
**Rutgers University Senate
Information Technology Committee (ITC)
Report and Recommendations on Charge S-2109
“Communication Mechanism Regarding
Major Changes in IT Applications”**

April 22, 2022

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The Charge: S-2109:

Title:

Communication Mechanisms Regarding Major Changes in IT Applications

Description:

Investigate the existing mechanisms for communication regarding changes in major IT applications. Propose additional mechanisms that would engage the Senate, through its IT Committee, in such communications and decisions about major IT application changes that would affect major University constituencies. (See [Senate Resolution S-1801](#))

Part I. Background and Rationale of Charge:

The accelerating progress in Information Technology has led to a number of recent significant changes in the university-wide applications at Rutgers and will likely lead to significantly more. Such changes often have a major impact on faculty, staff, students, and alumni, and have “broad educational and research consequences,” University Policy 50.2.2 (see: <https://policies.rutgers.edu/5022-currentpdf>)

IT services at the university are managed and supported by central services, provided by the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and the schools, units, and departments. Services vary across the university. As the use of technology continues to expand, increase in cost and complexity, opportunities for central offerings and standardization are regularly explored and implemented. It is these large-scale, broadly impacting technologies that require improved communications and processes. It is imperative that the University community has awareness and participation, where practical, in these large IT initiatives.

Part II. Investigation - Availability and Access to IT Information:

The Senate IT Committee (ITC) explored the current methods and processes for communicating current IT initiatives for both distributed IT and central IT (OIT.)

The ITC met with Allan Hoffman, Director of IT Communications and Marketing for OIT, on October 22, 2021. (See attached copy of presentation.) He shared the many communication mechanisms that are currently provided by central OIT.

Current Communications Mechanisms:

Web:

it.rutgers.edu (news, remote technology resources, alerts and notices, newsroom)

Social Media:

Twitter: @RutgersIT

Instagram: @rutgersit

Slack: rutgers.slack.com (channels alerts, announcements, etc.)

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/RutgersIT>

Digital/Print:

- Annual Review – <https://it.rutgers.edu/annual-review/>
- IT Projects and Initiatives Report:

These updates are intended to provide a way for IT staff members to learn about the status of major technology projects and initiatives, especially those with university wide impact or interest. Though the focus is on enterprise projects, it also includes items from specific schools and units when these might hold significant interest or have implications for others in IT.

The ITC has received and reviewed the 2021 monthly IT Projects and Initiatives reports and now receives the monthly IT Projects and Initiatives reports. See additional information in “Results” section.

Additional Resources:

- Mailing lists
- Slack
- Technology Guides

Collaborative opportunities:

- User groups, communities of practice, and related groups:
 - Communicators Network
 - Instructional Design
 - Instructional Technology
 - Mac Support Project Management
 - Women in IT Technology
- Committees and Working Groups

<https://it.rutgers.edu/itlc/committees-and-working-groups/>

- Committee and Working Group Governance Committee
- Desktop Standards Group
- Enterprise Cloud Strategy Committee
- IT Communications Working Group
- IT Service Framework Committee
- IT Service Management Group
- Project and Portfolio Management Advisory Committee
- Rutgers Active Directory Committee Synchronous Communication Committee
- Software Licensing Committee

Allan also shared the IT communications processes used for alerts and outage communications by his office:

<https://it.rutgers.edu/it-communications/knowledgebase/oit-process-for-alerts-and-outage-communications/>

Part III. Investigation -Major Systems Projects:

