

**COMMISSION ON UNIVERSITY SUPPORT  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 18, 2019  
130 Burruss Hall – 2:00 p.m.**

**ATTENDEES**

**Members Present:** Judy Alford, Richard Ashley, Jonathan Bradley, William Dougherty for Scott Midkiff, Julie Farmer for Charlie Phlegar, Debbie Greer for Dwight Shelton, Robin Jones, Brad Martens for Julia Ross, Kayla Smith for Sherwood Wilson, and Ryan Speer.

**Members Absent:** John Brenner, Samantha Fried, Aria Hill, Chris Kiwus, Jacob Lahne, Polly Middleton, Ken Smith, Benjamin Tracy, and Sarah Woodward.

**Guests:** Denny Cochrane, Andrea Ogier, Trudy Riley, Ryan Spoon, and Jack Washington

**Recorder:** Sarah McCoy

**1. Welcome**

The Chair, Jonathan Bradley, called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

**2. Acceptance of the April 2019 Agenda**

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to accept the April 2019 agenda.

**3. Approval of the updated February 21, 2019 meeting minutes**

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the February 2019 minutes.

**4. Approval of the March 21, 2019 meeting minutes**

A motion was made, seconded, and passed to approve the March 2019 minutes.

**5. Old Business**

- a. **Software Procurement** - The Chair shared with the Commission that he had a conversation with April Myers, Associate Director of Governance Administration regarding the Commission's means to pursue the topic on software procurement concerns. As a result of that conversation, the Chair drafted and shared a document with members ("*A charge to the IT Systems & Services Committee,*" attached), which recommends that the IT Systems and Services Committee consider the topic and report back to the Commission on any recommended actions. After discussing a few minor edits to the charge document, the Commission agreed to table further discussion at the Commission level, pending updates from the IT Systems and Services Committee. A motion to charge the IT Systems and Services Committee and table this item was made, seconded, and passed unanimously.

## 6. New Business

- a. The May Commission meeting is scheduled to occur during Graduate Commencement on May 16<sup>th</sup>. Since this may impact some members, the Commission made a motion to cancel the May meeting, which was seconded and passed unanimously.
- b. **Selection of the 2019-2020 CUS Vice Chair.** As no volunteers or nominations were presented, a motion was made, seconded, and passed to table the nomination and selection of a Vice Chair to the September meeting.

## 7. Updates from Reporting Committees

- a. **Campus Development Committee** – Jack Washington  
The Committee last met on March 28, 2019. The Committee received an overview of Minor, Capital, and Renovation projects. The November 2018 Board of Visitors Design approvals were shared with the Committee. The April meeting will include the Year in Review.
- b. **Energy & Sustainability Committee** – Denny Cochrane  
The Committee last met on March 25, 2019. The Committee continued discussions on the Green RFP program proposals. 2019-20 Sustainability Student Intern program applications are being evaluated. Earth Week begins Monday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>. Y-Toss program was held March 10-15.
- c. **Transportation & Parking Committee** – Andi Oger  
The Committee last met on March 27, 2019. The Committee reviewed a budget report for fleet, alternative transportation and parking. Increased rates for citations have been approved.

## 8. Acceptance of Committee Minutes

The following Committee minutes were approved by the Commission for posting:

- Campus Development Committee – February 28, 2019
- Energy & Sustainability Committee – February 25, 2019
- Parking & Transportation Committee – February 27, 2019

## 9. Adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah McCoy

A charge from the Commission on University Support to the Information Technologies Services and Support Committee:

To produce a mechanism, which could include recommendations, a resolution, and/or a report, detailing actions that could be taken to improve the efficiency, transparency, and timeliness of software procurement requests across campus. This mechanism should evaluate and address the possibilities listed below. In addition, the committee should also feel free to explore other possible solutions not foreseen by the Commission on University Support. The committee should consider both the current state of software procurement but also take into account the likely increased demands for software as enrollment in the University grows and the Innovation Campus in the Northern Capital Region is established.

The Commission on University Support requests that this mechanism be delivered to the Commission on Nov. 14, 2019, in order to grant the members time to review the documents prior to the November CUS meeting.

- Investigate whether training members of departmental IT units to “pre-screen” requests, which would entail gathering needed documents and marking common problematic language, could help ITPALS and Legal process requests more quickly. This request acknowledges that Legal will still, according to state law, need to read all the contracts. The question here is whether having a document that already has common concerns identified would speed up the process any.
- Investigate if using ITPALS’ existing data to establish categories of requests could provide general (but non-binding) turn-around times in order to improve transparency. For example, when a request is put in for a piece of software, a departmental IT unit or ITPALS would say, “This is a cloud-based service that doesn’t access student data and is based in the United States. Therefore, the turn-around time for getting this software approved is generally between 1-2 months.” Such a system of categories could help faculty members who are on deadlines know early in the process if they will need to make changes to grant timelines or look for different software.
- Investigate establishing a process that would expedite software that has no Terms of Service or End User License Agreement. Since this software would not require a Legal review, creating a separate process for approving it could both help get software to people faster and clear the queue for other software that does require more detailed review.
- Investigate ways of encouraging the adoption of open source software via the review process. Since open source software is at a disadvantage under the current review process (given that open source projects generally will have a small or possibly no legal team assigned to respond to information requests), how do we as a university prevent faculty and staff from feeling forced to use more expensive and possibly less ethical proprietary software just to get it approved in a timely fashion?

- Investigate the details of establishing an exemption policy for firmware, particularly in the case where a long review process for documents would put the University at significant security risk due to identified vulnerabilities that the new firmware would patch.
- Investigate the feasibility of having a separate expedited procedure for “download-only” services, such as research databases. These services pose little to no threat to the university and a timely response to them could greatly improve research workflows that rely on obtaining large datasets.
- Investigate whether a policy should be established requiring all departmental IT units to include the original requestor (or a delegate) on all communications related to the request. This increase in transparency could help ensure faculty and staff know where in the process delays are happening and ensure ITPALS and Legal aren’t being held accountable for delays that are outside of their control.
- Investigate the possible benefits of a shared contract system in the state of Virginia. Could software that has already been approved at another Virginia State University bypass part of the procurement process and go straight to legal? If so, is there already a system for sharing these contracts among state institutes in Virginia? If not, could Virginia Tech in partnership with our fellow state institutes establish such a system? If the system already exists, is there some way for faculty and staff to access this list to see what has already been approved at other institutes?
- Identify common causes for delays in the procurement process and possible solutions for them.
- Identify what resources are lacking or could be augmented in order to improve the timeliness of software procurement requests.
- Identify ways in which specific tasks of the procurement process could be distributed to departmental IT departments, particularly tasks that are of low-risk but are time-consuming.