

UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC COMPUTING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Friday, April 26, 2024

Meeting Minutes**I. Chair's announcements, agenda review, and updates**

The committee welcomed a new representative from UC Merced, Lisa Yeo, who is taking over for Emily Jane McTavish.

- ***CIO meetings: March 4-5 and April 3***

UC Riverside representative Ilya Brookwell participated in the March 4-5th in-person CIO Council meeting in place of Chair Paw U. Discussion items included the AI Congress, which had taken place the week before, energy use concerns related to large scale computing, and the feasibility of accomplishing 100% cybersecurity compliance. In an attempt to achieve that, some campuses are considering barring non-compliant users from university networks (excluding learning management systems). For security purposes, some campuses are imposing new restrictions on certain email clients. The CIO Council discussed strategies for engaging in AI and high-performance computing in terms of energy conservation and reduction of megawatts. Electrical power is a primary constraint in high performance computing. Some campuses have power generation on site. Berkeley's cogeneration plant that runs on fossil fuels is being phased out and will be replaced by a cleaner energy source. The Council also talked about revisions to cloud computing contracts with Microsoft and Google.

Chair Paw U reported that there were similar discussions at the April 3rd CIO Council meeting. The group talked about President Drake's cybersecurity letter and the applicability to private devices and non-computer technology (such as "smart" devices). The group also discussed the feasibility of Title IX training for students.

- ***Research Data Backup System Steering Committee***

Chair Paw U reported that the Research Data Backup System Steering Committee had completed its first RFP to narrow the field of potential vendors. The second RFP will include cost and scope negotiations.

- ***UC AI Council***

UCSF representative Duygu Tosun-Turgut reported that the UC-wide AI Council is developing a training website. The Council will hold a systemwide workshop in August. The transparency subcommittee is working on best use cases for AI in various domains (including academic areas such as teaching). The risk management subcommittee – of which Tosun-Turgut is a member – is drafting guidance for procurement of AI-based tools. It will include a grid of metrics that would enable anyone, as part of a procurement process, to analyze risks and benefits. The subcommittees are working together on use cases, examples, and stakeholders to consult. The draft guidelines should be ready by end of May and will go through a two-tier consultation process.

- ***UC AI Congress***

UCSC rep Zac Zimmer was a panelist and UC Merced rep Lisa Yeo was a participant at the AI Congress held in February at the Luskin Center at UCLA. UCLA Professor Safiya Nobel opened the meeting with a talk about data and representation. Some faculty found the congress not very reflective of faculty viewpoints. Several of the sessions were recorded and will be shared, along with a final report.

- ***IT Systemwide Sourcing Committee***

UCACC Vice Chair Jenson Wong reported that the systemwide IT sourcing committee, which is involved in purchases of hardware, software, and services, will be issuing an RFP for a new cybersecurity awareness training vendor. UC is interested in improving analytics as well as compliance. The sourcing committee is now reviewing the Adobe product pricing and looking into developing an enterprise agreement that would cover the system rather than having individual licenses at each campus.

II. Consultation with UCOP's Information Technology Services

UC Vice President and Chief Information Officer Van Williams and Cyber Risk Program Director and Interim Chief Information Security Officer Monte Ratzlaff joined the meeting to discuss systemwide IT topics.

- ***March 2024 Digital Risk Presentation to Regents Recap and Cyber Security Metrics Update***

The Board of Regents approved a UC “risk appetite statement” with little discussion. Locations can use the statement’s guidance to determine their local risk management strategies. The chancellors of UC Santa Barbara and UC San Diego presented on the top digital risks – financial, reputational – and the key activities for strengthening security. These include investing in staff development, identifying and filling gaps in leadership roles, and improving risk management standards. CIOs, CISOs, and campus risk management leaders meet regularly to discuss cybermetrics, including what metrics are included on the dashboard and the follow-on narrative. As UCACC has seen in the past, dashboard elements include endpoint monitoring, financial investment, number of systems on the network, and number of systems with high-risk vulnerabilities. Other metrics include suppliers and incidents with third party vendors, endpoint encryption percentage, awareness training compliance, and number of enterprise systems that have conducted backup system testing in the last 12 months.

All campus CISOs have done a great deal of work to provide data for the metrics, which includes financial information (spending on IT security) that is provided by finance offices. The Regents are putting pressure on the administration to reduce cybersecurity risk by increasing deployment of EDR (endpoint detection and response) and other solutions. They want proof of improvements. Insurance and payouts after events are both costly.

Director Ratzlaff said that UC has employed an endpoint threat detection program since 2016. Formerly FireEye, now Mandiant and Trellix, the software functions like a networked antivirus system and can reside on a server or laptop. Suspicious events are relayed to a central location, where the risk is assessed based on multiple inputs, including worldwide intelligence. Campus security personnel are alerted when there are major concerns.

