Information Technology Student Advisory Committee (ITSAC)

Annual Report

2008 - 2009

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I.   Introduction

This year's IT Student Advisory Committee experienced some minor changes that helped modify some of the processes and procedures that the committee has followed in order to generate comprehensive and straight-forward year-end reports. Last year ITSAC was chaired by two Co-Chairs, but due to other commitments only one Chair was able to return to chair this year's committee. This identified a need to create a structured Chair refresh cycle to ensure that the workload of organizing the committee meetings could be handled and that future Chairs can be given experience working on the committee before becoming the Chair.

To aid in the creation of the final report, time was set aside near the end of every ITSAC meeting to formalize recommendations on the topics discussed at the current meeting as well as the previous meeting. This ensured that topics were covered multiple times and the recommendations were clear and separated from general feedback and summaries of the topics. Recommendations for each topic are separated in this report and numbered so that each one can be addressed by the Manager's Response report.

This year also saw the transition of two key IT services on campus. In the Spring 2008, CCS unveiled the new email and calendaring system, Gryph Mail, that was rolled out to replace WEBmail. The new system contained many features that were considered lacking in the old WEBmail system by previous ITSAC committees. It was also announced this year that Blackboard/Courselink, the learning management system used on campus, would be replaced by a vendor hosted Desire2Learn (D2L) solution. A pilot was started in the Winter 2009 semester and D2L will completely replace Blackboard/Courselink beginning in the Spring 2009. Discussing both these topics early in the process gave a great opportunity for the committee to have input on the direction and presentation of both products.

Aside from regularly discussed topics at ITSAC such as WebAdvisor, NAC, software support, and email, the committee also discussed StartOnline, the Library IT Survey, and AskGryph. As well, the committee had discussions on two critical topics: documentation and communication regarding IT services on campus and the role that CCS plays in all of it, and using technology such as clickers and multimedia in learning.

II. Membership

IT Student Advisory Committee: Membership Information – 2008-2009

Matt Searle
Analyst, CCS
Chair

Randy Oldham
Library

Saveena Patara
Analyst, CCS

Josh Gaber
Central Student Association (CSA)

Wyatt Carss
Student Senate Caucus (SSC)

Jordan Kapp
College of Physical & Engineering Science Steering
Committee (CPESSC)

Jeff Zeyl
College of Bioligical Science Student Council
(CBSSC)

Stefanie Nagelschmitz
Students Federation of the Ontario Agricultural
College (SFOAC)

Megan Ellwood
College of Social and Applied Human Sciences –
Student Alliance (CSAHS-SA)

Jacqueline Figuero
College of Management and Economics (CME)

Peter Morin
Interhall Council

Zachary Dadson
College of Arts Student Union (CASU)

Scott St. Louis
Centre for Students with Disabilites (CSD)

No Rep
Grad Student Association

No Rep
Central Veterinary Students' Association

No Rep
Guelph-Humber Student Association

III.   Gryph Mail

Gerrit Bos, Communication and Collaboration Cluster Lead, CCS, gave a brief history and overview of the Gryph Mail/Zimbra E-mail and Calendaring solution that CCS rolled out to campus over the summer. The new system integrates e-mail, calendaring, and address books for all members of the university, allowing students, faculty, and staff to book meetings and to share calendars, email folders, and address books; previously all faculty and staff used a calendaring system called Oracle Calendar and there was no calendaring solution for students. Gerrit discussed the improved spam filtering, increased quota's, performance increase from WEBmail, and all the available help and training avenues for Gryph Mail and Calendaring: project page on CCS website containing info and training videos, discussion forum in MyPortico forums, and direct help through the help centre. CCS will continue to evaluate added functionality such as briefcase, chat, and zimlets.

General Feedback:

Overall students are happy with the change from WEBmail to Gryph Mail. The new system is sleeker and more feature rich than WEBmail. The addition of the calendar is great and many students are already taking advantage of it. The new system can be overwhelming for some, especially to upper year students who are used to using WEBmail, since there are so many things that can be done in Gryph Mail that could not be done or were done differently in WEBmail.

CCS Comment: Thank you for the comments. ITSAC's recommendations are very valuable as we continue to enhance Gryph Mail.

Recommendations:

1) The information on the new calendaring and email system needs to be pushed out to students.
    - A lot of students are not aware of the features of the new mail system.
    - Students know how to send an email, but they need to know the more advanced functionality and most of the calendaring functionality.
    - We are unsure of what the best way to communicate this to students would be though.

    CCS Response: CCS continues to develop the resources and documentation on our web site to aid the community in maximizing their productivity by leveraging all of the features available in Gryph Mail.

2) Overwhelming recommendation for course schedules, due dates, etc to be populated in the Gryph Mail calendar.

    CCS Response: Registrarial Services is working with CCS to allow students to export their calendar from Web Advisor and import it into Gryph Mail.

3) Gryph Mail should be branded a little better. The current colour scheme works, but there is no real connection to the University of Guelph other than the little logo on the login page. It should use the Guelph colour scheme (red, gold, black) - this would effectively brand Gryph Mail and make it clearer that the service is part of the University of Guelph.

CCS Response: *CCS continues to evaluate options for institutional branding of Gryph Mail that do not sacrifice the usability of the software suite.*

4) Synchronization programs for the calendaring system should be made available to students and staff. For example, being able to link your calendar to Outlook, iCal, Sunbird, and Lightning.

   CCS Response: *For information on available software tools or programs to synchronize or access Gryph Mail calendar data from desktop tools, please see the CCS web site at http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/email/suite/index.shtml.*

5) Add RSS CCS news feed to the front "login" page.

   CCS Response: *Enhancements for RSS news feeds are scheduled to take place during the 2009/2010 academic year.*

6) Customize the Login page for Gryph Mail so that there is a link to the Gryph Mail and Calendaring training resources/information. This should be true for all services that CCS provides.

   CCS Response: *Enhancements for the Gryph Mail login page, including support for Single Sign-On (SSO) and RSS news feeds are scheduled to take place during the 2009/2010 academic year. We will also explore other enhancements such as links to training resources.*

7) Perhaps put a TIP OF THE DAY on the Gryph Mail login page that contains useful tips on using Gryph Mail and Calendaring.

   CCS Response: *Enhancements for the Gryph Mail login page, including support for Single Sign-On (SSO) and RSS news feeds are scheduled to take place during the 2009/2010 academic year. We will also explore other enhancements such as TIP OF THE DAY.*

8) It would be nice to have mobile device support for students. Currently there is only a pilot that excludes students.

