ITG when there is an IT problem.
- There is no one single answer to an effective ITG structure.
- The correct solution depends on the culture of the institution.
- What characterizes a good outcome?
 - All the major stakeholders know what all the other major stakeholders need.
 - There is an agreed upon process and a set of criteria to establish priorities.
 - Campus buy-in of priorities.
- Understanding of reality of campus needs and priorities.
- Shared voices for increased resources for IT.
- Trust among stakeholders
- Have a jointly understood and agreed upon list of IT projects and efforts – no surprises.
- How should IT decisions be categorized?
 - Internal to IT: Architecture, network, systems
 - External to IT: policies, enterprises, systems, desktop systems, regulatory compliance, research computing, instructing technology
- Who should have input and decide in each arena?
 - Input can be sought and used for both internal and external to IT decisions.

- Institutional culture might drive the amount and type of input into various decisions.
- External to IT decisions must be decided by the broad body in consensus with the priorities.
- Group of people working with the systems have input.
- The body with the executives makes the joint decisions.
- What committees, councils or other structures are necessary to implement ITG?
 - There is no ideal structure since it depends on the size and culture of the institution.
 - Understanding what level of input and approval is required for each level of IT decision is critical to defining what committees and councils need to be established.

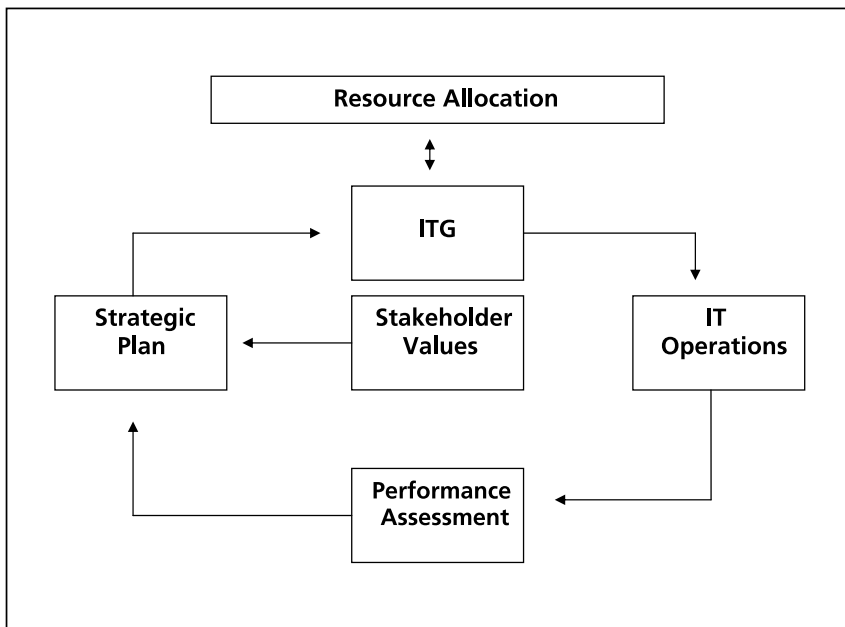
❖ **Group 2**

- Alignability is a process not an event.
- IT participation is critical to making a good institutional strategic plan.
 - Overlap get IT and university
- Institutional goals are framework for IT strategic goals: but some additional things are absolutely essential.
- IT initiatives must support the needs of constituents no matter how they are expressed.
- Test of alignability = annual assessment
 - Must be actionable and assessable.
- Governance is all about priority setting.
- IT staff must understand IT goals.
- IT goals must be articulated widely and consistently.
- Success depends upon high-quality communication
- Institutional goals often conflict.
- Relationships are everything.
- CIO is not alone in setting IT goals; other IT leaders need to be involved.
- CIO is advocate/evangelist for tech in institutional planning.
- CIO must resist being the “techie”.
- CIO aligned with the other executives (VPR, etc.)
- IT should be pervasive throughout institutional plans and goals.

❖ **Group 3**

- No single model ITG must match institutional culture
 - Degree of faculty governance
 - Presidential leadership style
 - Size
 - Complexity
 - Public/private (land grant/comprehensive)
 - Professional schools and their independence
 - Centralization/autonomy of schools
 - System/District participation

- Geography
- Best practices are valuable but can't be prescriptive.
- External forces that institute can control.
- Formal vs. Informal ITG
 - Relationships have to go deep into institution
- IT has to understand other unit business
- Characteristics of Good ITG Structure
 - Clarity about roles
 - Clarity about personal vs. unit representation
 - Should produce strong recommendations even when decision is executive's
 - Has to interface with/include resource allocations (or is just advisory)
 - Categorizations (governance vs. management) : \$ Threshold, strategic/tactical, major infrastructure principle and policies
 - One test of ITG is whether it can respond to major new strategic initiatives (as opposed to business as usual).



