

A black and white photograph of server racks in a data center, viewed from a low angle looking up, creating a sense of depth and scale. The racks are filled with various electronic components and cables.

# ITSAC ANNUAL REPORT

2018/2019 Academic Year



COMPUTING AND  
COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

[uoguelph.ca/ccs](http://uoguelph.ca/ccs)

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# ITSAC Overview

The Information Technology Student Advisory Committee (ITSAC) offers a forum for students and campus IT staff to discuss campus IT services, including reviewing IT-related services used by students and assessing and recommending changes to services.

Guest speakers at each meeting provide overviews of various IT services pertinent to students as well as an opportunity to provide feedback and recommendations.

This report provides an overview of the committee, a summary of the topics discussed, and recommendations.



# ITSAC 2018/19: Staff Representation

- Chair: Jon Spenceley
- Vice-chair: Eirini Roumpa
- CCS staff:
  - Jyll Weinberg-Martin
- Other departments
  - Randy Oldham, Library



# ITSAC 2018/19: Student Representation

- CSA
- Student Senate
- GSA
- Engineering
- College of Biological Sciences
- Ridgetown
- College of Arts
- Interhall Council
- OVC





# ITSAC 2018/2019

## Topics Discussed

- Emergency Notification System
- StatusPage
- GryphLife
- Cyber Security Ambassador Program
- Microsoft Teams
- WebAdvisor
- OpenEd/Educational Support
- Test Scoring
- Digital Accessibility Resource Center
- CIO IT Strategy



# Emergency Notification System

- Presented by Jennifer Lobo
- Implemented at Guelph and Ridgetown campuses to notify staff, faculty, and students about emergency situations.
- 12% of students have signed up for alternate communication channel (personal number, text, personal email, etc.).
- How can we get more students to sign up?

# Emergency Notification System: Student Feedback

- All students in attendance had heard of the ENS, and many had seen signage around campus.
- Ridgetown students learned about ENS during their “Get to Know” event, and students signed up on the spot.
- No professors mentioned the ENS at the start of classes – this may be an additional promotion channel in the future.
- Many attendees agreed that the ENS should be mandatory if possible – safety is important.
- Incorporating ENS sign-up process into CourseLink or WebAdvisor would increase adoption dramatically – all students use these platforms.



# Emergency Notification System: Student Feedback

- Work with departments directly rather than emailing all faculty to promote the application – faculty frequently ignore emails.
- Gryphon mascot should be used more, especially in digital signage – students love this mascot.
- Promotional ideas:
  - Organize an event for students where the only way to receive information is if you are signed up for the ENS.
  - Have giveaways for on-the-spot signups at the Security Roadshow.
  - Available devices at the Roadshow for students to sign up (laptops that they can sign into at the booth).

# StatusPage.io

- Presented by Lalit Jairath
- Purpose of StatusPage is to keep staff, faculty and students informed of planned maintenance, outages or incidents related to IT services.
- Currently CCS and C&PA can post to StatusPage.io.
- Plan is to make tool available to other departments (Library, etc.) over time.



# StatusPage: Student Feedback

- Only one student was aware of StatusPage.
- Students expressed interest in having more teams and departments able to post – would increase relevance for them.
- Attendees agreed that having one source for information on IT services across campus would be valuable, and they would subscribe.
- Attendees suggested more promotion around this site, as many students are likely unaware it exists, and where to find it.



# GryphLife

- Presented by Shannon Thibodeau
- Platform called Engage from Campus Labs, launched in winter of 2014.
- Used by student clubs and organizations for elections, events, managing contact lists, and hosting forms and documents.

# GryphLife: Student Feedback

- A mobile application that could send notifications about events to members would be incredibly useful for student groups.
- GryphLife should be more heavily marketed to student body, as sign-ups are lower than student groups would like to see – another student cautioned that this would create another media source that students have to check.
- Alternate idea is to have an option for students to follow the organization without explicitly joining it.
- Platform is limited and seems that there is little customization – Shannon responded that customizations are very expensive, so we have not gone down this path yet.



# GryphLife: Student Feedback

- Not easy for student groups to find organizations they are managing, and it opens a new tab when you do want to manage a page – always an extra click where you don't want one.
- Forms do not auto-save, which could lead to students losing what they have filled in if they have to navigate away.
- Dates are all shown in US format rather than Canadian as the system is based in the US.
- Request for a better way to create and approve events. Current work flow requires students to dig and wait for several pages to load.
- Suggestion of creating forms that can only be visible to members, which would encourage sign-ups as well.