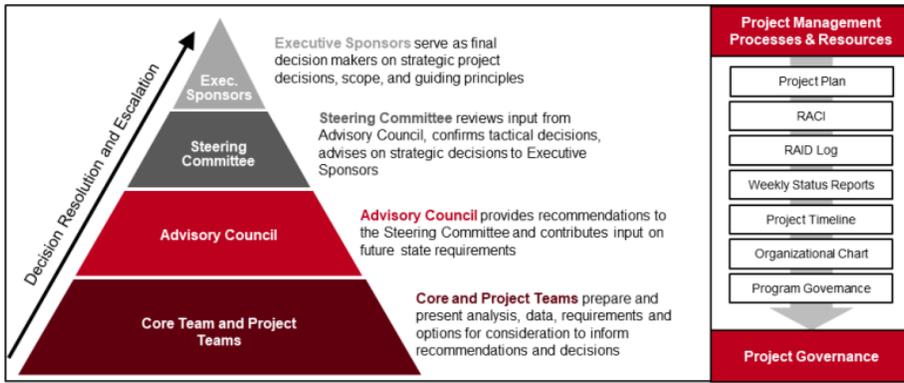
The ITC met with John Fahey, Associate Vice President, University Finance and Administration, Project Management Office (PMO), on March 25, 2022. (See attached copy of presentation.) His office manages various high-level initiatives, and John shared the methodology used by his office for project communications, inclusion, and engagement.

Project Management Office (PMO):

The PMO serves as a “single source to manage Rutgers’ administrative and student information systems, strategic financial initiatives and projects, processes, and organizational changes. “It also has a “decision management structure that provides cross-team alignment to effectively address and escalate decisions while project management processes and resources enable strong project governance and support and inclusive model for program execution.”

Further information regarding the PMO can be found at:

PMO: <https://finance.rutgers.edu/strategic-initiatives/project-management>



RACI – responsible, accountable, consulted, informed
 RAID – risks, assumptions, issues, dependencies

Function	Purpose	Project Team	Advisory Council	Steering Committee	Executive Committee
Vision & Objectives	Direct the project strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create vision and objectives based on Executive Committee and sponsor input Leverage knowledge of university operations, project components, and functional expertise to lead the project Develop and follow project plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share unit-specific needs with the project team to ensure the objectives will benefit the unit Align the unit to the vision, articulate what the vision means to the unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and provide input on the vision and expected benefits Recommend opportunities to align the project to other strategic initiatives to ensure coordination of activities across projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and provide input on guiding principles Recommend opportunities to align the project to other strategic initiatives to ensure coordination of activities across projects
Governance	Guide and support project activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare and present analyses, data, requirements and options for consideration to inform recommendations and decisions Make day-to-day, task level decisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and provide input on change network members Provide recommendations on tactical decisions Make unit-level operational decisions on future state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and provide input on advisory council participants Identify and/or confirm change network members (if applicable) Provide input on strategic decisions Make tactical decisions on behalf of chancellor/campus level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide final project and strategic decisions Review and provide input on steering committee participants
Change Management	Be engaged throughout the life of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide input on change, communications, and training activities Attend and engage in project and work stream meetings Engage with internal stakeholders to gather unit needs, impacts, and feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend and actively participate in project meetings Identify and engage with key staff to participate as advocates and influencers Take part in targeted change activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide insights and approvals for change and communications activities, as needed Identify and engage with key staff to participate as advocates and influencers Take part in targeted change activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide insights and approvals for change and communications activities, as needed Identify and engage with key staff to participate as advocates and influencers Take part in targeted change activities
Communications	Be the voice of the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate updates, issues, and risks across work streams, to sponsors and governance committee Share information across work streams to facilitate progress and reduce redundancies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as a project champion and source of information for unit Communicate updates to supervisors and direct reports in regular meetings Share unit feedback with the project team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as a project champion by providing visible support for the change Use opportunities to share benefits and excitement about the project to drive buy-in with direct reports and senior leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as a project champion for and encourage direct reports to be as well Use opportunities to share benefits and excitement about the project to drive buy-in

Portfolio

A list of active and completed projects can be found at:

<https://finance.rutgers.edu/node/164>

The following links provide details to active high-level IT initiatives:

1. Cornerstone: <https://cornerstone.rutgers.edu/>
2. Student Experience Improvement Initiative: <https://sites.rutgers.edu/seii/>
3. Scarlet Journey (CRM): <https://scarletjourney.rutgers.edu/>

Part IV. Feedback:

Our committee, the ITC, which consists of Faculty, Staff, Students and Alumni, was formed as part of Senate Charge: S1607 (2020).

