



**Minnesota**  
STATE COLLEGES  
& UNIVERSITIES

**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities  
Systems Development Steering Committee**

**MEETING NOTES**

**June 3, 2008**

**12:30 PM – 3:30 PM**

**Conference Room 1802, UBS Building, St. Paul**

**NEXT MEETING: Date:** August 5, 2008

**Time:** 12:00 PM – 3:30 PM

**Location:** Conference Room 1802, UBS, St. Paul

**ATTENDEES:**

Glen Guida, Mark Malecek, Ken Ries, Dave Overby, Alfred Essa, Joanne Chabot  
ITV: Les Bakke, Ilya Yakolev

**1). Review/Adjust Agenda:**

**2). General / Housekeeping:** The minutes from the May 6<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved with no revisions.

Academic Affairs Vacancy – We are waiting to see if our group's duties change. This group may be reconstituted as the Administrative Systems Committee which could increase our scope. Summer is probably not a good time to recruit new members. Once we see what the final group make up will look like, we will have to re-charter. In the mean time, Al Essa will work on recruiting someone from the Academic Affairs side.

Alfred Essa: Currently, a project comes before the EIC after going through the Cross-Functional Advisory Committee. Approval is essentially a one-step process. We are hoping for a two-step process where after the EIC approves a project, it would come to the SDSC as the second step of the process.

For example, the APPS project was approved at \$600,000. The project owner promised certain dates to the Board. The problem is that each project sets its own dates. They are run in isolation without coordination. IT is being held accountable for this which is unrealistic. A first pass could be to figure out some realistic dates for projects. One way to coordinate these projects is to put together a team that draws from the PMO as well as project team members. This group will look at all of the projects together.

One problem is that business cases and timelines are created in vacuums. Also, business cases are often viewed as project plans. We make budget assumptions, deliverables and project schedules based on the business case. There needs to be another step before these projects are accepted.

We have yet to calculate recurring costs based on the projects that we ran this year.

**3). Follow-up Items – Support for Under-Represented Groups:**

CE/CT Group, Libraries as well as some others do not have strong representation or support from the system. IT has attempted to support them, but we have not fully resourced their basic needs.

CE/CT's needs are known to the registrars and finance user groups. They do not take priority because there are other more urgent issues at hand. After years of underfunding, it is difficult for these groups to focus on anything but the most pressing issues.

Our biggest issue is campus groups who do not have a voice. They are unable to communicate their needs to the system groups. How do we build a system that is inclusive enough for these groups? What kind of representation and ownership do we want to drive priorities and administration?

One way of doing this is to assign an owner to each ISRS application or module. For example, the Housing module would be owned by Housing Officers who would be driving changes for this module. This could also be broken down by business function and make sure that each major business function has at least one representative.

An unintended consequence that could arise by trying to involve more constituents is that the demands by administrative users would have no boundaries. The first order of business is to identify the four business functions and determine whether or not ISRS can support them.

We would like to come up with a fixed pool of money for enhancements assuming that the basic functionality is already part of the system. We will need a process to allocate this money. A HEAPR-like process is a possibility. From the administrative side, there are two challenges:

1. RDB to Oracle Conversion: Our focus should be almost exclusively on this until it is successfully completed.
2. Migration from Uniface to JAVA

A strategy for this group is to focus on RDB to Oracle this year. This will consume the majority of our resources. When this is complete, our focus will shift to migrating to JAVA. This needs to be completed in 3 to 5 years. We will not be able to reach this goal if we are also working on multiple other projects. The community will need to understand that if ISRS performs a business function adequately, we will not touch it unless something is broken.

#### **Testing Environment for Campus Development Teams:**

We are still looking at this. We would like to provide a platform for campuses to test out their applications. We just need to have the foundation in place in order to do this. We are still working on this. The way that the testing environment works for campuses is significantly different than the OOC's testing environment. Campuses test their applications against the production site which we want to discourage but there is no alternative. One of our challenges is that we spend a lot of time on sanitizing data to make sure that there are no data privacy issues. We only represent 3 to 5 campuses on our database. Performance is not the same with this size of a database.

CIO Perspective: It would be helpful if we could test against a test CAP server. There are campus applications that are going against ISRS. Anytime a campus application requires ISRS data, it should go entirely towards REPL.

There is still going to be an effort by the architects and development teams to support testing environments. The first thing we will run into is setting up an environment to test data type changes.

As a result of the Oracle migration, there are some changes that will take place in APPL that may affect REPL which may break Apps that are running against REPL. If there was a test environment

for REPL that was fully populated and available to campuses as well as to us, this would relieve the problem. We will continue to report on this.

**Software Release Schedule – Mark Malecek:**

The Infrastructure group is requesting that Weekly Releases occur on Wednesdays rather than on Mondays. Since they do a lot of their work over the weekend, there is a risk that they may be continuing their weekend work on Mondays so they do not want disruptions. The Development group prefers Mondays so problems can be fixed early in the week.

Do campuses have a preference? Les Bakke said it did not matter to him. Our support staff recommended Fridays since they are normally quiet. Fridays would also allow for better communication to the users. We would have all week to send out information. Mark will work on changing the weekly release day from Monday to Friday.

Al Essa asked why do we need Weekly Releases? They are an imposition on the Infrastructure team. Why not package releases and send them out monthly instead?

-These releases are mainly bug fixes. Ken Niemi as well as our users prefer that we perform weekly fixes. Users are not tolerant of bugs even if they are not critical. Also, we often need to release things in a sequence. If we put everything out at once, it becomes more difficult to troubleshoot. Weekly Releases are a way to reduce risk.

Do we need a deployment team to approve, schedule and perform releases? We have about 25 to 30 applications which is a huge burden. We may want to look into developing a team that tracks and manages all of our releases.

**4). ISRS 2009 – 2011 Roadmap:**

Glen shared this with the CIO Tech. Leadership group. There were a couple of additions regarding supporting campuses. Glen will make some adjustments to the Roadmap. Al suggested that we also do a technology roadmap to go along with this. We have some choices that need to be made and we need to start mapping out our options. For example, as the RDB to Oracle conversion finishes, what are we going to retire and when? Does COBOL Stay on VMS? One possible path is to migrate completely to Solaris. Another possibility is to keep COBOL on VMS and migrate our hardware to Titanium.

Al will send out the ISRS Roadmap to the Infrastructure Committee. They will discuss it at their meeting next week.

**5). Other Items:**

Ken Niemi has requested that we have a plan in place for Fall Start-up and Capacity Planning. How do we get organized to put this plan together? Glen is working with the QA group as well as with a contractor to prepare for Oracle regression and functional testing. We could possibly utilize these methods in developing a plan. We have also moved part of our application away from RDB as a way to reduce the load on the servers. This covers registration and core functions. We will create a project plan to present in time it at the June 20<sup>th</sup> CIO meeting. Glen, Al and Ken N. will meet to work on the project plan and send it out to the SDSC for review.

**6.) Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 2:30. Meeting notes submitted by Smitha Pennepalli, [Smitha.Pennepalli@csu.mnscu.edu](mailto:Smitha.Pennepalli@csu.mnscu.edu).