Annual ITSAC Report

2014-15

This report outlines the key discussions and recommendations that took place during the 2014-15 academic year.

Executive Summary

Summary of Successes & Highlights

- 22 of the 24 available positions were filled and while this did not reflect in attendance, attendance rates were higher than previous years.

- There was representation from Guelph-Humber (via Adobe Connect) as well as several members- at-large positions and student Help Centre staff.

- Various members sent reps if they were not able to attend, showcasing their professionalism and commitment to the committee.

- ITSIG and CCS were presented opportunities to drive discussion and topic selection.

- Guest presenters were offered an opportunity to pose questions to students before attending the meeting in order to have a more interactive and informative dialog with students.

- A year-end satisfaction survey was distributed for the first time, which garnered an 81% response rate.

- Responses to survey indicated a high satisfaction rate overall.

Summary of Key Areas for Improvement

- Better communication for
    - Service outages
    - Services offerings
    - IT help and support options
- Better wireless
    - Coverage
    - Performance
- Classroom Technology
    - Greater uptake of classroom technology by professors
    - More concerted effort among faculty e.g. if asking students to pay for iClickers, then make use of them

Summary of Key Recommendations

- Push out communications using various channels
- Dedicated monitoring of social media outlets to be better informed (e.g. Overheard at Guelph)
- Offer online courses such as a variety of topics to make students more marketable (e.g. website design)
- Affordable and sustainable options and support for club/organizational websites

CCS Management Response

Thank you for a well done report. It is clear that ITSAC saw many successes. We are very impressed with the inquiries and feedback that ITSAC members took back to their constituents. The agenda topics were relevant and hopefully provided value to ITSAC – certainly the presenters received much value in the sessions and feedback received.

A common theme is weaved within this report, as it has been in the past. Communication. Providing information in a format that the receiver wishes and at a time that they are able to consume the information is an ongoing challenge. We communicate through email, social media, websites, posters, road-shows, committees and more.

We thank the ITSAC Committee for their efforts, in not only providing important feedback to the University but also by being a valued partner in our communication efforts.

Where recommendations have been made in this report, we have gathered responses to share with you.

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1. Introduction & Overview

The Information Technology Student Advisory Committee (ITSAC) offers a forum for students and campus IT staff to enter into dialogs regarding campus IT services, including reviewing IT related services used by students and assessing and recommending changes to services. Guest speakers were invited to present at each meeting to provide overviews of the various IT services pertinent to students as well as an opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations. This report begins with an overview of the committee, summation of the topics discussed, followed by recommendations.

1.1 Constitution

Pursuant to the Terms of Reference, ITSAC membership includes four staff positions (two positions for rotating chair and vice-chair roles within CCS, one library representative and one ITSIG representative) and 20 undergrad/grad positions (13 allocated various campus organization and colleges, five members at large and two student IT staff).

Table 1: Committee Membership as per Terms of Reference

Group	Number of Representatives	Filled
Central Students Association (CSA)	1	✓
Graduate Students Association (GSA)	1	✓
Student Senate Caucus	1	✓
College of Arts Student Union (CASU)	1	✓
College of Biological Science Students Council (CBSSC)	1	✓
Central Veterinary Student Association (CVSA)	1	✓
College of Physical & Engineering Sciences (CPES)	1	✓
College of Social and Applied Human Sciences Student Alliance	1	✓
Student's Federation of the Ontario Agricultural College (SFOAC)	1	✓
College of Business and Economics (CBESA)	1	✓
Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD)	1	
Interhall Council	1	✓
Guelph-Humber Student Association (GHSA)	1	✓
CCS Help Centre student	1	✓
CCS Help Desk student	1	✓
CCS staff members	2	✓✓
ITSIG- Information Technology Special Interest Group (ITSIG)	1	
Library Information Technology Services (ITS) staff member	1	✓
Undergraduate Student Members at Large	3	✓✓✓
Graduate Student Members at Large	2	✓✓
Total	24	22

1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair has the responsibility to create and distribute agendas, organize and facilitate meetings, seek answers and address concerns brought forward, ensure the mandate is met and to prepare the annual report. The vice chair's role is to take minutes, support conversation, provide refreshments and prepare to take on the Chair role the following year. The student role is to provide a voice for the constituency they represent; they give and get information to/from their constituents on IT related services, challenges and opportunities.

1.3 Recruitment Activities

Initially, the traditional approach of email was employed to solicit participation from clubs and student governments. In order to elicit greater participation from members at large and promote greater awareness for ITSAC, additional recruitment activities were undertaken. This included leveraging the expertise of the Communication Office to produce printed material such as posters to advertise ITSAC recruitment opportunities in various buildings. A table was secured and staffed during Club Days in September to advertise available positons. Student newspapers and the CCS website were also leveraged. Past ITSAC participants were also invited to participate in recruitment as well as utilizing social media (namely Twitter).

