

NEWS

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President Wright describes state of College technology in presentation to Board of Trustees

On February 27, College President Ron Wright presented to the Board of Trustees his view of "Cincinnati State Information Technology Issues."

The theme of his presentation was "Where are we, How did we get here, and Where do we go from here?"

President Wright's presentation was illustrated with 15 PowerPoint™ slides.

Early in his presentation, Dr. Wright said that the Information Technology Services (ITS) department, in his opinion, "has become the referee in a game where the players don't bother to learn the rules (which change every day) and fouling your team mates is common." President Wright used the cartoon reproduced on this page to represent this problem.

[Editor's note: all quotations are taken from a transcript of the audio tape recording of the Board meeting.]

In his presentation, President Wright also made these points:

- Cincinnati State's primary computer system is "A network which is reaching the end of its design life."
- The College has "A patchwork

of applications and files scattered across more than 40 servers."

- "Colleague--we're still working on Release 16, when next week we should be on 18.... So, some decisions have to be made.... Do we continue down the road with Colleague Datatel or do we find

need some rational standards...."

Dr. Wright proposed that the College needs to establish an "Information Technology Infrastructure Library, and that we need an inventory of all systems, with some accountability about the ethical behavior in the use of resources."

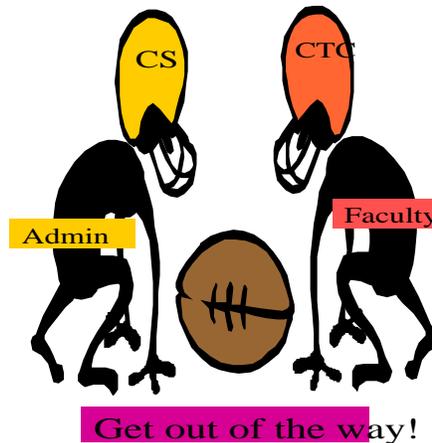
Dr. Wright proposed some next steps, including defining new systems as we approach the completion of a new building.

In his conclusion, Dr. Wright said, "I'm recommending that the College community begin the process of looking at all of those steps and putting all of those things in place so that we can adequately prepare ourselves for where we're going. If we don't do this now, we will have a major debacle, a major catastrophic debacle...."

One Board member said, "I'd at least like to see some options that are better than adequate.... I don't go in with an expectation that we're merely going to do adequately."

Faculty were given the opportunity to view Dr. Wright's PowerPoint™ slides and to read the transcript of his remarks.

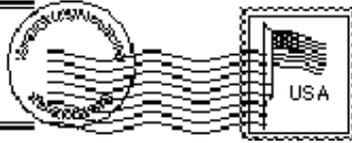
The remainder of this Newsletter includes some faculty responses.



some other provider that may be better suited to our needs at the College community?

- "There is a problem with manageability and interdependency. [The College needs to] consider and think about the equitable distribution of resources and make sure that every department, every area, academic and administrative, that we have the distribution of resources that allows everybody to work, but most important, we

Letters



--John Battistone
AAUP Grievance Officer

Article III of our Collective Bargaining Agreement says, **"The parties agree that it is in their mutual interest to maintain a harmonious and cooperative relationship."**

Many faculty believe that it is difficult to feel "harmonious" when our President—speaking also on behalf of what he calls "many of those who are at the top at the Executive level"—gives to our Board of Trustees the "perspective" which Dr. Wright provided at the February Board meeting in his discussion of Information Technology at the College.

In his PowerPoint™ presentation slide marked "Perspective," the President pictured two football players facing each other on the scrimmage line, with the caption "Get out of the way!" (see page 1).

I don't know whether the inscriptions on the helmets were meant to imply "old school" vs "new school." (When asked to explain his intention, the President reportedly said "a picture is worth a thousand words.") However, I can't imagine a metaphor more suggestive of this administration's adversarial perspective.

I was momentarily encouraged that the President's presentation included a bullet point that said "Accountability." But then I realized that he was not suggesting that we need more accountability by the CIO or any of his staff; nor was he suggesting that any other administrator needs to be held more account-

"And then there's the issue of illegal and unethical activities on our system. There are things going on that we have identified in the College that are going on that are immoral and probably illegal."

***President Wright
February 27, 2002***

able for the sorry state of IT at our College.

The President was suggesting that the Faculty and Staff need to be held more accountable for their "bad behaviors."

The President said (I've added underlining), ***"And then there's the issue of illegal and unethical activities on our system. There are things that we have identified in the College that are going on that are immoral and probably illegal... that people are doing on our system that is designed to serve the teaching and learning strategy of Cincinnati***

State Technical and Community College, not designed for the business purposes of any other persons or any individual who works here."

Later, when a Board member said that he was "shocked" by these "strong words," the President said,

"You know, frankly, I'm a little tired of being confronted by people who are trying to do a good job in the classroom and who have things that happen that don't work.

"And that's because we have not been able to stop people from doing things that they have no business doing, and chewing up the bandwidth...

"You can't have people all over the College listening to music and playing games and shopping and this and that and the other, and use up all the bandwidth, and the thing that we are required to do, which is to teach.

