ITSAC ANNUAL REPORT

2019/2020 Academic Year

UNIVERSITY of GUELPH

COMPUTING AND COMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

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 2019/20: Staff Representation

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

ITSAC 2019/20: Student Representation

- Central Student Association
- Grad Student Association
- College of Arts Student Union
- Engineering
- College of Biological Sciences
- Management Economics and Finance
- Interhall Council
- College of Engineering and Physical Sciences Student Council
- International Student Organization

ITSAC 2019/2020 Topics Discussed

- Cyber Security: How to Stay Safe
- Student Information System Refresh
- IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience)
- Emergency Notification System
- Barriers to the Digital World – Digital Literacy and Opportunity
- Microsoft Teams
- Student Information System Refresh – Update
- Digital Accessibility Resource Centre
- Software Distribution
- CCS Help Centre and Client Productivity
- Digital Signs and Live Bus Schedule
- Bus Pass Change
- IT Strategy Update

Cyber Security: How to Stay Safe

- Presented by Joao Bernardo.

- Presentation used as a platform to inform the students of what Information Security looks like on campus and provided them with useful tips while pointing them to where they can get help.

Cyber Security: How to Stay Safe

- Provided the students with the proper channels for reporting general IT issues and security-specific issues.

- Covered common threats they may encounter and how to combat them:
    - Password security
    - Phishing

- Informed them about the free cyber security course available on CourseLink to all students.

Cyber Security: How to Stay Safe: Student Feedback

- Students were curious how password managers work, and whether they are much safer than using the same password everywhere.

- An explanation was given around the extra security measures in place that can be used to make a password manager safer than password reuse.

SIS Refresh

- Presented by Paul McDonald and Tim Frank.

- Project revolves around what we need out of our SIS and identifying what is no longer relevant.

- Vision for the SIS refresh includes improving the student, advisor and staff experience.

- In the current phase of the project, the team is working on outbound communications from the system.

SIS Refresh: Student Feedback

- The students had many questions about the Student Planning aspect of the SIS Refresh.

- Many of the questions were along the lines of ease of use and pain points with the current system.

- All the answers from the presenter, regarding student planning, were generally accepted by the students.

- They all expressed excitement at how this would facilitate planning and make the process much easier.

SIS Refresh: Student Feedback

- Students wondered whether there would be a focus on UI or not, as the general feeling was that the current WebAdvisor UI was not very intuitive and easy to use. Presenter assured them that they would stick with the vendor's UI to facilitate future updates.

- There was concern around accessibility of the website.

- Questions around the communication plan for this change were placed. Presenter outlined that a website already is in place and tutorials are being planned.

SIS Refresh: Student Feedback

- There was a general concern if these features would be roll out gradually, and whether the old system would be accessible alongside the new.

- Students were assured the changes would be gradual, but that the old would probably not be available at the same time as the new features for fear of mixing up data and processes.

- Students suggested live chat as a good feature to have on the new site.

- Inquiry on whether there will be Microsoft Planner integration. The answer was not at this point but there is potential for the future.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience)

- Presented by Shannon Thibodeau.

- Main goal to improve IT at the University for a better Student Experience and to abide by the U of G motto to Improve Life.

- Explanation of the six pillars, the particulars and explanation of future state ideas of the student experience pillar.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience): Student Feedback

- Students expressed a displeasure in the current experience and that the student portal would be an important update, as they felt there are currently too many redirections and there is a need for a clearly outlined process.

- Student suggestions were along the lines of having less websites to visit and having most things accessible from one place.

- An expressed opinion was that some names of current websites for student use, did not relate to what the site is for.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience): Student Feedback

- The goal that this is not to build off old systems but create new ones was mentioned. Follow up questions were asked on what the students wanted the life cycle at the university to look like.

- Students expressed that face-to-face contact/access to professors is important, but even with processes in place for this, it will take a change in mindset for the students to take advantage of it.

- They would like to see a reduction in steps when using university services.

- It was felt that the "farther" they got from the main site, the more inaccurate some information was.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience): Student Feedback

- Students explained that emails were generally overlooked when it came to providing communication of changes to students. They continued to say that perhaps having an opt-out/opt-in system for certain information streams could help with this, as they currently felt they get too much information, and sometimes not on matters they find important.

- When asked, if not through email, how can students be communicated to, they agreed that often if a student needs information they will look for it, so to make it easy to find would be best.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience): Student Feedback

- By general admission, the current experience when it comes to course selection or anything along the lines of courses (e.g. course waivers), is very stressful and sometimes leads to students not getting the education that they want.