1.4 Participation

There are a total of 24 positions, 22 were filled (see Table 1) and while that did not translate in the attendance, the attendance rate was higher than in previous years (see Table 2).

Table 2: Meeting Attendance

Meeting	Attendance Rate (including staff reps, excluding guest speakers)	Topic
September	17	IT Communication & Support
October	9	Software Distribution & DRC
November	16	Wireless & IT Security
January	9	Student Email and Organizational Websites
February	10	CourseLink & Classroom Technology
March	10	Student Life & Virtual Labs

1.5 Topic Selection

Topics were selected mainly from a brainstorming session at the first meeting where all participants were invited to put individual ideas on sticky notes. Sticky notes were then put on the wall, grouped into themes and discussed. There was an open invitation to submit ideas throughout the academic year and ideas were also brought up during discussions such as IT Bytes. In addition, in August 2014, ITSIG members and CCS staff were given an opportunity to suggest topics which could be discussed at ITSAC. Two responses were received, both of which were discussed.

The topics requested and discussed were consistent with those from previous years. This may suggest issues and concerns not being adequately addressed if they are reoccurring year after year. Understandably, solutions to these issues are often bound to resource (financial, human and technological) and political constraints making them challenging to address.

1.6 Meeting Format

The general meeting format was to open with a different ice breaker question each time followed by an outline of the agenda. Ice breakers seemed to help create a more fun, engaging and friendly environment for participants, particularly as most do not know each other. Next, we reviewed previous minutes and action items, followed by an open forum to discuss any IT issues (IT Bytes) before breaking for dinner. Each meeting included 2 guest speakers who were invited and encouraged to arrive during the dinner break in order to mingle with students before beginning their presentation. Each topic/presentation was allotted 30-35 minutes (including Q & A and discussion). Before adjourning, a preview of the next topic was given along with a recap of the meeting. The committee met once a month between September and March on select Friday afternoons from 4:00PM – 6:30PM in the University Centre. Minutes and presentations slides were sent to ITSAC via email within two business days.

2. Topics

The following section summarizes the key points of discussion for each of the major topics/services discussed throughout the academic year. A summation of the topic brainstorming sessions is included in Appendix B – Results from Brainstorming Topics~~Appendix B.~~

2.1. IT Communication

One of the challenges reported in last year's report was the lack of follow-up on topics and questions asked of students. In order to address this shortcoming and facilitate a more interactive dialog, students were notified that they would receive 3-5 questions at each meeting. Andrea Karpala from Communications provided an overview of the channels available for students to communicate with their constituents as well as facilitated a discussion on some challenges and opportunities with these communication methods. Discussions included a minimum commitment of 3 responses. It was up to students what methods they employed. There were a mix of communication channels used such as creating surveys, sending emails, having informal conversations, using social media and hand written responses.

 Andrea Karpala also provided information on how IT communication (e.g. service outages and offerings) is communicated and introduced the CCS Twitter account.

Recommendations:

1. It is recommended CCS adapt to the changing communication preferences of students rather than the ways CCS expects and plans for communication (e.g. CCS Help Centre and website). This approach should make use of several communication channels, as people have differing preferences and no one specific channel is the best. Use of CCS News or CCS webpage is not sufficient for students. This can/should include:

        i.   Leveraging department admins
      ii. It was indicated posters in the washrooms are fairly effective.
    iii. Many talk about or ask questions on social media (specifically on Yik Yak and "Overheard @ Guelph" Facebook page). CCS social media committee may want to consider creating a CCS Facebook account to monitor and respond to "Overheard @ Guelph"

CCS Management and Communication's Office Response

Thank-you for these recommendations. We agree and will continue to use several communication channels to get out our messages. In response to your suggestions:

1. *The leveraging of department administrators is a practice that has been increasing for many IT communications. Based on your recommendation we will work with the admins to determine what information would be of value to them without overloading them.*
2. *We are pleased to hear that posters in washrooms are effective. We will continue to do this.*
3. *We are very interested in communicating with students in the most effective manner. The current CCS social media channel is Twitter (@ccsnews) and we put significant effort into this. We have invested in this channel based on previous feedback we had received that students preferred Twitter to other platforms for this type of information. While we recognize that the use of Yik Yak is increasing, we do have some significant reservations for engaging on this platform. Firstly, it is completely anonymous so it would not be clear that it was CCS responding, and in general we do not feel it is an appropriate platform for CCS from a professional standpoint (feels a bit "creepy" for us to be listening in!). As far as Facebook goes, engagement rates for Facebook for our target demographic have been declining, and many campus social media channels are showing declining FB use. We do monitor "Overheard at Guelph" as it provides us good insight into current issues, however, we do need to be careful when engaging with and responding to students who may be angry or irritated on this forum.*

We will continue to investigate our use of social media and methods to improve our communication with students – your input provides us important feedback.