# Cyber Security Ambassador Program

- Presented by Jyll Weinberg-Martin
- Looking for students to serve as ambassadors for cyber security initiatives and help reach students with relevant info.

# Cyber Security Ambassador Program: Student Feedback

- Best way of communicating with students is before classes as most professors will allow student reps to share news in class.
- Students would need training, but the program does seem appealing for students as there is a career development and monetary incentive.
- Disperse student ambassadors through different programs and different cohorts to increase spread of information.
- Have examples of what a message from CCS or U of G would look like so students know what to look for in a 'good' message, not just a bad one.

# Cyber Security Ambassador Program: Student Feedback

- U of G should investigate a messaging solution similar to banks – email simply tells you that a message is waiting, you must sign into your bank site to get the full message.
- Many students get information from email, but Facebook, bathroom ads, digital signage, etc. are all still very effective.
- GryphLife may be a useful tool for recruitment as you can post opportunities there and students tend to visit it often for club or organizational news.



# Microsoft Teams

- Presented by Jon Spenceley
- Designed as a collaborative environment that includes file storage, task management, team notebook, chat, and voice/video calling.
- Useful for projects, committees, clubs, and accessible by anyone with a U of G email account.



# Microsoft Teams: Student Feedback

- Many students would be more interested in using if they knew about functionality. Better promotion on the product will make it more popular.
- Collaborate with faculty to get students using it – they make suggestions for group projects at the start of the year.
- Would be a very useful tool for lab reports and class projects.
- Phone app makes it very easy to use for most students.
- Student groups are using Asana, but Teams could replace it easily.
- Contact Shannon Thibodeau, and CSA, GSA, etc. if we want to relay information out to wider network of students.



# WebAdvisor

- Presented by Tim Frank
- Overview of current system, customizations, branding enhancements, and limitations.
- Discussed Self-Service – the successor to WebAdvisor currently deployed under the Account View area.
- Next steps include registration, degree tracking, course planning and scheduling, and academic advising.

# WebAdvisor: Student Feedback

- Integration with Office 365 would be very helpful for managing course calendars.
- Students would love to see WebAdvisor handle pre-requisite checking and course waivers – Tim outlined that this is an available feature, but implementation would require buy-in from multiple departments.
- The “Too Many Cookies” error is problematic, but currently impossible to fix – Tim and his team have investigated every option, as this is one of their most commonly-heard complaints.

# WebAdvisor: Student Feedback

- Would be useful to see conflicting schedules in real-time as you add courses.
- More processes integrated into WebAdvisor would be very useful – Tim indicated that GryphForms is being investigated for things like course waivers, etc.
- WebAdvisor is end-of-life in 2020, so Tim indicated that student feedback would play a big role in selecting our next generation system.
- Current tool has a section for Notes which students indicated would be useful to keep.



# Open Learning and Educational Support (OpenEd)

- Presented by Richard Gorrie
- Overview of the department, its groups, technologies and offered services.
- Main discussion's focus was on Courselink, classroom technical support and online courses.
- Some of the current initiatives include Active Learning, Accessibility, Faculty Support and Training, Flipped Classroom Approach.



# Open Learning and Educational Support (OpenEd): Student Feedback

- CEVAL seems to have a bad reputation for both students and faculty.
- There is a general frustration amongst the students with the inconsistency of the apps/software that are used in different departments and the cost involved.
- Students would like to have the ability to clear out the list of courses appearing in Courselink.
- Students appreciate the fact that Courselink provides the ability for more organization.

# Open Learning and Educational Support (OpenEd): Student Feedback

- Ability for TAs to directly grade/provide comments within the platform instead of downloading, editing and uploading the files would be appreciated.
- Students are not aware that OneDrive is in Courselink.
- Issue when TA's download files to edit them, Courselink adds characters to the end of the name which results in exceeding the character limit of the platform.
- Option to use Turnitin without submitting the assignment would be beneficial.



# Test Scoring

- Discussion led by Saveena Patara and Richard Gorrie
- The scoring scanner (ScanTron) towards end of life.
- Research on a replacement solution currently active.
- Necessity for students' feedback.

# ScanTron:

## Student Feedback

- Issue with Crowdmark in group assignments – only one person can be the project submitter and also receiver of the grade.
- In some departments, the grading of multiple choices is being done manually.
- Crowdmark issue: if you have the URL from someone else, you can see the grade without having to sign in.
- ScanTron has consistency, everybody is familiar with it and the process is working.

