Meeting Minutes from
SENATE COMMITTEE – Education Services and Information Technology (SCEDIT)
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT STONY BROOK
Date: April 28, 2023
Time: 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Location: Zoom Meeting
In Attendance: Scott Campbell, John Shackelford, Rose Tirotta-Esposito, Michael Ospitale, Henry Joseph, Fumio Aoki, Lenore Lamanna, Moises Eisenberg, Thomas Wilson, Erez Zadok, Cynthia Davidson, Victoria Pilato,

Meeting called to order at 3:03 pm, Adjourned at 4:01 pm

Keri Hollander, the co-chair could not attend this meeting. As usual we asked to record the meeting purely for the purpose of creating minutes. The recording is not kept after minutes are approved.

There is one more meeting scheduled for May this academic year, 05/26/2023 at 3pm.

Educational Services

Brightspace
Starting with Educational Services, Diana Voss was not in this meeting, Rose Tirotta-Esposito provided us an update.

This is the last semester Blackboard will be used. Asking all faculty to get off Blackboard after this semester so it can be archived. October 4, 2023 all access will be ended so the content can be archived.

Turnitin has been implemented. They have started AI checking, this is available on a trial basis until January when we will decide based on faulty feedback if this is a feature we are interested in maintaining.

Recently we had an outage of Brightspace for an entire day, has there been any update on what happened and the steps we might take to improve whatever process? The idea is to learn and improve, not engage in finger pointing.

Henry Joseph brought up that there is a DoIT Status Page where everyone can sign up for updates, please note you may have to update your settings for new services as they are added: https://itstatus.stonybrook.edu/

Michael Ospitale joined the meeting a bit later and had some information to share:

The root cause was a script run on the back end of the Brightspace system to batch process courses for the spring, that broke all the links that had associated courses and students in those courses.

Any steps to avoid that situation in the future?

- All scripts will be tested in the Dev environment first before using them in a Production environment.
- When we are making a change we haven't made before we will coordinate with D2L Brightspace beforehand.
- Contact Brightspace earlier than we did, establish a support call with them rather than try to solve it all ourselves.

Question: We have a full Dev environment? Are there processes for code reviews?
Answer: Mike said he doesn't know but will find out.

Information Technology

Update on the CIO search for west campus

Both Moises Eisenberg and Rose Tirotta-Esposito were on the search committee, they provided an update. That committee narrowed the field from twelve candidates to six qualified candidates in ranked order, leadership asked the committee to narrow that down to three finalists. When it came time to make offers all three candidates rejected us.

Jed Shivers communicated to the search committee they are reopening the search together with the search company and invited the search committee to participate in the process again to see out new candidates. Candidates will be evaluated as submissions are made rather than waiting until a set period at the end.

Question: how did the committee feel about the candidates relative to our past CIOs?
Answer: The committee had scrutinized and ranked six top candidates, when leadership only wanted the top three, the others were told they were not selected. Those three candidates are out of the running on this second phase of the search. There were no comparisons with past CIOs in this process.

Question: Is this search open to internal candidates?
Answer: Yes, anyone can apply.

Update on Team Dynamics ITSM

Michael Ospitale and Henry Joseph provided us with an update.

Project kick off was in mid March, there has been significant progress. The project is still on schedule at this point for a July 1st launch for the university side. Stony Brook Medicine has additional integrations that makes their project more complex and as a result have a later launch date than the university.

We've been pleased with the product so far and the implementation team. Confidence is high that we will launch on time.

Question: Will we be trying to implement the existing Cherwell implementation as a starting point or will we be starting from scratch?

Answer: It is not a mirror image of the Cherwell implementation. Some of the workflows, service catalog offerings and ways people can request help internally (within west campus) from the old ITSM work well and we can build on those. Workflows that cross between Stony Brook University and Stony Brook Medicine, those will be reengineered so they work better. How tickets flow from our system to Stony Brook Medicine.

Question: Earlier you mentioned that we can have an unlimited number of ticketing systems, if an area wants their own instance will it be an isolated satellite instance or will it be integrated into the main instance?
Answer: We are all in one instance, but you can have multiple service catalogs. We are all in one environment but it's partitioned off where you can manage your own environment. The power is the ability to easily move tickets and workflows between those ticketing systems is much easier. This should help break down information silos.

Question: What happens with existing tickets? Should we recreate tickets in the new ticketing system?
Answer: Some of those tickets will be regenerated. If needed we will ask an end user to create a new ticket.

Question: Could a ticket be owned by two organizations that normally operate separately, for example west campus and the hospital. Some problems need some work from both sides.
Answer: Yes. For example, our cabling team also does work in Stony Brook Medicine. So the initial request can start at the hospital, the networking team at the hospital needs to check capacity of their network closets, then cable is run, then the hospital has to turn on the jack.

Question: Is there any distinction between each side of campus, as a user I don't know which side is required to do a given task.
Answer: It depends on the service that you choose. If you choose a service that is unique to Stony Brook Medicine or Stony Brook University it will go to the appropriate side. Otherwise you will have to come into the system the right way.

Question: Can the service catalog be created in a way that people who are not particularly technologically savvy can understand and navigate easily?
Answer: That is always the goal. As always you can call the service desk and they can create a ticket based on the information you provide if you have any doubt.

Henry expounded on this answer: In our existing system if a ticket winds up on the wrong side, that ticket needs to be closed and a new ticket created. In this system the ticket can be transferred where it belongs, the ticket number is still valid. Your ticket will have some location information and some historical information so the ticket can be routed correctly.

We can run reports on items people are searching for that have no results. This will allow us to add tags for a given service. So the system will "get smarter" the more we use it.

Question: These types of systems that are largely text based are going to be very impacted by AI improvements. There will be significant improvements and breakthroughs at a fast pace, hopefully this system will take advantage of those developments.
Answer: We just launched the most recent version of our chat bot that leveraged ChatGPT's natural language processing.

Research Committee Report - our research committee liaison Iris Fineberg is not in this meeting so we will move on to an update from the Libraries.

Library Report
Victoria Pilato offering a report of things happening in the library. There is a new Dean, Karim Boughida, he's very open to talking to anyone about what's going on at the library. He embraces technology and has participated in the campus discussions on AI. Working on a strategic five year plan to be finished in October.

Dryad Digital Repository, The Dryad Digital Repository provides a secure generalist platform for users to share their research data with the public, which facilitates compliance with open access policies such as the current NIH Data Management & Sharing Policy as well as publisher policies.

Email for Emeritus Staff
John Shackelford brought up this topic that was discussed in the PEG board. Thomas Wilson will give us an overview of the concern.

Thomas has been working at Stony Brook University for 40 years at SOMAS and was just notified he has received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Professional Service. He is planning to retire next year, retiring faculty have a path and options to retain their stonybrook.edu email addresses but retiring professional staff have their email and google drive locked down within 24 hours of leaving. This is a policy decision, not a technological one.

Thomas gave a detailed explanation for why it's important to Stony Brook University to maintain the outside ties and relationships that exist through these email addresses and the digital content in Google Drive.

Question: How could this committee help?
Answer: Thomas will bring this up with the Senate. This is a policy issue. There are lots of methods to mitigate any potential risks of someone retaining a Stony Brook email address.

We ran out of time, let's continue this topic in our next meeting.

Moises Eisenberg brought up a good point that raising a particular case of Thomas to the Senate rather than changing university policy as a whole. Universities with very large endowments maintain those connections, it's a mutually beneficial relationship. We help to educate young people and it doesn't make sense to shut the door on them as soon as they graduate.