2.2. IT Support

Another challenge identified from 2013-2014 was differentiating between strategic and operational discussions. Part of the issue is that many students are not aware of where to go for IT support. This was also confirmed during the brainstorming session in which students were asked to list the topics they wanted to discuss at future meetings and one of the topics was knowing where to get IT support.   In an effort to address this from the onset, Vince Tan was invited to present on where to get IT support:

- CCS website/service catalog
- IT Help Desk
- Email and phone support

Interestingly, despite this educational piece, operational questions were brought up at almost every meeting and each time it was suggested that they contact the CCS Help Centre. This suggests that even when knowing about the IT help and support options, students may not be interested in seeking help through this channel.

Recommendations:

1. Better job advertising IT Support
2. More consistent use of social media, specifically the use of Yik Yak and "Overheard at Guelph" Facebook page.
3. It may be worthwhile to investigate deeper as to why some student opt to live with the problem rather than seek assistance.

CCS Management and Communication's Office Response

Thank you for this feedback, it is very useful.

1. *With respect to better advertising, we take this feedback seriously. We have created new (hopefully improved) ads for incoming students with the primary objective being how/where they can get help. Future marketing efforts (twitter, posters, ads) will address avenues for IT Support.*

2. *Please see our comments in 2.1 IT Communication. We will continue to examine our use of social media and methods to improve our communication with students.*

3. *We did conduct some research on this last year and this year. There is no common answer. Workload, time pressures, magnitude of problem are all some answers that we have been given. As well, our research suggests that there is no common preferred method of support. We have heard desires for forums, real-time evening chat support, improved web documentation, videos, formal training and much more. Clearly one size of IT Support does not fit all. IT Support is a priority for CCS and we will continue to improve through a multitude of support channels.*

2.3. Software Distribution

Paul Kopacz presented the Software Distribution Service (SDS) as well as an overview of the software available. Majority of the students did not know about the SDS or what software is offered including ITSAC members – for most it was their first time hearing about it. The presentation content was well received.

Questions posed to students:

1. Do you know you have access to discounted software through U of G or know what software is available?
   - 14/15 did NOT know
2. What other software do you want to see offered?
   - No answer
3. Do you know about DreamSpark? If yes, do you or would you find it useful?
   - 15/15 did not know

Recommendations:

1. Make professors aware of SDS
2. Do a better job of advertising this service
3. Reach out to first year students - send information during the summer before they get here
4. Make the website more user-friendly

CCS Management Response

2.4. Course Evaluation

Paul Kopacz also provided a brief overview of Course Evaluation and how students can benefit from completing the evaluations. While promoting the uptake of Course Evaluation is within the Provost Office's domain, Paul asked for tips encouraging participation that could be useful for departments and the Provost office.

Recommendations:

1. Suggested that professors allow students class time.
2. Prefer online form rather than paper.
3. Timing of online evaluations may be problematic (at the end of the course) -a suggestion was made to extend the time.
4. Other Incentives suggested to encourage students to complete evaluations included having the professors offer hints on the exam.
5. Integrate evaluations with CourseLink.

CCS Management Response (with input from Tracey Jandrisits)

Thank you for this feedback. It is very consistent with a report that has been circulated to senior administration and that will form the basis of further discussion in the Fall Semester. We are hoping to begin the review of a new evaluation system starting at the end of the fall semester.

2.5. Data Resource Centre & Surveys

Quin Shirk-Luckett presented on the services available within the Data Resource Centre (DRC) such as helping students find, create, and access data and software, assistance working with statistics, access to free workshops. Quin provided a demonstration on how statistics can be accessed, which may not be available from internet searches. Students, in particular grad students, found that very helpful and wished they knew about this before. Brief overview of Qualtrics (new survey service) was also provided.

Question posed to students:

1. Do you know what the Data Resource Centre (DRC) is? Have you used the DRC before?
   - 13/15 did not know

Recommendations:

1. Better job of promoting DRC, in particular to grad students as well as departments.
2. Presentations at future ITSAC meetings could include more information on Qualtrics and perhaps a demonstration.

DRC Response

"How come I have never heard of this?" and "I wish I had known about the DRC before!" are two comments that we regularly hear in the DRC.   We are aware of the issue and we make a concerted effort to reach students with information about our services. The Data Resource Centre has had a booth annually at the Grad Student Orientation Day and the Library Open House. Information on the DRC is included in pamphlets and presentations about Library services and the Learning Commons. We regularly present in classes for departments with heavy data, stats or GIS use and at ITSAC. We have hosted 'DRC Open House' and 'GIS Day' events several times to promote our services.

There are a large number of useful services for students on campus and information on services that are not of immediate use and thus tends to be lost in the vast flow of information. The challenge as we see it is to make the information about DRC services available at the time when students need the services. To this end we reach out to professors when we learn their students could benefit from our services. Any student who asks for help at the Library AskUS desk will be directed back to the DRC if their question touches on our areas of expertise.

