



February 7, 2006

J. Gary Auguston, Pennsylvania State University
Laurie Benson, Inacom Corporation
Jim Bottum, Purdue University
John W. McCredie, University of California-Berkeley (Chair)
Steve Relyea, University of California-San Diego

Dear Colleagues:

Thank you again for your willingness to serve on the external review committee exploring information technology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

As you know, our CIO and Director of the Division of Information Technology (DoIT) is retiring at the end of this academic year. This change in leadership presents an opportunity to review our IT situation on campus and to assess our basic structure, administrative practices, and approaches we have taken to serve our IT needs. This review will help us determine whether there are changes we should consider at this critical juncture in our history.

This review is intended to focus on IT on campus broadly considered, including (but not limited to) the structure and functioning of DoIT itself. The basic questions we seek to answer are:

1. Are we positioned to serve the IT needs we face as a first-class public research university in the coming years? What are our primary strengths and the main problem areas we should address?
2. What changes should we consider in preparing for a new CIO?
3. What ideas and recommendations should we share with the new CIO to assist in formulating agendas for the future?
4. Is the position of CIO designed appropriately for this campus? Is the position sufficiently attractive to allow us to recruit the best possible person for our campus?

Of course, there are some key constraints that must frame the answers to these questions. UW-Madison is a large, highly diversified public research university with many top-ranked programs across the arts and humanities, social sciences, sciences, and professional schools. Our campus is not only large and complex, but very decentralized. Budgetary and operational decision-making with regard to many of our core functions, including IT, is distributed across our 11 primary academic colleges as well as other units. UW-Madison is only one campus – albeit the flagship campus – of a large university System encompassing 2 Ph.D. campuses, 11 comprehensives, the UW Colleges (2-year colleges), plus UW-Extension. Our central IT

organization serves not only our campus, but many needs of UW-System and other campuses. UW-Madison has been facing an increasingly tight budget situation in recent years in large part because of legislative cuts to our budget as well as relatively low tuition.

Our investigation process is as follows: We have gathered considerable documentation about our current IT functions at the campus and distributed levels, including detailed information about DoIT. We are grateful to you, as members of the external review committee, for your willingness to undertake the task of providing an evaluative report based on these materials, along with your on-campus visit in March and any other materials you would like us to provide.

Your committee is composed of five people. Three are CIO's from a diverse group of major public research universities, including your chair, Jack McCredie (Berkeley), Jim Bottum (Purdue), and Gary Auguston (Penn State). The other two members include Steve Relyea, Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs at UCSD, and Laurie Benson, CEO of Inacom. We are also charging an internal review committee to engage in a parallel review. These reports will be received and discussed by key shared governance committees and leadership groups, and will ultimately form the basis for decisions by the Chancellor and Provost.

A dean's task force offers the following more specific questions to guide your work:

1. What is the optimum administrative structure for IT at UW-Madison?
 - Should the CIO be the director of DoIT, as now, or should the director report to the CIO? If the positions of CIO and director of DoIT are separated, are there other information functions (such as the Libraries) that should report to the CIO?
 - Should the CIO report to the Provost, as now, or to the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor for Administration?
2. What is the optimum way of arranging administration and service provision on this decentralized campus?
 - What services should be provided centrally, and what functions should be decentralized?
 - What should be the administrative relationship of IT operations that reside in departments, schools and colleges to the central IT organization on a continuum ranging from reporting to the centralized operation to completely independent?
 - If we have both centralized and decentralized IT groups, how should the centralized and distributed parts of the IT infrastructure be coordinated to achieve operating efficiencies and economies of scale?
3. Should administration of IT functions be divided more clearly into three parts: research, administration, instruction?
4. How should the CIO and UW-Madison IT organizations relate to UW-System and other state agencies? What is working well and what needs changing in the current arrangements?
5. What functions should be provided on campus and which should be outsourced?
 - What criteria should be used for making these decisions?
 - Are we appropriately engaged in collaborations with other institutions and organizations, such as the CIC and major IT networks?
6. What services and functions should be part of the "basic" IT package on campus, covered by central funding and/or basic "subscription," and what should be custom service paid for by the user of the custom service?
7. What should be the criteria and process for setting priorities for IT projects and services?
8. What avenues exist for improving our business model for providing IT services and support?

9. How well are we positioned, and what improvement strategies should we consider with respect to key areas of IT service provision, including
 - Providing appropriate levels and types of service to faculty, staff, administration, and students
 - Creating a service-oriented, user-friendly environment for members of the university at all levels of IT sophistication
 - Providing appropriate levels of and processes for security

This is obviously a huge list, and you may think of other questions we have missed. We invite you to use your expertise to shape the questions and the report as you believe appropriate.

Thank you once again for your willingness to assist us. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or Paul Barrows.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Sapiro', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Virginia Sapiro
Interim Provost

Enclosures