   CCS Response: *Mobile access is natively supported in Gryph Mail for Active Sync devices, including the IPhone. For more information on accessing Gryph Mail from mobile devices, please see the CCS web site at http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/email/suite/mobility.shtml*

IV.   Network Access Control (NAC)

Drew MacPherson, Manager, CCS, accompanied by Leo Song, Networking & Security Cluster Lead, CCS, and Dennis Xu, Networking & Security, CCS, gave a presentation on Network Access Control at the University of Guelph. NAC ensures that only authenticated users can use our network and that the computers they are using are secure and virus free. To do this, a software agent is installed on the client computer (Windows only) that verifies that appropriate Windows security patches are applied and a virus scanner is running with up-to-date virus definitions. If the computer does not meet these criteria the user is put into a quarantine role that gives them limited access to the network so they can do basic things including taking the necessary steps to patch their system to meet the requirements of the NAC agent. In the month of October, there were 13,000+ devices accessing the network and 13,000+ unique users. Approximately 80% of computers are Windows based, 20% are MACs, and about 1% are others such as Linux. In the Spring 2009 semester CCS plans to enforce the policy for critical OS updates. Eventually CCS plans on implementing NAC for wired connections in public and semi-public locations and is planning policy enforcement in student residence for the Fall 2009.

General Feedback:

Generally speaking, the average student typically doesn't care about NAC - it's a small hassle but doesn't really bother them; if they have to install a client and update their virus scanner to get access they'll do it. Most students are still unsure if the hassle is worth it for the security it gives, but it's not a big concern. Power users, however, tend to find the NAC to be quite a nuisance. On older computers the Cisco Clean-Access agent can also slow things down significantly as it does use cpu and RAM resources. Are there other solutions available that might be less intrusive and less hassle to the end-user?

CCS Comment: Thank you for the comments. Protecting our computing environment and networks is critical and CCS ensures that the appropriate steps are taken, while trying to minimize the impact to our users. We certainly appreciate the understanding that students have shown in this regard.

Recommendations:

1) Provide notification far in advance of any changes to the service.

   CCS Response: CCS uses our web site and RSS news feeds to notify the community of any changes in service. Announcements are scheduled to ensure that the information is released to the community in a timely and relevant fashion.

2) We feel it is important to be proactive and give advance notices about changes in the NAC service, even if it will affect a small number of users. For example, when CCS makes the critical OS patches required before being granted access to the internet, students should have advanced notice. It may only affect 900 out of 13,000 users, but that is still a lot of users and they should be given time to prepare for the changes.

   CCS Response: CCS uses our web site and RSS news feeds to notify the community of any changes in service. All attempts are made to schedule announcements to ensure that the information is released to the community in a timely and relevant fashion.

3) Provide a link to the software distribution site from the main NAC page, and make sure it is also available in the quarantine role.

   CCS Response: *The software distribution site is available in the quarantine role. Customization of the NAC page is limited however CCS will evaluate adding a link to the software distribution site.*

4) Ensure all uoguelph.ca sites are available in the quarantine role - Gryph Mail, Blackboard, Web Advisor, etc. If the University of Guelph mandates that email is the official mode of communication, then you should definitely be able to check your email regardless of whether you meet the requirements of NAC.

   CCS Response: *CCS will do a review of what sites should be available in the quarantine role.*

5) After the quarantine role expires, students should still be able to access email at the very least.

   CCS Response: *Access to these and other web resources is available for wireless users who have not met the requirements of NAC by choosing* **Limited Network Access***. For more information see our web site at http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/internet/nac/clean_access_agent.shtml*

V.   Documentation, Communication, and CCS

Kent Hoeg, Manager, CCS, and Cort Egan, Communications Officer, Office of the CIO, led an open discussion regarding the documentation that exists for IT services on campus, how students can get help for these services, how information regarding these services is communicated to the students, and what role CCS plays in regards to all of these topics.

General Feedback:

This discussion was prompted by the fact that many students were unaware of how to find information about IT services such as Gryph Mail, WebAdvisor, and Courselink (Blackboard) and how they would go about getting help for any of these services. Many IT services are provided by CCS, but many critical services are managed by other groups on campus, some in partnership with CCS. Many students, however, do not understand who CCS is, what services they provide, and what role they play on campus.

For getting IT help, most students don't know what help they can get from CCS and how they would get that help. Since everyone does not associate CCS with all IT services, a lot of students think they should only go to CCS for resnet issues and hardware and network problems. To get help many students use Google search as their starting point, as opposed to the search on the UofG website which does not always return the most useful results or the CCS website search which is not very useful either - most results that are returned are pdf documents, not actual web pages. While the forums are also available for some help, most students don't even know they exist or how to access them.

CCS Comment: Thank you for the comments and insight. The recommendations below are great and each one will be considered.

Recommendations:

1) Put a help link on every service that links to a help page. Make the link consistent - on the login page as well as in the application, same position, same format, same text. The link can go to individual help pages or preferably to a central help page that would contain help for all the services - can include FAQ's, link to forums, help centre info, etc.

    CCS Response: CCS will be developing a new website over the next 6 months and suggestions such as these will be helpful for our Communications and Web Solutions teams as they work on the new design. As it is right now, there is a link to the current Help pages on all of the website pages as part of the navigation elements. This links to our Help services information.

2) There should be a central location for all documentation. Perhaps have a help portal with all of the help information in one spot. All services could point to the one page and students could navigate from there - as long as it's very clear and easy to use - to get the appropriate help. There could also be a knowledgebase containing most frequent issues as reported to the CCS Help Centre with solutions or workarounds posted. Maybe even include a bug-tracker where students can submit problems or issues.

    CCS Response: We are currently developing a knowledge base of answers to many of the standard issues for which our clients may require assistance. Beginning this fall, this knowledge base will be used by our internal personnel to provide detailed and consistent responses to

inquiries and requests from our clients. The next step will be the development of self-service opportunities based on the knowledge base and many of our frequently asked questions whereby we can provide a central location for these answers to so they are easily available to our clients.

3) CCS news should be on all core CCS services, including the login pages for Gryph Mail, Web Advisor, Blackboard, etc - use to advertise CCS services, outages, and perhaps helpful information.

   CCS Response: *As we move to a revised CCS Website, we will be expanding our use of CCS News. This recommendation will be taken into consideration. We are also working on revisions to our CCS Website to accommodate "scorecards" – providing information as to the availability of some of our CCS Services. It should be noted that CCS is not responsible for all IT services on campus. For example, Web Advisor is the responsibility of the Registrar; D2L/Blackboard is the responsibility of Teaching Support Services.*

4) Users should be able to subscribe to CCS news (RSS feed) via email so you could get the notices even if you don't really use any of the other services.