We welcome any input on further avenues for promoting DRC services. We would be pleased to present at further ITSAC meetings, including a Qualtrics demonstration.

2.6. Networking & Wireless

U of G Wireless was the most popular topic that came up due to poor performance and wireless coverage, a common theme based on previous years. Dennis Xu and Tom Herr took the opportunity to present on wireless before the decommissioning of unsecure wireless. Issues discussed were the general description of various wireless options (secure, unsecure, eduroam), campus coverage and the technical (high-use areas), physical (e.g. concrete buildings) and financial limitations that affect wireless performance. Discontinuing unsecure wireless was also advertised and students were asked to share this information with their constituents.

Questions presented to students

1. What is your overall satisfaction with U of G WiFi? How do you want to see it improved?
2. Compared to other public areas (e.g. malls, cafes, etc.) how would you rate U of G WiFi and why?

Answers to these questions cannot be easily incorporated into this report due to the many formats and qualitative nature of the questions. However, responses are saved on CFS.

2.7. IT Security

Chris Sowley discussed how phishing is the biggest problem experienced by security office, resulting in over 700 locked accounts for 2014. Chris also spoke about the use of password managers to help organize, encrypt and protect passwords by only having one password to remember. Recommendations include: Lastpass, Dashlane, Keepass, 1Password.

Chris also presented the idea of bringing multi-factor authentication on campus to provide additional security. U of G does not currently support multi-factor authentication on campus. IT Security is looking to establish it, requests input from ITSAC.

Questions posed to students:

1. How many unique passwords do you have?
2. Do you use a password manager?
   - 9 yes; 25 no; 16 did not know what it was
3. Do you want multi-factor authentication offered on campus?
   - 5 no; 1 would like a password sent to their cell phone; 3 would like personal questions asked; 2 would other like other methods of MF authentication.

2.8. Student Email

Kent Hoeg provided an overview of student email and why undergraduate students were moved over to GAFE and the benefits of that decision. It was explained that graduate students remained on Zimbra due to issues raised by the groups such as data being stored on the cloud or in the US as well the close ties between faculty and grad, thus needing to remain on the same system. Kent also discussed the future of email on campus and is looking to start conversations with various groups to solicit feedback on a future email and calendar solution.

Question posed to the group:

1. How do you want to see student email improved?

   - Ability to delete an email with a single key press/button, without having to use mouse to select
   - Access to Google Cloud Print
   - Have class schedule automatically loaded into Gryph Calendar
   - Have mobile version auto-populate emails (e.g. have emailed contacts show up automatically)
   - Add to do list tab
   - Integrate CourseLink and Email so their Google Drive can be accessed from CourseLink

2.9. Organizational Websites

Craig Hyatt gave an overview of the different types of student websites (personal, academic, student government and club) and the general challenges (cost, modernization, ease of use, security, supportability, accessibility and branding). Due to the number of third party services and capabilities available (e.g. Tumblr, Wordpress, CourseLink), CCS is making a shift away from supporting personal and academic websites and also recommends student clubs make use of third party services.

For student government websites, Craig gave awareness to three options: 1) CCS web development (high initial cost but comes with continual support, maintenance, branding, compliance and long-term supportability); 2) managed virtual servers (cheaper but requires technical knowledge and thus supportability becomes an issue once student leaves position) and 3) third party (costly).

Recommendations:

1. Ability to add an interactive calendar to websites.
2. Using Gryph Life to offset cost of organizational websites.

3. Opportunity for students to learn more about web design and hosting.

CCS Management Response

1. *There are many ways to add interactive calendars to websites. An easy and common approach is to **embed calendars from cloud services like Google Calendar**. This is an interesting option for undergraduate students and student groups, who have access to Google Calendar through **CCS's Gryph Gmail service**. Though Graduate Students do not use Gryph Gmail, they can similarly embed Google Calendars that have been created using external accounts. There are many other cloud calendaring services and embeddable calendar widgets freely available online.*

   *It is important to note that University of Guelph websites must be **AODA (Accessibility for Ontarian's with Disabilities Act)** compliant. While embedded calendar services are quick and easy to use, they are often not perfectly accessible for users who have disabilities. For example, at the time of this writing, it is not possible to fully operate an embedded Google Calendar using only a computer keyboard.*

   *However, almost anything is possible on the web and through software. For example, the **Graduate Students Association has created an online planner**, which incorporates an interactive calendar. This was accomplished as part of website development project in partnership with an off campus web agency. It required a significant budget to complete, and is subject to the AODA legislation, as all campus websites are. Despite all of the work that went into this project, even this calendar may not be completely AODA-compliant. For example, **WCAG 2.0 Success Criterion 1.4.1** suggests that colour cannot be used as the only means of conveying information, and the GSA planner indicates the current week and day of the month using the colour pink. It may be impossible for a person who has colour blindness to use this piece of functionality.*