- ***President's Letter to Chancellors Regarding Cybersecurity (February 26, 2024)***

Regarding the February 26th letter from President Drake, CIO Williams noted that the standards in the letter have been discussed for years and have become of great concern to the Regents. He said that the Regents saw increases in insurance premiums and tens of millions of dollars spent on cybersecurity incidents – including litigation – and were getting impatient with slow progress. Rather than have the Regents take over, the UC administration stepped in with the letter in an attempt to focus on a few of the most important things that would cause the least amount of disruption.

Although there was not enough time to meaningfully engage the Academic Senate before President Drake's letter was distributed, Williams asked about how best to engage the Senate going forward. He thought that local engagement would be best, but information sharing at the systemwide level is crucial as well.

Committee members informed Williams that that letter's suggestion of limits to merit promotions for unit heads impinges on faculty self-governance. Principle investigators – who are generally faculty – are one of the categories of unit head designated by IS-3. A goal of 100% compliance is unrealistic in a distributed university setting where many faculty purchase and maintain their own hardware. UCACC Members asked about use of endpoint detection on cell phones and other devices that are not university owned or controlled. Unanswered questions remain regarding the Eduroam network, the needs of visiting scholars, and potential impacts on academic freedom and public records requests. Local ITS departments will surely need additional resources to carry through the new directive.

In response to the letter, some campuses are starting to restrict email clients that were previously permitted, which will be extremely disruptive to faculty who have long histories with their email systems.

Williams noted that if endpoint software had been more comprehensively deployed, it could have prevented recent incidents, many of which do not make the news. Inventorying assets is important to ensure that protections are in place. Insurers have raised rates for the past 4 years and UC has lost underwriters and taken on more self-insurance.

III. Consultation with the Senate Leadership

Academic Council Chair James Steintrager and Vice Chair Steven Cheung joined the meeting to discuss the current issues facing the Academic Senate and the cybersecurity letter from President Drake. Steintrager said that after learning about the President's letter from a divisional Senate chair, he talked to Chief Compliance Officer Alexander Bustamante and to the President. He will also be speaking to Chief Operating Officer Rachael Nava and to CIO Van Williams and would appreciate UCACC's input via a letter from the committee.

Steintrager said that the upcoming Regents meeting agenda will include the revised proposed "Regents Policy on Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Units," which is now in its third iteration. He noted that policies that impact faculty need to be reviewed by faculty. In this case, students felt that they should have been consulted as well, and the student Regent made a case for not having such a policy.

Other current issues are admissions and transfer requirements. The university has determined that data science courses will no longer be able to substitute for algebra 2 in fulfilling the mathematics (“area C”) requirement. A change was made a few years ago to allow data science in lieu of algebra 2, but the courses have been found to have insufficient rigor. The issue is polarizing, and both sides claim that the other side hurts diversity and disadvantaged students. UC’s position is that standing by the more rigorous math requirement will have a positive impact on preparation for a UC education, particularly in the STEM fields. The legislature, governor, and Regents are all interested in this issue. Faculty want to maintain control of this delegated authority and work cooperatively.

IV. Member/campus issues and discussion

UCACC members discussed the relevant topics from their divisional committees and campuses with respect to academic computing and communication.

UCLA: UCLA’s purchase of new sites and the increasing number of advisory boards are having an impact on faculty involvement. In addition to the Regents’ proposed policy on political statements, the local committee has been talking about systems, zero-trust networks, and a recent ransomware situation that resulted in a stronger mandate for endpoint security. AI task forces are taking on issues of teaching, administration, and graduate students. It’s becoming apparent that there is a need for awareness training around privacy issues (device security, FOIA, etc.) for faculty. The Google storage crisis is partially resolved; bridge funding will allow continuance of some storage, although it has been greatly reduced overall.

UC Santa Cruz: UCSC has been discussing the Regents’ proposed policy on discretionary statements and the difference between a best practices guide and a policy. The campus is dealing with faculty and student storage needs and providing default allocations. Undergraduates will get ten gigabytes and a timeframe to move off the system after graduation. Graduate students will also have a ten gigabyte default that can be expanded upon request. Faculty and staff will get twenty gigabytes that can also be expanded upon request. The local committee is also talking about cybersecurity training modules and the mandate for campus cybersecurity plans. The Santa Cruz Faculty Association (SCFA) is checking to see if it is bargainable.