   CCS Response: *Within Gryph Mail, you can subscribe to RSS Feeds using this approach:*
   1. *On an existing folder (eg Inbox), right click and select New Folder*
   2. *Type the name of the folder that you want to call it (ie CCS New)*
   3. *Click on "Subscribe to RSS/ATOM feed"*
   4. *A URL field appears. Paste in the URL of the RSS feed. For example, for CCS news type* *http://blogs.uoguelph.ca/ccsnews/blog/default/?flavor=rss2*
   5. *OK*

5) Maybe have an intro/reminder email to welcome students at the beginning of each semester that would identify the various services offered by CCS and where to get computing help. Students can then use this as a reference and easily bookmark the help pages or whatever information they want to. An email once a semester or even once a year would not be annoying or intrusive to students.

   CCS Response: *Thank you for this suggestion. We will look into this.*

6) Include something in the first year residence package with information about CCS - what services it provides, where to go for help, etc. To make it more useful to students, include a complete list of every service that CCS maintains/offers, with up-to-date information about these services.
   a. A single sheet of paper is easy to misplace or get lost in piles of paper - maybe it would be better to provide a pamphlet or book that a student could keep with them throughout their university career. We understand that information changes and creating a pamphlet or book meant to be kept for multiple years may not be feasible.

   CCS Response: *Thank you for this suggestion. We will look into this.*

7) Students don't think using professors to distribute IT information would be the best way to go. It could be very annoying for the professors.

CCS Response: *Thank you for this feedback.*

8) Put a CCS link on the University of Guelph home page.

   CCS Response: *The University of Guelph home page is the responsibility of the university's Communications and Public Affairs department. We can make this suggestion to this department, however it is not under our control.*

9) We recommend CCS comes to ITSAC when they have questions and are looking at starting new projects. They should come to us with questions and get our feedback. We are here to help inform and offer recommendations.

   CCS Response: *We appreciate this and see great value in this.*

10) It would be worthwhile if CCS conducted a survey to get student opinions and ITSAC would evaluate the survey beforehand and provide their feedback.
    a. Randy, the Library representative, recommended that we extend the survey that the library did last year and include more questions specific to CCS and IT services on campus.

    CCS Response: *The CCS Communications team is devising a number of ways in which they can illicit information from our clients to allow them input to assist us in improving our services. Surveys are one method of doing so, as are focus groups and general client feedback. We will be reviewing various opportunities to ensure we continue to receive student opinions. The IT Student Advisory Committee is a very important method for tapping into student opinions as well.*

11) For promotional material, CCS should spell out the acronym that CCS stands for. As well, if students saw "CCS" with a tagline that captures what CCS provides it would be more useful and help students to associate the IT services with CCS. The tagline could also be used somewhere on the actual services themselves.

    CCS Response: *Thank you for this feedback.*

12) Improve the search function on the CCS website. Currently it tends to only return pdf documents in the results, not actual web pages. For example, a search for ResNet returns 3 pages of pdf documents, but not a single webpage - not even the main ResNet webpage (http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/internet/resnet/index.shtml) is displayed.

    CCS Response: *This is a known issue and our Web Solutions team is working on this for the fall semester.*

VI.   Office 2007, Vista, and Mac's

Vincent Tan, Client Solutions Cluster Lead, CCS, described the Microsoft Office license agreement the University of Guelph has with Microsoft that makes Office 2007 available through the CCS software distribution site to students at a discounted, academic price. For staff and faculty Office 2007 is the standard office product that is used.

Since the release of Windows Vista, more and more computers coming on campus already have Vista installed. Windows Vista has not been wholly replaced by Windows XP yet as the main supported operating system on campus, but CCS still tries to provide as much support for Vista users as possible. The same goes for Mac - Mac is not supported on campus but if CCS can help with certain issues for those with a Mac they will.

General Feedback:
Not all students can afford commercial software; there are free alternatives for most of the software required by students to do their school work, but not all students are aware that they exist.

Macs are becoming more and more popular and statistics from the wireless network (as presented at a previous ITSAC meeting) indicate that 1 out of every 5 computers accessing the wireless network is a Mac. This is a significant portion of the population and this number will most likely keep growing.

CCS Comment: Thank you for the comments and insight. Our latest Resnet statistics show approximately a 17% Mac usage. CCS continues to evaluate its services and tries to balance the need with the resources available. Although we cannot guarantee all our services on the Mac we do provide best effort support in many cases.

Recommendations:
1) There are enough Mac users on campus to warrant CCS supporting it, and chances are the number of people using Macs will continue to increase in the coming years.

   CCS Response: We recognize an increase in Mac use on campus, Several services, including enterprise applications are still only available on windows systems We do provide best effort support to users with other platforms and when deploying new services we look for options that are web based and independent of the OS – as an example – Gryph Mail.

2) Trends in computing usage should be monitored and CCS services should be tailored to service the largest group of users possible (as many students as possible).

   CCS Response: Although we may see an increase in Mac use on campus, it is still very much a minority of the U of G community. To that end, and following this recommendation, we do tailor our services to the largest percentage of our user who are still Windows users. We do provide best effort support to users with other platforms.

3) We recommend that an effort be made such that all software & applications used by the University be supported on the Mac platform as well as Windows. The same applies to web applications like Blackboard/Courselink, D2L, Gryph Mail, etc.

4) Open Office does support the new office file formats. We could offer recommendations for free versions of office and other software as alternatives to the commercial products that are needed by students. Open Office, Google documents, free PDF creator's, etc.

    CCS Response: Thank you for this feedback, we will consider this recommendation.

5) Professors should be encouraged to use PDF's instead of word or other document types that not every student will be able to open.

    CCS Response: We will share this recommendation with Teaching Support Services.

6) CCS should talk to TSS about standards in software use and support.

    CCS Response: CCS and TSS have increased their communication with one another since the start of the D2L implementation. This has given us great opportunity to talk about standards, etc.

7) Provide a "RECOMMENDED CONFIGURATION" for computers for first year students. Let them know that Macs are not 100 percent supported, while Microsoft Windows is, and provide this information to first year students before they come on campus if possible.

    CCS Response: This information is available on the CCS website now and we ensure that we do mention that Macintosh is not supported while the Windows platform is. This information is available on the CCS website as follows: http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/resources/technology/computer_specs.shtml

8) Encourage use of PDF's for submission and promote free PDF creators.

    CCS Response: We will share this recommendation with Teaching Support Services.