   *Adding an interactive calendar to a website is possible, but doing so in an AODA compliant manner is likely cost prohibitive for University of Guelph students. There may be fully AODA compliant calendar functionality already available online, but CCS is not aware of it. For these reasons, at the time of this writing, CCS does not recommend that students add interactive calendars to their websites. Instead, consider using shared calendars behind the scenes through services like Gryph Gmail, Gryph Mail, or a centralized service like **GrpyhLife**.*

2. *There are many factors to consider before pursuing a modern personal or organization website project. These include ease of use, security, supportability, accessibility, and branding. All have a price tag and all contribute to the total cost of website ownership. Given that cost is probably the most limiting factor for student initiatives, CCS indeed recommends that students carefully consider centrally available website options like **GryphLife**, or software-as-a-service options like **Wix** and **Weebly**. While these services may still require students to make room in their budgets, they generally solve the ease of use, security, and supportability problems out-of-the box. Furthermore, they are almost certainly more cost effective over the long run when compared to do-it-yourself or custom web development projects.*

3. *CS does not offer training related to web design and hosting. However, this type of training is widely available on the web. Here are some sample resources:*

   - *CodeAcademy: Make a Website*
   - *CodeAcademy: Make an Interactive Website*

- ***[Khan Academy: Computer Programming](#)***

*On campus, **[resources about web accessibility](#)** are available through the department of Diversity and Human Rights.*

*For more formal training, consider the University of Guelph **[Computer Science](#)** or **[Software Engineering](#)** programs, or the **[Media Studies program through the University of Guelph-Humber](#)**.*

2.10. CourseLink

Richard Gorrie offered an overview of Open Learning and Educational Support and the services offered through the department such as Distance Education, educational and curriculum development, non-degree learning and teaching and learning technology including CourseLink (D2L). The future direction of CourseLink includes: Learning Outcomes, Accessibility (AODA), Analytics, Mobile Learning, Google Apps, and Faculty Support

Question posed to students:

1. What's working/not working with CourseLink? What do you want to see added/changed/improved?

- See recommendations

Recommendations:

1. Ability to populate calendar with due dates (essays, assignments, midterms, exams)
2. Integrate GSA calendar with CourseLink
3. Ability to include audio/video of lectures
4. Provide students with a variety of learning tools - Modules, quizzes, tutorials
5. Software tutorials
6. Orientation kits or videos

Response from Richard Gorrie

1. *This is a feature of the CourseLink software, but it is up to instructors to make use of the tool and populate their calendars with events. We let instructors know that this is an easy and much appreciated tool to add to their courses and show instructors how it is done. We will promote the tool further.*
2. *It is possible to import iCal files into the Calendar, but not a URL which would automatically update. Providing this latter functionality has been suggested to the vendor, Brightspace (D2L).*
3. *There are a variety of ways this is already being done by a number of faculty here at Guelph: podcasts, lecture captures, integration of video clips and presentations. We are also piloting lecture capture software that could be supported by the University. Again we will work at publicizing this work.*
4, 5, 6 *All of these requests refer to things that some faculty already do in CourseLink. At OpenEd we certainly encourage faculty to integrate technology into their courses to enhance student learning, through the tools that are readily available in the learning management system or developing multi-media materials and online tutorials themselves or with our help.*

We suggest that pretty much every one of these recommendations ITSAC has made speaks to the need for better communications with faculty that might not be aware of all of the functionality that is available in CourseLink, nor how to readily use it. We will make a concerted effort to get the word out, communicating the innovative

work being done on campus through our website and directly contacting departments, as well as providing support that directly addresses this issue.

We will also communicate more extensively with students to make sure we are better aware of their experience and provide a forum for listening to their suggestions.

2.11. Classroom Technology

Steve Borho provided an overview of classroom technical support including AV equipment in classrooms, special events, equipment loan/rental, video conferencing, technology and design, orientation and training for instructors.

Questions posed to students:

1. Do you want to see more technology being used in your classes? If yes, what kind of technology (e.g. iClickers)?
2. Do you have thoughts/ideas on how profs/instructors can be better engaged with classroom technology?

Recommendation:

1. Many instructors do not use available classroom technology – effort should be spent on encouraging uptake of both technology and CourseLink.

Steve Borho Response

Classroom Technical Support encourages the use of classroom AV technology for teaching in a number of ways:

1. *Availability - as of Summer 2015 all central pool classroom have the technology compliment updated to include computer projection, video projection, and AV control.*
2. *Reliability - Over the past 5 years CTS has replaced aging equipment in 90% of central pool classrooms.*
3. *New Features - 45% of central pool classrooms now have HDMI input at the teaching station. 80% of central pool rooms have document cameras.*
4. *Classroom Profiles Website - helps with central pool classroom familiarity by providing a listing of technology in each room, instruction and help documents, listing of other room attributes (eg. seating type and capacity), photos of the room and technology.*
5. *One-on-one classroom technology orientation sessions - allows faculty to gain familiarity with the classroom technology in a private, non-threatening environment that targets their specific concerns.*

The classroom technology education program could benefit from workshops that showcase the technology's creative presentation possibilities to faculty. Workshops would be introductory level to inspire thinking as to whether the technology features could benefit their individual teaching practice.