- Students agree that paper processes should only exist were completely necessary.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience): Student Feedback

- When discussing ideas for a smart campus students pointed out that the areas, they would like to see improvement in navigation throughout campus and general issues with public transit at the University such as availability and scheduling.

- They also would like to see improvement in communication of whether study areas have available spots or not.

IT Strategic Plan (Student Experience): Student Feedback

- Students would like to see more predictive services, but also want to have a respect for their privacy.

- The need for choice was brought up around the type of information received.

- Students expressed that if the information they received was more catered to them, they would likely pay more attention to email.

Emergency Notification System

- Presented by Jennifer Lobo.
- Explanation of the what, who, where, why and when of ENS and how it is relevant to the students.
- Stats on how the user base grew to over 7,000.

ENS:
Answers from Last Year

- Utilizing last year's feedback from ITSAC, updates were offered as to the actions taken into consideration for this year and some for the near future.

- Why not mandatory? - In a way it is since everyone is added by their U of G email.

- Examples of announcement in Courselink, having Campus Community Police do a short talk in front of large classes.

- The suggestion for promotion during the road show and providing prizes was followed by also including a QR code to scan in 2019.

ENS: Student Feedback

- General positive feedback was given about the power outage alert that occurred a few days before the meeting.

- It was expressed that English Language Program student have a tough time understanding the alerts and that perhaps a conversation needs to be had with a manager in English Language Program to facilitate this.

- Students were not clear how the process for removing them from the alert list works once they have graduated.

ENS:
Student Feedback

- Regarding highly dangerous alerts (e.g., lockdowns) it was stated that control of the situation would be handed over to the police who would be responsible of all the informational updates.

- It was suggested that when it comes to QR codes, not all phones are created equal and that should be taken into consideration.

Barriers to the Digital World – Digital Literacy and Opportunity

- Presented by Angela Spenceley.
- This is a conceptual presentation addressing digital literacy and barriers of opportunity (specifically for women in STEM).
- Key reasons for these barriers and examples of women that were successful in the STEM field were presented.
- Promotion of programs offered and steps taken at U of G.

Barriers to the Digital World – Digital Literacy and Opportunity: Student Feedback

- Agreed among the students that others would not be interested in a general Fall IT day for students, unless there was something that made it very compelling, or if it was very targeted.

- Students suggested that if a Fall IT day were had, it should be in the UC courtyard as this will ultimately get more people stopping to attend.

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.

SIS Refresh Update

- Presented by Deborah Tovell and Tim Frank.

- An update on the project and what has changed since the last meeting.

SIS Refresh: Student Feedback

- When course planning, some mechanism that could handle changes in the schedule or course conflicts would be very beneficial.

- Student data protection was a concern with Guelph Transit integration as well as any process changes for co-op students.

- Best ways to help students learn new process:
  - Highlight options and include a tutorial on first visit of the page.
  - Provide videos both for experienced/new users.
  - Email will work if the title is "catchy".
  - Posters up in residence
  - College government pages.
  - Social media
  - CourseLink
  - In WebAdvisor itself.

Digital Accessibilty Resource Centre (DARC)

- Presented by Marinette Fargo.
- Overview of what digital accessibility is and the importance of its implementation.
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) compliance
- Key focus areas for the DARC team.

Digital Accessibility Resource Centre: Student Feedback

- Main concern was around possible training sessions and if those are mandatory for mainly faculty.

- Curiosity around if DARC team is an active member of the accessibility conference on campus.

- Some students were aware of the team's existence.

Software Distribution

- Presented by Sarah Snider.
- Overview of the service, the website and software available.
- Talk around how the licensing works and provided support.
- Many service improvements were a result of feedback from ITSAC.

Software Distribution: Student Feedback

- Curiosity around the platforms that the software is available and how that is determined.

- Ideas around the login button to make it more eye catching for easier access to the hub.

- Adding a link for the hub in other products like CourseLink or WebAdvisor.

- Some faculty/staff inform the students about the site.

- Mostly word-of-mouth communication about the site's existence.

CCS – Help Centre and Client Productivity

- Discussion led by Brian Thomson.

- Description of both teams and services they offer.

- Ways to get IT help on campus.

- Some tips about IT at U of G and provided tools.

- Working opportunities for students in CCS.

CCS – Help Centre and Client Productivity: Student Feedback

- "The IT help desk really works."

- Significant improvement to WiFi over the past few years.

- Suggestion on how to let students know about the IT Help Desk: classroom talks and profs to add link in the course page in CourseLink.

- Students would like the mobile network signal in residences to be better.

CCS – Help Centre and Client Productivity: Student Feedback

- GryphLife is not a user-friendly system to use.

- Promote more the uoguelph.statuspage.io. It is very useful and beneficial especially for first-year students.