VII.   StartOnline

Naeem Ordonez, Student Life, and Kent Hoeg, Manager, CCS, discussed StartOnline, a program/website dedicated to assisting and preparing first year students for life at the University of Guelph before they arrive on campus. This is accomplished through a peer to peer based model where senior student volunteers provide leadership and guidance to first year participants.

CCS' Web Services cluster created a new StartOnline site for Student Life this year that included forums, a "coffee shop", video tutorials, and a chat feature (which was removed due to some technical issues). Student Life created facebook groups for incoming students before StartOnline began, and then when it did they used the facebook groups to direct students to StartOnline. Students would get weekly emails from StartOnline containing useful information and guidance and were encouraged to log onto StartOnline and check out all the resources that were available to them. Active participation was also encouraged and many students did so, helping make StartOnline a great success.

General Feedback:

Many first year students find StartOnline quite helpful. You get to interact with senior students who are very knowledgeable about the University of Guelph and the issues a new student will face, and you get to meet and interact with fellow first year students. The forums on StartOnline were very helpful, as was the coffee shop feature, which was a section on the main page that contained the most talked about topics from the forum. Students loved the stats showing how many users were online; it made them feel like they were part of a large community and that StartOnline was a very active place. The weekly emails were very useful and students appreciated the less formal tone, such as "From my perspective" or "When I was a student", which made it easier for students to relate to. Overall StartOnline was very useful to incoming students.

Student Life Comment: We are grateful for the opportunity to work with CCS on STARTOnline as we work to improve service, accessibility and the quality of the START environment. ITSAC's recommendations and suggestions proved most helpful in this regard.

Recommendations:

1) CCS should be using StartOnline to promote its services, such as software distribution, IT Help, new computer specifications, etc, to incoming students.

    Student Life Response: CNS (Centre for New Students) already does include information from CCS - we often refer students to new computer specifications page, IT help, ResNet, etc. Software distribution hasn't been included to date, however we will work with CCS to review the content and see if some additional blog entries are needed.

2) Chat feature is important for making StartOnline even more effective - it could potentially keep students on StartOnline more. What about using something like meebo? It is very easy to use and embed.

    Student Life Response: We all agree that the chat feature is important. We haven't looked into meebo so will take this suggestion into consideration.

3) Sending of emails to incoming students is a key way of getting people to StartOnline and should be utilized more. There is a lot of useful information that is contained in StartOnline that can easily be missed by those students who just log in a couple of times.

    Student Life Response: *These are helpful suggestions. We could beef up the 'this week on START online' section of the weekly e-mail messages and we could also ensure we are using HTML to format nicer e-mail messages. We do need to balance this however, since sending more frequent messages is a bad idea... it will look like spam to some people.*

4) Include more video tutorials for students: Gryph Mail, Blackboard/Courselink, D2L, and other CCS Services.

    Student Life Response: *Good idea.*

5) Tell students they need to bring a network cable since there is no wireless in residence. CIS sells network cables at a very cheap price.

    Student Life Response: *We already do this in the forums especially when listing what to bring just before move-in.*

6) Perhaps keep StartOnline around for longer since even after students start at the University of Guelph there is still a need to provide this information to students.

    Student Life Response: *STARTonline.ca continues to be available after Labour Day Weekend, but students choose not to login. We've tried a number of approaches in the past to extend START beyond move-in, without success. My speculation is that they are surrounded with so many new people at the start of the new year that they hardly need to go online to meet people. We could always try again (online culture is continuously shifting) but unless there is evidence of demand, we're hesitant to devote much in the way of resources to this. Additionally we want students to participate to our other transition programs running once students are on campus: Orientation and Momentum.*

VIII. Desire2Learn (D2L) Migration

Richard Gorrie, Manager of Learning Technology & Courseware Innovation, TSS, and Kyle Mackie, Manager of Courseware Services, TSS, discussed the Desire2Learn (D2L) Migration project currently taking place on campus (official project website - http://www.uoguelph.ca/tss/D2Lmigration/). Last year, with the support of the CIO and the AVPA, a decision was made to have a single Learning Management System (LMS) on campus, and D2L was chosen as the product to move forward with, replacing the current implementation of Blackboard (Courselink). The Office of Open Learning (OOL) has had a close relationship with D2L ever since they first started using D2L to offer distance courses in 1999. They have had great success using the software and have received excellent support from D2L over the years. The use of Blackboard (formerly WebCT) for on-campus courses was becoming problematic in many ways; the hardware and software costs were also getting higher and would continue to grow with increased use. Based on a number of factors the decision to migrate to one LMS was made and D2L was the chosen application.

A full pilot is being run now with 40 courses being offered in the new D2L (which is a hosted solution by Desire2Learn in Toronto). In the Spring 2009 all courses will be offered in D2L. The OOL will continue to have administrative control over the Open Learning (distance education) courses, but they will be hosted inside the new D2L solution.

Desire2Learn has also promised to work on specific University of Guelph criteria such as Single Sign-On (SSO) and Colleague integration. There has also been interest from other groups, not just teaching, to make use of D2L since it can be used for other purposes (groups, research, surveys, etc).

General Feedback:

There has been some negative feedback regarding D2L from students who are part of the pilot this semester: there are some frustrations with the new D2L due to the differences between it and Blackboard; students are used to using Blackboard and find changing the way they do things a little frustrating. That being said, it is really too early to provide a lot of feedback since D2L is currently only in a pilot phase and not a lot of students are using it. Hopefully next year after students have used it for awhile the committee can provide greater feedback.

TSS Comment: While we did not receive significant negative feedback from students in the pilot directly or via faculty, it is understandable that there would be some frustration with a new system, especially after a semester using the old system. We will certainly appreciate any feedback the committee can provide.

Recommendations:

1) Seamlessly integrate the student information system (WebAdvisor) with Desire2Learn.

   TSS Response: This is a major goal of the migration, however it will happen in stages. This fall we will have course enrollment and creation tied to the SIS so that students will be enrolled in courses within 24-48 hours of signing up in Colleague and will also be removed from courses which they have dropped within 24-48 hours.

2) The distance education (Open Learning) and in-class D2L instances should use the same login so that users only have to login once to gain access to both DE courses and in-class courses.

TSS Response: *This is taking place in a phased manner. A dozen DE credit courses will be part of the migration in the Fall, appearing on the same page listing on-campus courses. In Winter 2009, there will be a single login for on-campus and DE courses.*

3) The layout and data organization needs to be customized to increase usability - we are comparing to the current Distance Education/Open Learning instance of D2L, which lacks a little in usability compared to Blackboard.

   TSS Response: *Usability and the user experience are obviously major concerns.*

4) After being up and running for awhile, TSS should come back to ITSAC and get additional feedback on the Desire2Learn LMS.