We shared our perspectives on the current challenges as well as best practices in identifying stakeholders, evaluating risk, and communicating timely information for major IT initiatives.

Challenges:

1. Many ongoing IT Initiatives affecting a broad range of constituencies and of varying impact and importance
2. Identifying criteria for what rises to the level of participation and governance
3. Communications
4. IT is the implementer, but most often, not the stakeholder

ITC Discussion - Information Gap

The ITC is in its second year as a committee, and it was formed to have primary responsibility for matters related to the impact of Information Technology software and infrastructure that impacts research, graduate and undergraduate education, and the administrative and business processes of the university. These responsibilities include but are not limited to the following:

- To provide feedback and input to the Senate for all university-wide technology and applications.
- To provide feedback to the President on university policies and practices used by university offices and programs in software and hardware technology used by the university community.
- To evaluate and recommend policies concerning both information technology applications and infrastructure and the conditions under which systems and services are modified, added, removed, and administered.
- To review the broad educational and research policies of the university and how systems and services are developed and adopted.

Suggestions:

The committee focused on identifying gaps in current mechanisms and had several ideas regarding where the ITC can assist in communications for IT major initiatives:

1. ITC can invite IT representatives to “guest speak” at ITC or Senate meetings.

2. ITC members can serve as or solicit SME (Subject Matter Expert) or stakeholders from the Senate to represent on various IT committees.
3. ITC can serve as a resource for collaboration and coordination between IT and the university community.

Results:

As a result of this Charge, the following processes have been implemented:

1. IT Initiatives Report:

The ITC receives and reviews the monthly IT Initiatives Report from OIT and plans to regularly review the reports and act accordingly:

- a. Information Gathering:
 - i. Request additional information
 - ii. Provide feedback
- b. Representation:
 - i. Provide or solicit senator representation to serve on IT committees where appropriate
- c. Communications:
 - i. Request the CIO, or appropriate IT representative, speak to the initiative during a Senate meeting
- d. Collaboration: Meet with and/or potentially add “Ad Hoc” members to the ITC that are not senators, to assist and serve as subject matter experts (“SMEs”) to assist the committee with specialty IT issues.

EXAMPLE: The ITC received Charge S-2201, regarding Electronic Lab Notebooks (“ELNs”). The ITC Co-Chair reached out to the Executive Director of IT for the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) for subject matter assistance, and he was able to provide additional details and context for the ITC. This collaboration helped form the response to the charge.

2. ITC Participation in IT Initiatives:

The ITC has been solicited for participation, and members are currently serving on various IT committees. (See section “IT Project Collaborations”)

Review of Senate Resolution S-1801:

The ITC reviewed Senate Resolution S-1801 from 2018, “OIT Integration of feedback from RU Stakeholders” the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC.) This report had six (6) recommendations, each of which is below and noted with its current state noted inline:

RESOLUTION Be it resolved that the Rutgers University Senate recommends that:

- OIT maintain up-to-date web sites to inform the Community of existing services, including where to go for help and any plans to make changes to major IT programs.

Web Sites:

This recommendation has been satisfied by OIT who maintains up-to-date web sites:

it.rutgers.edu
cio.rutgers.edu

The it.rutgers.edu website posts resources about IT strategic priorities, services, support, and various other IT-related work.

- OIT establish a clear mechanism for all users to directly communicate questions and concerns to Central IT.

OIT Feedback:

This recommendation has been satisfied by OIT who provides a feedback mechanism available on their website:

<https://it.rutgers.edu/feedback/>

- OIT provide evidence-based rationales to user groups prior to implementing changes to existing projects or introducing new ones.