- Students were curious on what happens to services like Amazon Prime if their account gets deleted.

Digital Signs, Live Bus Schedule

- Presented by Kevin Jinde.
- Overview of the digital signs project, their location and information they display.
- More digital signs in progress.
- Live Bus Schedule project and how does it work.
- Future plan to include more screens with the live schedule.
- Arcade machine project.

Digital Signs and Live Bus Schedule: Student Feedback

- Specific routes seem to have their timing a bit off (issue of buses actually being late not with app).

- Students would be interested in seeing more arcade machines on campus.

- There was interest in having an e-sports team at the University.

- Having a dedicated space on campus for vendors and technology themes as long as there is no cost associated with it.

Digital Signs and Live Bus Schedule: Student Feedback

- Question on why the science complex does not have a room for events such as a technology exhibition or an e-sport event.

- Everyone read something on the digital signs that they did not know before.

- Idea on having a similar room to Humber's, to build as a hotel room for Hospitality.

- It is easier to find information about things/events happening than it used to be.

Bus Pass Change

- Presenter: Tim Frank
- Overview of the changes in the procedure and who qualifies for the pass.
- How the new process will work especially with lost cards.
- Focus on special cases:
  - When adding an on-campus course late, withdrawals and dropping on-campus courses.

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Bus Pass Change: Student Feedback

- Concern over how quickly the tap can work when you have a busy bus.

- Questions around how exactly the tap will work, if it needs to be a direct tap or not, etc.

- The general feeling was positive towards this change since the waiting in lines will be avoided.

IT Strategy Update

- Presented by Adam Potter.
- Overview of IT Strategy and its goal.
- Shared all the sectors and the feedback received that will drive the initiative.

U of G IT Strategy:
Student Feedback

- Students agree that the initiative is heading the right way.

- Suggestion on having a chat bot to get location of empty spaces either for library or even parking spots.

- Specifically on Colleague: It would be useful to have access in previous courses to see notes from class.

Key Takeaways from ITSAC 2019/20

- Students would like to see more student groups involved in the committee and they were generally pleased with the topics discussed. A suggestion was to have the full agenda about the topics from the beginning.

- As far as how to reach the students, most of them agree that there is a fine line between too many e-mails and a healthy amount of them that will attract interest. Social media is good but only for those who follow it, while in-class announcements seem to be the best way to reach them.

- No actions were taken from students to help promote U of G Alert more, but their acquaintances already had signed up for it.

- Having one place/hub from where you can get all the information is one of the main concerns since there are a lot of platforms, software and information spread out.

Key Takeaways from ITSAC 2019/20

- Challenges for students:
    - Using GryphLife
    - Finding necessary papers (transcripts, finance, etc.) on the website.
    - Finding information on the website.

- Students seem to like using Teams for both schoolwork, labs, research projects and fun or social activities. Some indicated a preference for Teams over Zoom because of specific functionality (calendar invites, joining a meeting when someone is ready, file storage and sharing is easy – desktop app was preferred).

- Students felt that attending ITSAC was worthwhile since they could provide feedback to presenters with initiatives to help in steering them to the right direction.

- In some cases clubs were actively asking for ITSAC updates which indicates an interest in learning what is changing/evolving.

ITSAC Retrospective

- The attendance rate saw a drop for the winter semester.

- Membership from student groups remains a hard task to tackle.

- Promotional clip in the UC digital signs had impact.

- ITSAC promotion was also included in the International Student Connections Newsletter (sent by International Student Experience office).

- Students would recommend ITSAC to other students.

2020/21 ITSAC Planning

- Given the challenge of social distancing we will have to offer ITSAC this year in a virtual format.
  - Challenges with this involve taking away one of the main draws (free food) – looking into other offers that can be made instead e.g. gift cards.
  - Plan is to use Teams as the medium for meeting all members of ITSAC.
- In 2019/2020 digital signs were leveraged
  - May not be as useful given many students will be off campus.
  - Looking into other forms of advertisement.

2020/21 ITSAC Planning cont'd

- Perhaps get rid of the mandatory attendance, to encourage more attendance from the start.

- Reach them right before the semester starts as there are lot of unknowns prior to the semester starting.

- Look into class announcements, by speaking to admin assistants to get this process started.

- Have agenda outlined early on as a draw for members.

- Have a short questionnaire after each meeting as opposed to having one large one at the end.

- 8 sessions is challenging as it becomes a large commitment for students, perhaps reducing by 1 or 2 sessions.

- Leverage social media for advertisement.

- Use gift cards as an incentive for completing questionnaire.

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

Contact Joao Bernardo, ITSAC chair 2020/2021 at joao@uoguelph.ca!