   TSS Response: *We would be highly appreciative of the feedback and look forward to meeting again with the committee.*

5) We recommend soliciting feedback from pilot participants and making this information available to the community.

   TSS Response: *This is a good idea and while we have had a general comment on the pilot, we will put together a more detailed report.*

6) We recommend gathering feedback from users during the actual production run of the new D2L. Is this product meeting the needs of instructors and students?

   TSS Response: *A good suggestion. We will put it into effect.*

7) It is important to provide documentation and training to students and faculty so they know how to use this new service. Including documentation outlining how you would do something in D2L compared to Blackboard.

   TSS Response: Documentation and training are currently being developed and will be available in the Fall 2009 semester. The focus will be on how to do things in D2L.

IX.   Library Survey

Randy Oldham, IT Services, McLaughlin Library, went over the questions of a survey that the Library did last year regarding trends in computing. The Library is planning on repeating this survey again in the fall of 2009. Repeating the survey will allow comparisons to be made between the 2 sets of results which may also result in the emergence of trends in computing and computing. The results from the previous survey were very useful to the Library and CCS and have been used to give a better understanding of how students use computers and various web technologies. The questions in the survey were used to gather information on what computers and mobile devices students use, how and where they use these devices, what technologies and services they use for academic and personal use, what type of courses they have taken, and how they do research.

The committee reviewed the existing survey questions, provided input and feedback on question wording, and also gave a few recommendations on new questions to ask to get more information from respondents.

X.   WebAdvisor

Tim Frank, Registrarial Systems and Technology, gave a brief presentation on WebAdvisor that detailed how it is a part of the Datatel Colleague application; Colleague is the current student information system (SIS) used at the University of Guelph that is responsible for handling all student enrolments. There are limitations on what can be done to WebAdvisor since it is a part of a larger product package, so for any modifications/additions the web development tools/interfaces provided by Datatel must be used. Many institutions use the out-of-the-box WebAdvisor but here at the UofG they have modified the product greatly from the beginning to make it more appealing and useable. Aside from the Guelph specific branding, the WebAdvisor team has created custom student processes such as the registration billing, account summary, application for graduation, and the Go Transit application, as well as added enhancements such as the integration of the Ask Gryph help feature, class and exam schedules, and course descriptions from calendars.

Tim has done some initial investigation in allowing students to export their class schedule and import it into Gryph Calendar, but there are still many issues that would need to be worked out before making it available to students.

Since the upgrade to version 3 of the Datatel Colleague software, Tim has been running Google analytics on the site and can compare usage trends. In Dec 2007 when WebAdvisor went down there was a large spike in usage, even greater then this Dec 2008. This could have been caused by students getting timeouts and errors and then continuing to click on links to try and gain access to the system - this would have increased the usage and eventually bogged down the system and crashed it. Since then the hardware infrastructure has been expanded and had no issues dealing with the usage in Dec 2008.

General Feedback:

In general, students are quite happy with WebAdvisor and are unsure why there would be complaints against it anymore; it is very useful, stable, and encompasses a lot of features and functionality that it performs admirably. The committee also appreciates the modifications that have been done to WebAdvisor to make it a superior product to the default, out-of-the-box version that many institutions seem to stick with. Since the hardware and software upgrade that occurred following the system crash in Dec 2007, there have been no real issues from the student perspective.

Registrarial Services Comment: Thank you once again to ITSAC for inviting me to speak about WebAdvisor. A large amount of time and effort have been put into WebAdvisor over many years to try and create the best experience for our users. It is extremely encouraging to hear the many positive comments from the committee. The hardware upgrades made in 2008 have greatly improved the stability of WebAdvisor during peak usage times and have reduced the number of issues reported by students.

The ITSAC reports from past years have been an important source of recommendations. In fact many of the recommendations from past reports have been incorporated into the system as part of minor and major WebAdvisor upgrades. Work is already in progress to address the recommendations in this report. Hopefully the improvements will be incorporated during the next WebAdvisor upgrade cycle.

Recommendations:

1) Change the session timeout to at least 30 minutes, preferably one hour. Students are used to closing their browsers or logging out after doing online activities, so the security risk for an increased timeout value is minimal.

   Registrar Services - Response: The current session time-out on WebAdvisor is set to 5 minutes. We can review this setting to see if it can be increased to a value on par with similar services on campus.

2) Have a link directly to the academic calendars (both Undergraduate and Graduate) in the quick links section on WebAdvisor.

   Registrar Services - Response: Improvements are required to provide more direct access to the four academic calendars from WebAdvisor.

3) Being able to export student calendars/schedules from WebAdvisor into an iCal format would be really great.

   Registrar Services - Response: There is interest from many groups on campus to have course/exam schedule information available in Gryph Calendar. Concerns about information accuracy still need to be discussed.

4) Place the calendar of dates regarding course selection, reading week, and last day of classes in WebAdvisor (essentially a copy of the one in the academic calendar).

   Registrar Services - Response: We will try to resolve the challenge of making critical dates easily accessible to student, staff and faculty.

XI.   AskGryph

Jeff Overton, Registrarial Systems and Technology, presented an overview of AskGryph, which is the help system used by the Office of Registrarial Services and is found on their website and is integrated with WebAdvisor and the student financial system, as well as a couple of other websites. AskGryph uses a common interface for all systems that utilize it and a single database to store all the information it uses to provide answers to questions or error messages when a problem occurs. For WebAdvisor errors, AskGryph tries to find the error in its database and give a more intelligible error message to the user; unfortunately, this can be difficult as WebAdvisor can give quite cryptic error messages. Since WebAdvisor crashed in Dec 2007, a new mechanism has been added to AskGryph, where it will email the AskGryph administrator with any bumps or glitches that it is experiencing so that problems can hopefully be avoided before they become too severe and affect system stability.

The developers of AskGryph strive to provide an 80% good response rate to questions and to minimize the number of mouse clicks needed for the user to complete their objective.

General Feedback:

Most students use AskGryph when they start using WebAdvisor and are getting familiar with it and having some issues and questions, but after that they use it very infrequently. Having to ask questions in full question form is not intuitive considering how Google and most other search engines work, and this does cause some issues getting the answers you need because you may not be phrasing the question properly. The results page which gives an example of how to ask questions is helpful in demonstrating how a question should be asked though.

Recommendations:

1) Change the background colour or use an icon to make the AskGryph feature stand out more.

   Registrarial Services Response: I have made the changes on the Registrarial Services sites: http://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/registrar/index.cfm?index. The changes to AskGryph on the WebAdvisor site will require some discussion with Tim, as he will have to implement these.

