

SENATE RESOLUTION ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) REORGANIZATION

BACKGROUND:

President Hogan has announced that all aspects of IT, including not only administrative but also academic and research computing, are to be moved under the control of the University Administration. These plans involve changing the reporting lines of campus-level IT staff below the level of the Chancellor, including the campus CIO, to direct reports to university-level administrators, while removing any reporting line to the Chancellor or Provost. This continues a pattern of changes (e.g., Human Resources) that require campus employees to report directly to university-level administrators, with no intervening or even secondary reporting line to a campus official.

The Academic Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has repeatedly expressed its concerns with these university reorganization proposals, both because of their harmful consequences for our campus, and because of the overall lack of genuine consultation with appropriate governance bodies in deciding them.

We are also concerned that significant changes to administrative structure are announced without any sort of detailed plans that would allow a careful review of their workings or consequences.

We see a clear pattern of centralizing decision-making and control, far beyond the recommendations of the ARR Report, far beyond the mandate of “consolidating back office operations” or seeking “shared services” where these can legitimately reduce costs. We see no detailed analysis of savings, nor of their potential cost to academic endeavors.

Particularly in the area of academic decision-making, we find this centralization to be inconsistent both with the Statutes and with the principles of campus self-governance that have helped make the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign one of the great universities in the world.

These changes not only diminish the proper scope of campus authority over academic matters; they diminish the proper role and authority of the Chancellor, who is the Chief Executive Officer of the campus. We have repeatedly expressed our concern over this diminishment of the Chancellor’s role and authority especially while we are in the midst of a search for a new Chancellor.

Furthermore, this move to centralize decision-making over IT without campus consultation is disturbing in light of the world-class expertise that this campus has in all areas of computing, both academic and administrative.

Our success as a research and educational institution depends on deploying IT effectively, and with vision, in support of our mission.

RESOLUTION:

WHEREAS, the recently announced proposal that all IT, including academic and research IT, would be moved under central university control directly violates an explicit promise made by the President to faculty governance groups that academic and research IT would *not* be centralized;

WHEREAS, the Statutes require that any such policy affecting academic matters must be formulated clearly and submitted to faculty governance for review, which it was not;

WHEREAS, these proposals shift the reporting lines of campus-level staff below the level of the Chancellor to direct reports to university-level administrators, rather than to the Chancellor and Provost – an unprecedented change in our organizational philosophy with absolutely no justification in the Statutes or General Rules;

WHEREAS the intention to change reporting lines was never discussed or presented for review before it was announced as a *fait accompli*;

WHEREAS, these unprecedented and unjustified changes have already forced the resignation of our campus CIO, Sally Jackson, one of the most widely respected national leaders in this area; and whereas even the decision about how to replace her has been taken out of campus control;

WHEREAS, the loss of our CIO damages the morale, the IT capabilities, and the reputation of our campus with our peer institutions and with the educational organizations of which we are a member, such as Internet 2 and EDUCAUSE;

WHEREAS, all of these proposals were announced without any serious consultation with the affected campus-level administrators, including the Chancellor, Provost, or CIO herself; or with the IT@Illinois Steering Committee, the Council of Deans, or the Council of CIO's;

WHEREAS, these campus-level administrators and governance groups have repeatedly cited the damaging effects of this proposal on the campus's right and need to maintain the kind of IT infrastructure that is necessary to support its academic and research missions – missions that are quite different from those of the other two campuses;

WHEREAS, the IT “savings” that have been attributed to the effects of this reorganization are largely the result of campus-level initiatives, developed by the outgoing CIO and adopted by the ARR, and predating the term of the current President;

WHEREAS, many national leaders in higher education are emphasizing the need for greater *decentralization* and local control over academic and research matters, while our university seems to be moving in the opposite direction;

WHEREAS, there has never been any explicit plan provided for review, and the nature and content of this proposal is constantly evolving without due consideration of how it will actually work or what its effects will be;

AND WHEREAS the structure of IT has a direct impact on our ability to carry out the core research and teaching missions of our university;

THEREFORE

BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign of the University of Illinois finds this IT proposal to represent both unacceptable policy and a deeply flawed decision-making process;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign considers this proposal to be a further example of centralizing academic policy and decision-making, in violation of statutory rules and in contradiction with the principles of good governance;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign registers its strongest disapproval of university-wide initiatives that are carried out with no, or merely token, engagement with statutorily mandated shared governance processes;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Academic Senate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign respectfully requests for its review a clear plan and rationale for this IT reorganization before it is implemented further; and that in this plan we expect to see reporting lines that respect the appropriate authority of the Chancellor over campus personnel, and reporting lines that maintain campus control over policies affecting its academic and research mission.

This resolution shall be forwarded to President Michael Hogan, Vice-President and Chancellor Robert Easter, and Chairman Christopher G. Kennedy of the Board of Trustees.