UC Santa Barbara: The local committee has focused on the new security controls outlined in the president's letter, including email restrictions, EDR software deployment, and changes to network infrastructure. It looks like there will no longer be email forwarding or IMAP support. The faculty want to know if Trellix software gives administrators the ability to wipe computers without consent. It is unclear to many faculty what changes are happening locally, and which are UCOP-directed. In local storage issues, CrashPlan will be the data backup provider, priced at \$30/year for each license.

UC Berkeley: Starting in the fall, the campus will have new machine room space and storage at the NASA/Ames research center. The next step will be to determine who gets to use it and how to charge for it. Energy-based charging is in the works for the long term. Berkeley faculty data storage allocation is 150gb, which is not enough for some researchers, who would like to see a 2-10 terabyte range. Berkeley utilizes both Google and Box and had to reduce storage amounts. There were terabytes of duplication in Box. The local committee is working with the library on data storage and data management. Berkeley has many committees looking at AI from various

angles and stakeholders, from staff to teaching to research. The local committee also talked to IT administrators about implementation of President Drake's letter.

UC Davis: The local committee is discussing who pays for cybersecurity breaches, how to make systems more secure, and how to intelligently educate faculty about cybersecurity risks. President Drake's letter was not taken well, and there is unease about endpoint security. After considering the alternatives, UC Davis will revoke student email accounts after graduation. Faculty can generally keep their campus email when retire. For now, it seems Gmail will continue to be the underlying system.

UC Merced: As a smaller campus Merced hasn't had to deal with data storage issues yet. It is also not a Google campus. The local committee has discussed President Drake's letter and it seems the campus is already fairly well in compliance.

UC Irvine: UCI's CORCL covers research and libraries as well as information technology, so discussions of IT are usually in the format of updates from the CIO and involve little discussion. UCI moved massive amounts of data from Google to other platforms in order to come in under the Google ceiling and avoid \$1m in charges. They found duplicate, triplicate, and much unneeded data in the process. There is a student-led effort regarding data governance and security based on fears that faculty are using student data for research. UCI also has a plethora of AI committees. The administration is thrilled with "ZotGPT," a UCI-based ChatGPT system, but some faculty have questioned its utility.

UC San Diego: The local committee met off schedule to talk with the CIO about President Drake's letter. Like other campuses, UCSD is making changes to its Google drive storage. There is a survey to gather information on computational resource provisions for new faculty and local storage and server rooms across campus. The San Diego Supercomputing Center is meant to be a one-stop shop for high performance computing. A new student information system is about to rollout and the campus is trying to apply lessons learned from the Oracle debacle and have more faculty input and review.

UC San Francisco rep Duygu Tusun-Turgut reported that UCSF clinicians and research faculty were working on a proposal to start a GPU farm that could be added on to by additional clinical groups. The group is asking for an initial investment from UCSF.

UCOLASC representative Mark Hanna reported that he is part of the Project Transform Working Group that is negotiating with big publishers regarding open access. UC is pushing back against publishers' attempts to impose restrictions on fair use activities such as text and data mining in computational research or using content for artificial intelligence (AI) for research purposes.

CCGA representative James Bisley reported that his committee is monitoring the outcomes of California Assembly Bill 656, which allows CSUs to establish professional doctorate degrees. CCGA is also looking at enrollment commitments made within the Governor's Compact and whether the agreed-upon funding will be forthcoming. Due at least in part to graduate student unionization outcomes, there are not as many new graduate students enrolled as previously anticipated. Increasing undergraduates without a commensurate increase in faculty or TAs is problematic.

V. Follow up actions and next steps

Chair Paw U will draft a response to President Drake’s letter and send it to a small sub-group for review. There was a suggestion to focus on the principle of shared governance and flawed process, in addition to the content of the letter. The committee analyst will find out the protocols for sharing the letter more broadly when it’s ready, including with local VC-ITs.

Meeting minutes drafted by: Joanne Miller, UCACC Committee Analyst
Attest: Kyaw Tha Paw U, UCACC Chair

Meeting participants:

Kyaw Tha Paw U (Chair), Jenson Wong (Vice Chair), John Kubiawicz (Berkeley), Cristiana Drake (Davis), Paul Gershon (Irvine), Matthew Fisher (UCLA), Lisa Yeo (Merced), Ilya Brookwell (Riverside), Barry Grant (San Diego), Duygu Tosun-Turgut (San Francisco), Frank Brown (Santa Barbara), Zac Zimmer (Santa Cruz), James Steintrager (Academic Council Chair), Steven Cheung (Academic Council Vice Chair), James Bisley (CCGA Vice Chair), Mark Hanna (UCOLASC Vice Chair), Jamie Hindery (Undergraduate Student, UC Santa Cruz), Van Williams (Vice President for ITS and UC Chief Information Officer), Monte Ratzlaff (Cyber-Risk Program Manager), Joanne Miller (Committee Analyst)