2) Placing AskGryph in the right-hand side menu (the main menu and/or quick links) would make it more noticeable and might be a better placement for it than at the top. Having it in both places would be fine as well.

   Registrarial Services Response: Same as 1).

3) People should be able to search using just keywords. Having to ask a whole question is not what students are used to and can create frustration for some students.

   Registrarial Services Response: I have created several landing pages and future updates to the product will allow this. I have tried (on the interface) to encourage people to use at least two words.

4) Is it possible to do something like YouTube or Google, where as you type it gives possible questions that you can select?

Registrarial Services Response: *We are looking into this possibility now that we have access to SOAP from the vendor.*

5) If you click on a link that sends you to AskGryph page that already has suggestions on it for questions, this might be useful.

   Registrarial Services Response: *Still working on aspects of this.*

6) We recommend that the errors in AskGryph/WebAdvisor be clearer and more descriptive.

   Registrarial Services Response: *We will try to correct these if possible. The WebAdvisor Help clerk position has been vacant for over 6 months and that would fall to them.*

7) Clarify the "Still need help?" section. To a lot of students it seems like you would use this only to report a major problem with WebAdvisor, not to get answers to questions you couldn't find an appropriate answer to through AskGryph. Also expand or clarify the Subject drop-down list on the submit form - make it encompass more current topics.

   Registrarial Services Response: *I have done some work on this; I have contacted the administrative units for their input and have assembled and reviewed it, I have to contact the vendor to get them to make the changes to the drop down list. I will make adjustments to the"Still need Help?" section and have those in place before September.*

XII.   Technology in Learning: Clickers (SRS), podcasts, and more

Richard Gorrie, Manager of Learning Technology & Courseware Innovation, TSS, gave a brief description of technology that TSS has introduced into the classroom.   Already there have been classes using clickers (student response systems) and overall feedback from both students and professors has been positive. Using clickers, professors can ask students questions during class and get their answers instantly.   There were two models of clickers being used previously, but TSS has now settled on one model. Other technologies such as wimba and streaming media are available to professors as well, but it's up to them to decide what technology, if any, they use in the classroom.

Len McCarthy, Professor of Music in the College of Arts, demonstrated how he uses Blackboard (WebCT/Courselink) to integrate technology into two of his classes. He tries to use the services available to him to make the best learning experience possible. He uses streaming media services that are available on campus to stream audio files that are needed by his students for assignments, youtube links into Blackboard, and sometimes streaming video.

General Feedback:

The students on the committee that have been in classes that used clickers liked them and thought they were useful. If integrated into a class properly they can be extremely helpful in increasing class participation and they can help students feel like they are not alone and that other students in the class are thinking the same way they are or are having the same problems that they are having.

Most students are accustomed to using technology and expect it to a certain degree in all their courses. Listening and note-taking are still essential skills that every student needs to learn and use, and the point of technology should not be to replace these skills but to enrich the learning experience. Sometimes a video can explain subjects much easier than one person talking about the subject. Professors can also make students use technology in their assignments; instead of students writing essays or answering questions, they can create podcasts or blog entries instead, for example. A little variety in courses and assignments can increase student interest.

TSS Comment: We are certainly aware that technology can enhance the learning experience (and results) in a variety of ways. At the same time faculty exhibit a variety of inclinations and aptitudes to technology. With that spectrum of user skills in mind we are working in a variety of ways to help faculty see the pedagogical value in learning technologies. The migration to one platform provides an excellent opportunity focus our efforts. At the same time there are a number of technologies, especially in the realm of social media, that work outside the learning management system or in concert with it, and we are promoting their use as well.

Recommendations:

1) Encourage professors to use more technology in classes; this should apply to both in-class courses and distance education courses. Some classes do not even make use of Blackboard at all! Technology can significantly enrich the learning experience if used properly and incorporating a variety of instructional formats can help cater to different learning styles.

   TSS Response: TSS and LTCI make every effort to encourage faculty to use in-class and online

technology in ways that enhance teaching and learning.

2) Make professors more aware of the technology options that are available to them (clickers, Wimba, CCS' Streaming Media service, D2L features, etc). Technology can be a great tool to aid in learning and if professors were aware of all the options available to them, they might use them more. Introducing D2L next year is a good opportunity for this because everyone will be at the same level and need to learn the new product.

   TSS Response: *We try to promote technology options.*

3) Class notes should be made available online for almost all classes, preferably in PDF or Word format.

   TSS Response: *This is a difficult recommendation to follow through on. It up to faculty to decide how much to post. We certainly will work with them to encourage the practice, trying to find a way which they are comfortable with and that also serves the needs of students.*

4) For distance education courses, the use of streaming media and video/audio podcasts should be more prevalent since lectures do not occur and there is no face-to-face interaction with the professor.

   Office of Open Learning Response: *Open Learning follows a systematic process of instructional design to develop our distance education courses. An important part of this process is media selection which involves identifying the most appropriate media to present information and support learning in an online environment. Our course designers discuss media strategies with professors at the early stages of design. In some cases it may not be appropriate to use video or audio at all. However, in many situations video and audio is a sound choice to enhance learning and provide variety to how students learn. One of the objectives of Open Learning is to use more multimedia in distance courses as we continue to develop new offerings and revise existing distance education courses.*

5) Clickers should be used in more classes. It's frustrating to buy a clicker and only use it for one course.

   TSS Response: *We are promoting the use of clickers in a variety of ways and their use appears to be growing.*

6) Diversity in assignments should be encouraged - writing an essay vs creating a podcast both require the same research but can challenge students in different ways.

   TSS Response: *This is an interesting idea and we will discuss it further.*

7) Include a "Use of Technology" section as part of the course evaluation so that professors who incorporate technology and use it effectively can be rewarded and those that do not use technology or do not use it effectively can get feedback on to utilize technology to improve the learning experience (and offered help from TSS or CCS if needed).

TSS Response: *An interesting idea, one that is adopted in some courses, but one we will try to promote further.*

XIII. IT Bytes - General IT Issues

At the end of every ITSAC meeting, committee members have the opportunity to bring up any IT issues or questions that they would like to discuss or get an explanation or answer to. If the issue cannot be answered immediately it is the responsibility of the chair to take the issue to members of CCS or the University community that should be able to provide info or an answer.

Clocks on the Library Laptops

Question:
Why do the laptops on reserve in the Library have the clocks removed?

Answer:
The clocks were removed for a couple of reasons.

1) Since the laptops are not turned on all the time, clock drift tends to occur due to the CMOS battery not giving constant power to keep the proper time.