IT Project Collaborations:

There are many IT projects regularly underway at the University. For large scale projects affecting the University body broadly, stakeholders are included in the project process.

Recent examples of inclusion:

- *Digital Badging*
- *Multifactor Authentication (DUO)*
- *Student Information System*

- OIT pause and announce a period of public comment prior to considering or actually making major changes to ensure that all affected users be notified and consulted beforehand.

Many major IT initiatives have “Town Halls” sessions to solicit public comment. Further, the ITC suggests in its resolution that broad initiatives are shared with the Senate body, either through the CIO, ITC, etc.

IT Project Communications:

For broad IT initiatives, OIT has a structure that includes stakeholders at every level: Core Working Team, Steering Committee, and Advisory Committee/Tables.

The Institutional Planning and Operations (IPO) PMO is also exploring additional means of project communication, such newsletters or email/project updates, as well as an “Open for public comment” phase where they could collect information and feedback from key stakeholders.

- Local IT support staff be included in the chain of information, be informed of coming changes so they can communicate these to users and be solicited by supervisors to provide their expertise.

IT Governance – IT Leadership Council:

The IT Leadership Council (ITLC) is a group consisting of over 60 IT senior staff members and serves as a regular forum for communication, strategy, consensus building, and inclusion for IT staff throughout the university. This group, led by Michele Norin, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO), has been established for several years meets monthly to explore, collaborate, and discuss ongoing and proposed IT initiatives. As part of this collaboration, OIT distributes the monthly IT Projects and Initiatives report to members of the ITLC. The report consists of information regarding IT initiatives and updates that are representative of IT across the university.

- The University create the Rutgers IT User Council, a group representing key university stakeholders including faculty, staff, students and administrators, whose duties are to advise and consult with OIT on User experiences, to recommend improvements to services and to make recommendations consistent with User needs. The IT User Council will meet periodically and directly with the CIO.

It would be challenging to create a single council to cover the vast number of user-related IT services. IT governance is however very much embodied within the ITC and the ITLC. These groups include representation from the CIO, and are available to source, receive and disseminate IT information as well as user feedback.

In addition to the governance groups, there are numerous IT committees for specific initiatives (existing structures).

PART V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Technology continues to drive the day-to-day operations of the University. Rutgers is a large, complex institution, and there are many forms of communications and inclusion for IT projects. Many mechanisms exist to provide information and inclusion in projects, and the Senate can serve as another opportunity for information sharing, feedback, and participation. Offering ways for the Senate to be represented on IT initiatives with broad impact will further support collaboration and participation.

RESOLUTION

Be it Resolved that the Rutgers University Senate recommends that:

- The ITC be added to the Senate meeting agenda to report on important University technology business when appropriate.
- The Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer (CIO), or their representative, provide an IT Update to the Senate, at least once per semester, to report on university technology business.
- The ITC should be a required component of inclusion on significant IT projects.
- The Senate should develop a process for university groups to solicit Senators to serve on institutional IT initiatives.

Information Technology Committee (ITC): 2021-2022

Adrienne Esposito, Co-Chair	New Brunswick Staff
Katie Anderson, Co-Chair	Libraries, Faculty
Robert Boikess, Member	School of Arts & Sciences-NB, Faculty
Stephanie Bonne, Member	New Jersey Medical School, Faculty
Brian Everett, Member	Camden Staff
Masanori Hara, Member	School of Engineering, Faculty
Michele Norin	Office of Information Technology
Shubon Husan, Member	School of Engineering, Student
Galathara Kahanda, Member	Newark College of Arts & Sciences, Faculty
Nicholas Linardopoulos, Member	New Brunswick At-Large, Faculty
Aman Shah, Member Rutgers	Business School Undergraduate Newark
Martin Siederer, Member	Alumni Association
Zhiqiang Tan, Member	School of Arts & Sciences-NB, Faculty
Cassandra Vega, Member	School of Arts & Sciences-NB, Student