- Decision vs. Input
 - Will vary, but need clear executive responsibility and accountability.
 - Broad input via councils, etc.
- Good Outcomes
 - Tradeoffs clear / have been communicated
 - Can be assessed and are related to strategic goals
 - IT staff feel validated about IT process (not necessarily = getting their way) – true of all constituents
 - Advisory groups know why decision was made
 - Timely

❖ Group 4

- Outcomes—Brainstorming
 - Communication and trust are ways to happy IT-enabled campus and clear expectations.
 - Sustainability—stand the test of time (long term plan, strategic goals). This is based on Campus culture (“cultural fit”)
 - “Render unto Caesar” model wants community to decide on functionality
 - Different governance roles:
 - Input, IT learning about issues, discussion, decision, and clarity – input decision makers.
 - How do you communicate effectively?
 - Resources necessary will be forthcoming
 - Clients advocate for IT
 - Prioritization and allocation
 - Governance:
 - Community buy-in
 - Big picture
- IT Decisions Categorized (Management vs. Governance Decisions)
 - Management
 - Enterprise
 - Compliance
 - Governance
 - Executive enterprise level, legal, liability/risk
 - “Lower”/community levels
 - Distinct constituents
- Effective IT Governance
 - Ross & Weill Matrix
 - Starting point
 - Business applications include learning and research
 - These are the principles
- Match Governance to Institution Culture
 - Look for existing governance models on campus
- Who has input, who decides?
 - Engage entire community “appropriately”
- Look for silent types
- Engage squeaky wheels
- Input is not always through committees.
- External Resources
 - Environmental scanning
 - Best practices

- External reviews
- Who decides? It depends
- Governance Structures
 - Improving existing structure; what you think is broken.
 - IT governance must be a seamless part of governance
 - Credibility
 - Effective overtime (after honeymoon)
- Assessment

❖ **Group 5**

- Good Outcomes
 - Education as part of governance process
 - Enough trust in process that dissenters don't undermine process afterwards
 - Agreement to move on if not consensus; set priorities and make decisions
- Structure
 - Multicultured
 - Sustainable in terms of participation
 - Flow
 - Rotation
 - Charters
 - Rookies vs. veterans
 - Ex-officio (by nature of positions)
- Committees
 - Student
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Researcher
 - Steering or cabinet
 - Policy group
 - Liaison
- Input vs. Decision
 - Depends on issue, complexity, funding requirement, campus support
 - Strata of decision making
 - Strategic vs. Tactical
 - Linkage from input process to decision process
- Culture
 - Sets expectations for input decision making
 - Acknowledges desired levels of engagement

- Partner with other constituencies
- Build participation into culture, rotation is critical
- Decision Categories
 - Overall campus plan and strategic priorities
 - IT as enabler
 - What are we trying to accomplish with technology?
 - Board/Cabinet decision
 - Institution-wide process for input
- IT Funding
 - Board/Cabinet decide (CIO or Cabinet)
 - IT, business process owner input
- Architecture/Infrastructure
 - CIO Decides
 - Input from IT business process owners, faculty/researchers, students
- Application Business Process
 - CIO and business owner partnership decides
 - Input from IT business process owners (staff, faculty, students, researchers)

❖ **Group 6**

- What does effective IT governance look like?
 - Clarity
 - Opportunity for input from all constituent groups
 - Aligned with campus culture
 - Transparency – constant communication
- How to match culture
 - Identify formal and informal structures and relationships
- Categories
 - Operational decisions
 - Strategic
 - Tactical
 - Tools and applications
 - Policy decisions
- Who gives input?
 - Strategic ITG
 - Trustees
 - CEO
 - CIO
 - Senior administrators, faculty, staff, students

- Structures
 - User advisory
 - Short term topics
 - Student advisory
 - Essential IT support
 - Research competing ad-hoc groups – focus
- Outcome
 - Minimize the surprise
 - Trust in the decision
 - Dissent comes early
 - Use existing structural and informal means to gather input
 - People feel that they are “weighed in”
 - Decision is made; trust is there

6. What can EDUCAUSE do to assist higher ed institutions in this area?

Final Recommendations:

❖ Group 1

- Organize discussion or participatory event at CIO forum
- Compile best practices with special attentions to:
 - Resource allocations
 - Assessment for ITG
- Standing Education Committee to periodically review ITG issues, prepare “letter to president” documents (e.g.)

❖ Group 2

- Professional development for CIOs and staff
 - Relationship building
 - Work of collaboration
- Joint sponsored workshops on IT governance with ACE, NACUBO, etc. Force on key executives, CEO, CFO, Chancellors, Presidents, Boards, etc.
- Assessment tools, i.e., readiness index for governance; comparisons to best practices as well as intra and inter institutional comparisons.

❖ Group 3

- Facilitate collaboration opportunities (e.g. summit, positions, research papers, etc.)
- Joint Governance Summit (NACUBO, EDUCAUSE, etc.)
- 21st century role professional development (emerging CIOs)
 - Negotiation
 - Collaboration
 - Research computing

- Communications (strategic marketing)
- Cultural travelers
- Succession planning
- Facilitation
- Best practices
- Articulating structures/models
- Search Services
 - EDUCAUSE Governance Symposium
 - Palatable training operation

❖ **Group 4**

- Identify and publicize practices (e.g. qualitative component of ECAR study, include non-US institutions)
- Develop expanded ITG curriculum component of EDUCAUSE Leadership and Management Institute.
- Develop working partnership/relationship with Weill & Ross to expand their studies to higher education.

❖ **Group5**

- Case studies
 - What worked and what didn't
 - Extract key questions from cases to ask as your institute establishes practices
- Broker peer advising on IT including ITG
- CG on ITG
- Paper on why ITG in higher education differs so that we aren't held to non-higher education standards (pre-emptive strike)
- Help educate executives about IT

❖ **Group 6**

- Resource Page and Constituent Group ITG
- Develop series of workshops (1-2 days)
 - ITG
 - Review CIO
 - Executive Briefings
 - Regional Workshops
 - Research Computing
- Develop assessment instruments for ITG