2) Due to daylight savings time. The laptops are protected with software that prohibits any changes to the system. When the time changes, all laptops would need to be taken out of service and configured to reflect the new time change - this is very time consuming for Library ITS staff and disruptive to the service considering there are 150+ laptops that would be taken out of rotation while the maintenance is completed.

In order to synchronize the time with a time server the laptops would have to be connected to the internet all the time, which is not the case. Without the ability to guarantee that the time is accurate, the Library ITS staff felt it best to remove the clocks.

Recommendations:
The clocks should be added to the laptops with a disclaimer somewhere stating that the time may not be accurate. Perhaps add a time synchronization tool so when there is internet connectivity the time will automatically synchronize. Students do not only use the clocks on the laptops to determine when they should return them (there is a 2 hour limit); if a disclaimer is put somewhere on the laptops or near the sign-out desk then students would not be able to use that as an excuse for returning the laptops late regardless.   The physical clocks that are in the Library are not always visible so it can be quite difficult to know what time it is.

Library Response: There is no way to provide an accurate clock on the laptops so the clock was removed to prevent giving borrowers incorrect information. Some people were using the clocks to determine when they had to return the laptop, but the time cannot be accurately maintained on the laptops. The Library's experience with signage is that it is often ignored and does not help the person determine the correct time to avoid late fees. Placing a sign to tell people not to use the clock to accurately determine the time, yet providing a clock for them, with purpose of letting them tell the time, does not make sense. Laptop borrowers will have to use other sources of the time, such as their cell phones or wall clocks,

rather than a clock that cannot be reliably maintained and updated.

Internet Outages in ResNet

Issue:

A couple of times this year the internet has gone down in residence and students were unsure of what was going on and what they could do to report the problem. Some students left voicemail messages on 58888 but never heard a response back. For one outage email notification was sent out 12 hours after the problem was resolved. Any outage to ResNet can greatly affect students as they rely heavily on the internet for their school work. Outages can also affect student marks for assignments if they are unable to properly work on an assignment or submit an assignment electronically on time while the network is down; professors do not always take into consideration issues that prevent students from completing work - a due date

Recommendations:

1) Outages in ResNet should be considered a high priority.
2) Students should be notified as soon as possible of ResNet outages with an explanation of what went wrong and how it was fixed.
3) All ResNet outages should be posted to CCS news so that students can proof to professors that an internet outage did occur; professors can then take this into consideration for missed due dates or issues with assignments, if they choose to. It is understood by the committee that this is still up to each individual professor's discretion.
4) ResNet should be considered a critical service and perhaps considered a 24 hours a day on-call service.
5) CCS should define a procedure for students to be able to report problems like this. Most students in residence were unaware of what they could do when ResNet was down.

CCS Response: CCS and our ResNet service team do take outages in ResNet very seriously and do consider these to be high priority issues. Outages can be caused by a variety of factors including equipment failure and can also be caused by one or more clients on the ResNet network, including those who may have mis-configured routers. There are a variety of monitoring methods in place to help us ensure that the ResNet service is maintained. We do also rely on input from our residents if issues arise. Some issues may take place after hours and are handled by our on-call team. As a result it may not be possible to respond immediately to client issues.   CCS and the ResNet service team have in past and will continue to follow up with all of our clients in a timely fashion and we will continue our diligence around posting known issues and resolutions to the CCS news so students have this to refer to when necessary. We will also look to send out a notification process to our ResNet clients so they know how to address issues that may arise in future.

E-mail Accounts for Non CSA Clubs

A non CSA club was unable to create an email account because they were not part of the CSA and therefore had no authorization from them and they did not have a faculty member to sponsor them either. How can a non-CSA club get an email account?

Recommendations:
Can the elected College governments be given authorization to grant these groups accounts (i.e. sponsor them)? Since Student Affairs knows who the president of the College governments are, there will always be a contactable person and the College executives could be given the authority to request accounts and password changes for the accounts they sponsor.

CCS Response: *This matter has been resolved in cooperation with Student Affairs. Those individuals who are in the president's role for their college government will have the ability to request organizational accounts and password changes for the accounts they sponsor. The Student Affairs staff will provide our CCS Help Centre with the names of these individuals so we can determine who has the authority to make these requests.*

CCS Survey Service

Question:
Can students use the CCS Survey service?

Answer:
Yes. Students can email sas_spss@uoguelph.ca and request an account. More information on the service can be found at http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/resources/instructional/survey.shtml.

Advanced Email Filtering/Tagging Using "+"

Question:
Some mail transfer agents, including many of the *.mail.uoguelph.ca MTAs, will ignore a plus sign ("+") and any following characters in the username portion of an e-mail address. For example, user@uoguelph.ca, user+test@uoguelph.ca, and user+list@uoguelph.ca would all be delivered to the same mailbox (user). The advantages of this include:

- Easy creation of throw-away e-mail addresses for signing up for sites, e.g., if you don't trust a site not to spam. If spam starts to arrive, you know who gave your address away, and can effectively cut them off.
- Procmail scripts can handle different tags separately. For example, a user might direct some mail to a script, rather than to their inbox.

Most MTA's support this feature, it just has to be enabled. Some University of Guelph servers supported this until recently but others never have. If this feature was available it would be nice, but not especially important.

Answer:
No, this feature is not currently available and CCS does not believe many users would make use of this feature. If demand was high CCS could investigate what it would take to enable the feature.

Students on the Blackberry (BES) Pilot

Question:
Can students participate in the Blackberry BES pilot?

Answer:
Participation in the Blackberry BES Pilot is limited and participation is granted by Mike Ridley, Chief Information Officer. If a student would really like to get on the pilot, they can present their case to Mike Ridley and he will decide on whether they can participate in the pilot or not.

Secure Wireless Internet (uog-wifi-secure)

Question:
Why isn't the uog-wifi-secure wireless network broadcast?

Answer:
Configuring secure wireless internet on Windows XP was quite tedious and difficult, so the decision was made to not broadcast the uog-wifi-secure but still include instructions on the CCS website for those who really wanted to use it. Configuration on Windows Vista and MACs is a lot easier, and wireless usage statistics show that Vista users now surpass XP users. CCS is now in the process of reviewing this decision and deciding if it should be broadcast.

Recommendation:
The uog-wifi-secure wireless network should be broadcast and promoted. All students should be using secure wireless and many are not even aware that they are currently using unsecure wireless. If the network is broadcast more students will become aware of it and hopefully start using it.

CCS Response: In response to feedback from the campus community, including ITSAC, CCS has implemented Uog-Wifi-Secure as a broadcast wireless network, and added additional configuration tools and documentation to our website at
http://www.uoguelph.ca/ccs/internet/getting_connected/wireless/uog-wifi-secure.shtml

Operating Hours for the New Science Complex Computer Labs

The computer labs in the New Science Complex building are closed at 4:30pm but the building remains open until 10pm.