2.12. Student Life and GryphLife

Shannon Thibodeau spoke about Student Life as well as GryphLife. "GryphLife is the University of Guelph's student involvement system - helping students get involved and make connections". Student Life is the department that is responsible for training related to requirements of students' roles within student groups as well as approving student groups on campus. Each group has a webpage on the GryphLife and is responsible for updating their information. The advantage of GryphLife is that it is a co-curriculum platform that documents activities outside a student's academic curriculum as well as accounting for activity progression and tracking. GryphLife can also be

leveraged to demonstrate skills and experience gained outside the classroom and offers students with the language to articulate this information.

In previous ITSAC meetings, students mentioned there is a low uptake of GryphLife and it seems to be re-launched over and over. Some frustration was expressed over this given that student organizations have had to pay money into it. Additionally, a suggestion was brought forward to leverage GryphLife instead of having organizational websites for student clubs.

Shannon explained that GryphLife is being targeted to first year students as they will continue to use it throughout their academic career at U of G. As for hosting organizational websites, currently GryphLife is configured so that clubs have a single webpage linking from GryphLife. This indicates that clubs would still have to maintain a separate website, which can be linked from GryphLife.

Recommendations:

1. Have a link to GryphLife from U of G homepage
2. We think college government voting is going to happen over GRYPHLIFE this year

Response from Shannon Thibodeau

It's always nice to be invited to share about GryphLife as we continue to grow and expand the system. As you know Student Life is a very broad department and part of our role is student engagement and support. GryphLife is a tool that enables us to do some of that. When I presented to ITSAC in Winter 2015 GryphLife was preparing to celebrate 1 year of activity - and what a difference a year makes. We have grown from 250 users to over 10,000 and from 100 organizations to over 250. I did want to take a moment to respond to a few items mentioned above.

There is this myth that no one is using the system and that is simply not accurate. Our target users post-launch has been first and second year students alongside student leaders with our member organizations. At this stage, we are pleased with our numbers and they have met or exceeded our targets. Within a year of the launch (March 2015) there were over 10,000 users on the system and over 2,300 of those users had one or more roles in an organization on the site. Incoming first year students in Fall 2015 will receive targeted information about getting started with GryphLife that will continue to grow the system and support student engagement across campus.

We have launched the system only once, in March 2014, however have continued to have a presence on campus where we engage students in signing up for the system or taking the next step to customize their experience using some of the profile features available. As mentioned at the ITSAC meeting, our last event in January 2014 had us engaged with over 75 students, nearly all of whom were already on the system.

The funding model for GryphLife is challenging and I share the group's frustration that student groups are paying for use. As a department we are not in the position to pay for the entire system as well as provide the administrative support, training and management of the site. This model can also be a limiting factor for groups that want to join but are unable to pay. To date, we have managed to get non-paying student organizations on the site, however they cannot access certain tools such as events or elections. In summer 2015, all athletic clubs will be uploaded to the system in this static way as well. Our goal is to have all students groups present on the site so that students looking to get involved can find them. By placing the groups on in a static way, our students

can still find them and link out that group's external site should they choose. Not ideal, but definitely better than the previous system of out of date links and incomplete lists of student groups.

Academic and non-academic departments have expressed in joining. Several have been able to cover the cost and in 2014-2015 we added 7 departments/colleges to the system. If the system was funded, we would be able to add more and support them in posting their events and activities for students on the site. The system is more than capable of being a campus-wide tool. We have had to say no to non-student groups joining if they were unable to pay and this is something that we'd like to move away from. In order to that, we require support.

The site can function as a website replacement for student organizations with places for forms, documents, photo galleries and more. This is not something we can mandate. Some groups prefer to have their own website and that is something we respect. Student organizations have leveraged the site in different ways and in Winter 2015 we hosted over 16 different elections and award nomination processes for Primary Student Organizations and 3 other groups.

Finally, we would love to see a link to GryphLife on the homepage. This is something students have mentioned in our one-on-one interactions and student organization training workshops. We will be in contact with Communications and Public Affairs (the "owners" of the homepage) to determine if this is possible. We are also pleased to see that GryphLife shows up first and second in a search of GryphLife from the uoguelph.ca site.