# ScanTron: Student Feedback

- Transferring answers during an exam can result in mistakes.
- Students would prefer to get not only the grade from ScanTron but comments on the answers instead of having to visit the professor's office.
- Students suggested a more environmentally friendly option for the replacement. Not possible at this point since it would have to be a campus-wide digital solution.
- Adding extra pages to the exam – this is an option but some students were not aware of it.



# Digital Accessibility Resource Centre (DARC)

- Presented by Marinette Fargo
- Overview of what is digital accessibility.
- The importance of its implementation.
- Key focus areas for the DARC team.



# Digital Accessibility Resource Centre (DARC): Student Feedback

- Students would like to see more professors record their lectures.
- In general, there is an impression that professors are not following the digital accessibility rules for their content – it is not required at this time.
- Students placed inquiries related to the faculty training on digital accessibility.
- Most of the students were aware of the DARC office existence.



# U of G IT Strategy

- Presenter: Dave Whittle
- Overview of why it is needed, the scope and the planning process.
- References to the key areas of focus and qualified groups for providing feedback.
- Next steps include recruitment of leaders, initiating the campaign to campus, finalizing the areas of focus, creation of dedicated website and starting workshops.

# U of G IT Strategy: Student Feedback

- Suggestion to have both an undergrad and a grad student participating - experiences differ.
- Achieving a high participation rate by organizing workshops in different residences.
- Fall semester is the best time for engagement from students.
- Interhall Council is a great place for one workshop that will guarantee higher student attendance.

# U of G IT Strategy: Student Feedback

- To be mindful of the technological advancement between departments.
- In order to achieve a more diverse audience, the workshops need to occur in different department buildings since the attendance of the department's students would be increased.
- In order to include OVC students, one workshop could be organized in OVC.

# U of G IT Strategy: Student Feedback

- Receiving feedback from applicants about their first contact (application stage) with the University - what are their expectations before their studies?
- To gather information on what is important for a first-year student, in order to continue his/her studies with the University.

# Key Takeaways from ITSAC 2018/19

- For platforms like the ENS and Microsoft Teams, encouraging professors to discuss the benefits at the start of the year, or having information integrated into CourseLink, would likely increase student engagement. Having incentives for sign-up at the Roadshow event is also valuable.
- Having one source for IT availability information on campus would be valuable. StatusPage.io is not well known among students, but adding other organizations like the library and OpenEd would increase visibility and usefulness.
- Students would love to see increased logic in WebAdvisor to handle things like course conflicts. Course waivers are also a painful experience, and tools like GryphForms could streamline this process.



# Key Takeaways from ITSAC 2018/19

- Inconsistencies in the teaching and learning software used by faculty is frustrating for students. CourseLink helps with the organization of courses, but every faculty member uses the platform differently. Students would also like to see professors follow digital accessibility rules for their content – currently this is not mandatory.
- Students would love to see a digital option for test scoring that would replace ScanTron cards, as it would be more environmentally friendly, and they are interested in getting more feedback from faculty when receiving marks.
- For IT Strategy engagement, students are more willing to participate if we come to them. Set up events in residences, or in major student locations (library, OVC, UC, college buildings) and we will likely get a better result.


# ITSAC Retrospective

- The attendance rate was quite high and consistent throughout the year.
- There was interest for participation from Guelph-Humber representatives (via Skype).
- Student reps found that ITSAC was very valuable, informative and relevant.
- There were some new initiatives on campus so booking speakers was easier.
- Membership from student groups remains a hard task to tackle.



# 2019/20 ITSAC Planning

- Ideas on how to engage more students in participating
  - Possibility on reaching out to departmental admins if students have not been responsive to help us identify the correct contact persons.
  - Thoughts on promoting ITSAC more effectively throughout the year, especially in September (digital signs, etc.).
  - Suggestion for not only representatives to be able to attend the meeting but students that are interested as well (through Skype call).
- Collecting info on which departments show more interest in the committee by tracking attendance by department.

A black and white photograph of server racks in a data center, viewed from a low angle looking up, creating a sense of depth and scale. The racks are filled with various electronic components and cables.

**Have some suggestions  
on how to make ITSAC  
better, or want to get  
feedback from students  
on your project?**

Contact Eirini Roumpa, ITSAC chair  
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