Recommendation:
The computer labs should remain open for longer, possibly as long as the building is open.

CBS Response (responsible for labs 1304 & 1306): The labs were open longer in the first year, but ultimately that was stopped because students would not leave at the designated time and would attempt to stay overnight in the labs. As well, the labs were abused which created security and potential liability concerns. Due to these factors, the labs were closed by the end of office hours and this will remain so.

CPES Response (responsible for labs 1303 & 1305): The labs close at 4:30pm weekdays (unless there is a lab scheduled in the evening) for security reasons, i.e, to prevent theft or vandalism. There are normally

no staff members available after hours to supervise or close the labs either.

Wireless Network Outages

Question:
For a period of time in January there were quite a few wireless network issues. Some people could login but they could not gain access to the internet through the wireless network, while others could get access, even if they were in the same area accessing the same wireless access point. Why did this occur?

Answer:
There was a system bug with the non-secure wireless network that would cause access issues during periods of high-volume authentication requests. A new wireless network, uog-wifi-new, was created to distribute the load and it contained patches that fixed the previous bug. uog-wifi will be patched during a maintenance period at some point.

Online Forms

Many processes on campus still require filling out paper forms and then personally taking the form into an office and manually submitting them; this process can be cumbersome and unnecessary.

Recommendation:
Make all forms available online. The technology exists to have electronic forms that can be filled out online and submitted online, and having to sign in with central login IDs could potentially be just as good as a signature. Even if forms could be filled out online then printed out, signed, and handed in, that would be better than the current manual processes.

CCS Response: We appreciate hearing this feedback from the students, as this is something we have been considering for a long time. The issue of form processing is tied into document management and is something that needs to be addressed in many areas of the University.   The ISC Sub-committees on Infrastructure and Architecture recently identified this complex need, based on a community survey.

There are currently two major projects on the way that will help set some direction. One is in Financial Services and deals with document flow in that area. The second is in the Office of Research where they are also looking at improving their information flow and paper handling. It is going to be interesting to see how their unique needs are identified and resolved and where the commonality exists.

We are hopeful that these initiatives will help guide an institutional direction and alleviate some of the concerns you raise.

XIV. How Can We Make ITSAC Even Better?

For many years ITSAC has provided valuable feedback to CCS and other departments on campus that has helped improve the quality and direction of IT services at the University of Guelph. While being very successful, there is still room to expand upon the vision of ITSAC and improve the role that ITSAC plays for students. To achieve these objectives, the following goals should be undertaken by ITSAC:

- Increase student awareness of ITSAC.
- Increase student involvement and interaction with ITSAC.
- Define issues to discuss based on metrics and student opinions.

The committee discussed these goals and came up with suggestions on how to possibly meet them. The committee did not necessarily agree that all of these suggestions should be implemented, but they do consider them possible actions that could help achieve the objectives listed above.

Increase student awareness of ITSAC

- Advertise ITSAC in the Ontarion or other popular student newspapers, and include a point of contact: maybe an email address (itsac@uoguelph.ca?) or an online submission form?
- Separate the ITSAC website from CCS website. Currently it is buried and not easy to find. Having a separate website like www.itsac.uoguelph.ca or www.uoguelph.ca/itsac would be much easier to find.
- Have a link to the ITSAC website on the CCS website's main page.
- Redesign the ITSAC website and make it more informative and dynamic (i.e. constantly updated) to make it more useful to students.
- Create a RSS news feed for ITSAC containing important information like meeting agendas, key topics that were discussed, important announcements, etc.
- Have an ITSAC booth in the UC providing more information on ITSAC.
- Add ITSAC information to student affairs mail-outs - provide updates and happenings.

Increase student involvement and interaction with ITSAC

- Create audio podcasts of meetings for students who cannot attend the meetings but would like to listen to what was discussed.
- Make the ITSAC meetings online so that students can participate in real-time. There is meeting software being used on campus that could be utilized to provide an online interactive meeting, where online users can see any presentations or demonstrations viewed in the meeting and hear anything that is said. Online users could then ask questions through a chat feature that is monitored by someone at the meeting.
- Allow students that are not representatives to attend the ITSAC meetings and participate. Maybe limit initial discussion to representatives then open up to audience questions. Providing meals for the meetings may be difficult or not feasible if other students are welcome to attend.
- Create a forum where students can ask questions that can be discussed or answered during the ITSAC meetings.
  - Ensure the purpose of the forum and the ITSAC committee is clear. Students don't get immediate help from ITSAC - they are more for helping define policies and providing suggestions to help improve the IT services on campus so they better meet the needs of the student population.

- The College-level student governments should be more involved with ITSAC. Their ITSAC representatives should be able to gather their feedback and opinions prior to attending an ITSAC meeting and discussing the topics. This can be achieved by the ITSAC Chair providing the meeting agendas far in advance to allow the representatives the opportunity to bring the topics up at their respective meetings before the next ITSAC meeting.
- Have mini-surveys or polls on the ITSAC website ("Get Your Suggest-On" feature). Can have a contest and give out little prizes. Any involvement or feedback is good. Can combine these at the end of the year for a more complete and comprehensive survey.

Define issues to discuss based on metrics and student opinions

- If ITSAC had access to the CCS Help Centre stats, we could see what issues are the most frequent and we could then make sure these issues are discussed at an ITSAC meeting.
- Have a topic suggestion forum or spot on the ITSAC website so that students can give ideas on what topics should be discussed.
- If mini-surveys or polls are created, the results from these could help decide which topics should be discussed.

XV. Conclusion

Each year ITSAC provides valuable input, from the student perspective, to the IT community regarding the state of the IT infrastructure and services that are provided to and for students at the University of Guelph. This year's report, with its more intuitive document structure and its coverage of critical topics such as email, D2L, help documentation, IT support and communication to students, WebAdvisor, StartOnline, and using technology like clickers and streaming media in learning, has once again achieved the effectiveness and success reached in previous years.

 Next year, with the implementation of some of the recommendations found in the section on how to make ITSAC even better as well as encouraging guest speakers to come prepared with specific questions they have for the students (facilitating pull conversations as opposed to just push conversations), the committee will hopefully play an even greater role for students and continue to provide exceptional feedback to the IT managers and decision makers at the University of Guelph. In regards to the key IT services that have been in transition over the past two years, as the students use and become more familiar with them the committee will be able to provide even greater, direct feedback about these services in the upcoming years.