2.13. Virtual/Remote Labs

Joel Best shared an initiative launched at the School of Engineering whereby a VDI (virtual desktop infrastructure) was implemented for engineering students in order to make expensive and memory intensive software accessible to eligible students at no additional cost. SOE has 6 computer labs and 40 software packages available to engineering students, which allow access to storage and printing as well. VDI allows remote software access when students are unable to use the lab (most software cannot be installed on student laptops – reduces cost of maintaining a lab and frees up space). Joel was interested if students from other departments would be interested in this service. Majority of the students in ITSAC are in programs that do not require software of this nature. However, many math, science, technology and architecture students may be interested in this.

Question posed:

1. Have you ever required access to software to complete a course requirement and could not install the software on your own computer? If yes, were you provided a means to access this software remotely?

Recommendation:

1. CCS may want to investigate with some of the relevant colleges or departments to see if there is an interest pursuing this, which highly aligns with CCS's Vision statement "To be technology and knowledge solution leaders, partnering with University communities, enabling excellence in teaching, learning and research".

CCS Management Response

We appreciate the recommendation. CCS has been part of the SOE implantation of VDI. We continue to have dialogue with them and other colleges on campus as to the value of VDI more broadly. The information that you have provided will be useful as we develop our future directions. Thank you.

2.14. IT Bytes

The following are dialogues that took place throughout the term that do not fit in with the topics discussed above.

1. Single-Sign On issues experienced when logging in and out of Gmail and CourseLink.

   - This was brought forward to the Analyst who supports Single-Sign On who then joined the Facebook group "Overheard at Guelph" as very few tickets have come in through the CCS HelpDesk (ext. 58888, 58888help@uoguelph.ca) but complaints are being posted on social media.

2. Students mentioned that AskGryph on WebAdvisor is not effective, responses are not timely or not at all, the drop-down questions are not extensive enough and overall the website needs improvement.

   - Spoke to Jeff Overton about this, he is aware of previous comments but noted that often the questions posed are inappropriate in order to generate an adequate response. For example, the questions may be too specific or too broad. They are always looking for ways to improve but they also have resource constraints that limit that.

3. One student suggested introducing "diagnostic tutorials" or learning modules/quizzes that professors can set-up. The idea is to help students to prepare and understand material required for particular courses.

   - This was idea was brought forward when Richard Gorrie presented and he made note of it.

4. Suggestion was made to offer practical skills training to make students more marketable such as learning how to create websites.

5. Recommendations that CSA provide a forum for students to submit their feedback on current issues as there is a concern with receiving only one perspective, however, multiple perspectives on issues are needed so that students can be fully informed.

CCS Management Response

The ideas above are all of great value.

1. *When these issues are raised we do review error logs and utilize other methods to find and correct issues. We do not formally monitor social media although we may view them periodically. The best method to obtain assistance is through the CCS Help Desk at ext. 58888 or 58888help@uoguelph.ca. This provides us direct contact and an ability to obtain greater detail than what we see on social media.*

2. *Jeff Overton provided his response directly above.*

3. *This was brought forward to Richard Gorrie*

4. *This is certainly a valid and important recommendation. Although CCS does not necessarily offer training, we are able to guide people to training opportunities. For example, Microsoft offers many learning opportunities through its Online Learning (http://onlinelearning.microsoft.com/) ; you will need to register with a Microsoft Live ID and use subscription code IWOD4E0EEB.*

3. Concluding Remarks

3.1. Criteria for Success

Some of the criteria identified for achieving success with a student advisory committee are:

1. Ensuring there's a clear & shared understanding of role & objectives by all stakeholders, including IT staff. The committee has an advisory capacity, not decision-making
2. Members are actively engaged – for example, it's not enough to show up to meetings but be surfing the net and not paying attention; the same goes for staff
3. Enthusiastic & innovative leadership - is important to ensure meetings are fun and positive fun but also innovative and adaptable to changing trends rather than maintaining static meetings

3.2. Challenges

The following are list of challenges observed and indicated by past and present committee members.

1. It is difficult to find a time that works well for everyone, which appears to be a consistent challenge over the years, which is further supported by the survey results.
2. There are also misguided perceptions that ITSAC is a technical group and technical skills are required and expected, which can hinder students from volunteering and participating. Moreover, staff also maintain this view that ITSAC is a tech-savvy group, leading to inaccurate expectations
3. There are limited mechanisms for students to elicit feedback from their constituents. For instance, they do not have access or permission to send emails to their constituency; so unless they are really proactive and innovative in their approach, their reach is often limited to a very small portion of the community.
4. As a result of #3, the feedback provided is often personal opinion or preference rather than representational, which does not reconcile with the mandate of the ITSAC.
5. Often topics brought forward are operational in nature rather than strategic that usually can be easily resolved by contacting IT support services, which does not adequately meet the terms of ITSAC.
6. There may also be challenges with the process of creating this annual report. For instance, CCSMT provides a response to the report after the committee has adjourned for the year and it is something that is addressed by next year's group who may or may not have the same concerns/challenges.