"And when they go to run their programs in the classrooms, they

can't run them, because they got all this other kind of crazy stuff going on...

"And we administrators, we get a lot of heat, we get a lot of heat, because there's just so many things that people are doing that they have no business doing."

So, the poor upper level administrators at Cincinnati State "take heat" for something that they have nothing to do with.

See *Bad Behavior* 3

Bad Behavior/ continued from 2

The administration has nothing to do with the fact that some faculty members have computers so antiquated that they have to go home to produce their course materials on the computers they purchased at their own expense.

The administration has nothing to do with the fact that the College purchased a "system" which we knew from the start was not appropriate for our five-term schedule, and then we could not or would not modify to fit our needs.

The administration has nothing to do with the fact that the College will not spend the money to hire highly qualified specialists who could design an appropriate system for us.

According to the President, the IT problems at the College are apparently the result of behavior by faculty (and perhaps others?) that is

"unethical," and "immoral," and "probably illegal."

As the Grievance Officer for the AAUP, it is my job to help ensure that the contract is enforced. Sometimes that means making sure that faculty have their due process rights protected.

Sometimes (not really very often) it means filing a grievance regarding a violation of the contract.

Sometimes, it means helping faculty to see that they have no grievance and that they do have

responsibilities which go along with their rights.

Other times it means simply lending an ear to people who feel "aggrieved."

Since the last Board meeting, I have had numerous contacts from faculty members (and others, by the way), who feel insulted and "aggrieved" by the President's comments.

I had to explain that the President's public remarks are not a contract violation, so I can't file a grievance.

"And then they go to run their programs in the classroom — they can't run them because they got all this other crazy stuff going on."

***President Wright
February 27, 2002***

But I did promise that on their behalf I would state forcefully and publicly to our Board of Trustees that the fact that our College President implied to our Board that the abysmal state of technology at the College has something to do with bad faculty behaviors amounts to disingenuousness of the first water.

Our collective bargaining contract has provisions which speak to "ethical behavior."

Our contract has provisions which speak to employment outside the College, when it

involves use of College equipment.

Our contract has a process for sanctioning and dismissing faculty for adequate cause. (This process has been used two times in our collective bargaining history. Both resulted in sanctions for faculty members: one a suspension, the other a termination.)

The President said that these alleged behaviors were "...*things that we have identified in the College that are going on....*"

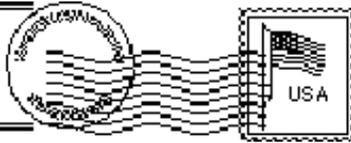
If faculty perpetrators have been identified, then, as AAUP Grievance Officer, I would encourage the President to bring charges against those faculty members under Article XI of our contract.

The AAUP will certainly ensure faculty their due process rights. If it is proven that faculty have engaged in "illegal or unethical" behaviors, then I would hope that

the contractual Fact Finding Committee would recommend that the Board levy appropriate sanctions.

Absent such specific charges, I would encourage our President, in the interest of harmonious and cooperative relations, to publicly retract his certainly scurrilous, possibly slanderous, and maybe even immoral accusations.

Letters



--to the Editor

Last night I read a transcript of the presentation given by Dr. Wright to the BOT in regard to the IT issues facing our College. A number of things struck me about this presentation and I wanted to share my thoughts on this matter.

The first thing that I thought about was that Cincinnati State administration has had a history of starting projects in the IT area and failing to fully implement them. They run out of money or they fail to follow a plan of action that will see that a project is finished.

It appears that resources aren't dedicated to bringing a project to completion. To me, this shows a lack of leadership.

Apparently there is no planning by our administration for future equipment and software needs at this institution, nor is there any organization to the way we establish where we stand at the current moment in regard to what we have and use. According to Dr. Wright, there is recognition that the Colleague system does not meet our needs— but we have no plan to find or develop a system that does.

My history with the College tells me that we have had a lot of turnover of upper level administration through the past seven years. Every time there is a change, the new administrators have to be educated as to

what technical education requires. And since changes happen so fast in this field, it is like being Alice Through the Looking Glass: we are running hard just to stay in place, with little hope of ever getting ahead.

Another problem I thought about is that we fail to be willing to pay the competitive price to get truly qualified people, who can address our issues effectively, to come to the College

"In '96 and '97 there was an Internet project that patched together a network.... Before we got to the end of this thing, funding was cut."

President Wright

and give us the benefit of their expertise. It seems that when we have someone with good IT skills, they often go elsewhere, where they are paid more.

Sadly, the impression I get from the transcript of the President's remarks is that statements were made to indicate that the employees at this institution are using our IT system illegally and unethically and it is because of this abuse that our IT systems don't work, thus costing us money and productivity.

If statements like these can be made, then where is the data to back them up? If the data exists, then why is the administration

not addressing the problems by dealing appropriately with the known abusers? I see no need to invent new "consequences" as the President seemed to be telling the Board we need to do. If you're an administrator and you know there is an employee performance problem, you document it, you counsel the offending party, and if the behavior doesn't change, you take appropriate steps to ask them to leave.

It was sad to me that the President said that we are planning to be "adequate," not to meet and exceed our student's and the community's needs.