3.3. Chair's Observations & Recommendations

1. Most of the issues communicated revolve around inadequate communication of services offered. Most of the students were not aware services were available to them. A better way of communicating information is required. One recommendation is to leverage departments by giving information to department admins so they can pass it along.
2. It may be useful to target communication to specific departments where IT service is more heavily used rather than broad communications. Some services are more heavily used or have interest to grad students so targeted communication to this group might be worthwhile.
3. Social media is how students are choosing to communicate their issues rather than using formal channels such as the CCS Help Centre. Social media is a channel that students frequent and hence very accessible. Also, despite CCS outreach, awareness of the various CCS IT Support services is low. Finally students may experience issues outside of normal CCS support hours, hence finding it a challenge to reach out for support.
4. Students do not have a list of things to talk about. Often the discussion needs to be guided and probing is required and even then, the discussions are operational items that can easily be resolved by Help Centre.
5. I have also found that demonstrating how student participation is valued by IT staff is important for engagement and participation.

6. Many of the issues brought forward by students and many of the challenges encountered by previous ITSAC chairs are known and ongoing (i.e. nothing is new or a surprise). This may suggest a gap and that perhaps the end results of an ITSAC engagement is not having the desired effect. One recommendation would be to have ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness and value of ITSAC.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all the students who sat on the community, the guest speakers who took the time to pose questions, prepare presentation slides, present and field questions and comments. Thank you to Randy Oldham (library rep) and Margaret Barth (vice-chair) for all their hard work and participation.

Appendix A – Survey Results

What challenges made it difficult / impossible to attend some of the meetings (check all that apply)?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	I had no challenges attending meetings		3	23.08%
2	Inconvenient day/timing of meetings		5	38.46%
3	Scheduling conflict (e.g. job, classes, other meetings)		6	46.15%
4	Too much on my plate		6	46.15%
5	Lack of interest in the topics		1	7.69%
6	I'm usually out of town		4	30.77%
7	I'm not on campus on the days of the meeting		1	7.69%
8	I didn't understand the purpose/objectives of ITSAC		0	0.00%
9	Insufficient meeting reminders		0	0.00%
10	I don't think any change results from these meetings		1	7.69%
11	Other		2	15.38%
12	ITSAC is not a priority for me		2	15.38%
	Total		31	100.00%

Please rate the chair in terms of:

#	Question	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Response	Average Value
1	Organization and preparedness	-	-	-	5	8	13	4.62
2	Communication skills (e.g. style, frequency, timeliness)	-	-	-	8	5	13	4.38
3	Interpersonal (helpful, approachable, respectful)	-	-	1	3	9	13	4.62
4	Follow-up to concerns/issues	-	-	1	4	8	13	4.54
5	Engagement/Enthusiasm	-	-	-	3	10	13	4.77

Please rate the meetings, presentations and logistics in terms of:

#	Question	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Response	Average Value
1	Meeting Format	-	1	1	4	7	13	4.31
2	Overall quality of guests' presentations	-	-	1	7	5	13	4.31
3	Relevance of topics presented	-	-	1	5	7	13	4.46
4	Meeting Room (location, equipment, furniture, etc.)	-	-	2	8	3	13	4.08
5	Selection and quality of food/drinks provided	-	-	3	5	5	13	4.15
6	Engagement/participation by other students	-	-	1	7	5	13	4.31

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Overall how valuable did you find it to sit on this committee?

#	Question	Responses	Mean
1	1 low, 5 high	13	3.77

Do you feel ITSAC is a valuable committee to have on campus?

#	Answer	Bar	Response	%
1	Yes, I think it's valuable		12	92.31%
2	Not really sure		1	7.69%
3	No, I don't think it's valuable		0	0.00%
	Total		13	100.00%

Appendix B – Results from Brainstorming Topics

- Technology:
    - Where to find Tech Support on campus?
    - Technological advances on campus (i.e. mobile apps)
    - Classroom technology?
    - Cloud Service?
    - Why does the Onthehub website look so user-unfriendly?
    - CourseLink on phone app?
    - How much of your day-to-day computing is done on a mobile device? (smart phone or tablet)
- Gmail:
    - Google mail integrated with Google Drive
    - Gmail: how to transfer contacts from other accounts, taking advantage of Gmail's features – workshops for students?
    - Gmail: better calendaring between Gmail and Gryph mail
    - Gmail: for grad students
- Internet – Wi-Fi:
    - Wi-Fi: improve Wi-Fi connections across campus
    - Internet coverage throughout the campus
    - Wi-Fi: need better way to communicate how to connect using secure Wi-Fi – many people don't even know it is accessible
    - Internet connectivity issues – who do we report concerns to?
    - Wi-Fi: the UC Wi-Fi is terrible
    - Wi-Fi: why does U of G Wi-Fi disconnect periodically in certain sections/buildings?
    - Wi-Fi: locations on campus?
    - Wi-Fi: more use