What I find sadder is that the Board appears to have embraced the excuses offered by the President as reason we are not meeting our IT needs. I'm sad to think that this is what the Board will remember about Faculty.

The Faculty needs to address these issues with Dr. Wright, but also with our Board of Trustees.

There are a lot of good people who work at Cincinnati State, who care very deeply about this institution and who work very hard to make it a better place.

The lack of respect shown in instances like the February Board meeting makes it very difficult to take seriously administrative Quality Initiatives or any other program that requires trust.

Maggie Davis,
Information & Engineering
Technologies

Letters



--to the Editor

There's been a lot of buzz about a presentation that Dr. Wright made to the Board of Trustees on the state of technology at the College. I'd like to address not the points made in this presentation, but some points that were left out.

What disturbs me about this presentation is that there is no recognition of the role the Library played in this process.

The Library, with the help of OhioLINK, got the first National Science Foundation grant used to wire the campus.

In 1995-96, the Library was using the Internet to deliver OhioLINK services on campus. Dr. Wright's presentation said that at that time "the College was deciding whether our faculty and staff even needed a network, much less connecting to the Internet."

The Cincinnati State Library never had an online catalog that was a stand-alone product. From the start, our catalog was joined (via the Internet) with those of colleges all over Ohio.

We used the Internet to deliver a variety of research databases to our students, and to all of you. Some of us knew we needed Internet access because we were using it every day. Some of us were paying other agencies to provide e-mail accounts, because the College hadn't gotten around to it yet.

Early Internet access on this campus was all text-based. We weren't on the World Wide Web yet, but we were using the Internet to deliver library service.

When the College started using the World Wide Web, the Library was in the lead, with little assistance from ITS. For over a year the Library's homepage was the College's entire web presence.

"In '95 and '96 the College was deciding whether our faculty and staff even needed a network, much less connecting to the Internet."

President Wright

Library staff fielded phone calls regularly from prospective students—who had been searching in vain for the College's website—because the College had none.

(And I sure didn't appreciate when I was suddenly told to make over the Library website to meet the "College standard" after we'd been using the website for access and as a teaching tool for several terms.)

I still get e-mail on all kinds of topics because my e-mail address is prominently displayed on the Library's homepage—and you can search the College website for hours without finding an e-mail address for the

College's webmaster.

In answer to the questions Dr. Wright asked in his IT presentation:

- Where are we?
Embarrassingly far behind.
- How did we get there?
By making decisions in a vacuum without consulting with the stakeholders.
- Where do we go from here?
Why don't we start with true collegial, non-adversarial communication?

Debbie Bogenschutz, Library

Letters

--to the Editor

Wow! I just read a transcript of President Wright's report to the Board about apparent misconduct of faculty. OK, so who are you and what are you doing?

I have yet to see any faculty member engaged in unethical activities. Perhaps I'm too busy teaching.

I wonder what our Board thinks of us now. Instead of focusing on real IT issues, they'll be looking for faculty abusers.

I am disappointed that our President would portray faculty as he has done. How are we supposed to get behind "quality" when the President hasn't even mastered the basic structure of good relationships: honesty, trust, and mutual respect.

Cindy Kief,
Health Technologies

Letters



--to the Editor

The other day, I went to class planning to have a discussion and do some exercises around some reading material that the students were expected to have read. I had posted these materials on a College-hosted website.

When I arrived in class, the students had not read the material and were therefore unprepared for my class. They claimed that they were unable to gain access to the site.

As my second option, I thought I would go to the Divisional office and simply photocopy the materials so the students could read them on the spot in class.

The photocopier in the H&S division was broken. So, I went to the I/ET Division, where I found that their machine was broken also. Then I thought that I would simply print the materials out from my computer at the divisional printer, but I didn't want to wait for my computer to

boot up, and, besides, every other faculty member had the same idea. The print queue was so long that it would have taken longer to print than I had time left in class.

This episode made me think about the opportunity cost of waiting for our technology to support us. I did a little non-scientific study of the amount of time wasted just by faculty just waiting for their antiquated computers to "boot up."

I examined the computers in the H&S divisions. Some are 166 MHz machines; some are 266 MHz machines; and some are 300 MHz machines. I took an average of the time it took from the first push of the start button to the point where the employee using that computer had access to Outlook™ and MS Word™.

The results of my investigation show that the average H&S faculty member spends over 30 minutes per week just waiting

for the computer to boot up. In the aggregate, the H&S faculty spend 22 hours, three minutes, and two seconds a week waiting for their machines to boot up.

If this model were applied to all of the other College divisions, we would see that the faculty use the equivalent of two FTE faculty members' time each week just waiting for their College-issued computers to start.

There is no reason for this situation. Even if we went to the most expensive retail store in town, we could purchase a brand-new, state-of-the-art computer with personal printer for each full-time member of the faculty and still not use the equivalent of 40 percent of the FY 2001 Intercollegiate Athletics line in the College budget (almost \$900,000).

It's a question of institutional priorities.

I have no time for unethical activities. I'm wasting enough time just waiting for our technology to meet the needs of our students.

Geoff Woolf, Humanities

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