

Office of Information Management

Emerging Themes from Discovery/Assessment Meetings May 15, 2007

OIM has completed its discovery/assessment meetings with key stakeholders. The purpose of the meetings was to gather input on UW information management and administrative systems, both challenges and opportunities. More than 700 comments were collected and organized into four broad themes.

1. Emerging Themes

The following provides a summary of the four themes, followed by a more detailed list of comments collected under each theme. A list of stakeholder groups interviewed is included at the end of this document.

A. Summary

The four broad themes that emerged from stakeholder meetings are:

Strategy, Policy, and Partnership

- The need for leadership in information management/administrative systems and for strategic partnerships (both corporate and higher education)
- An approach that provides central solutions for common needs and local solutions for specialized needs
- The need to clarify governance structure, roles, and responsibilities
- A culture of open access to information and information sharing
- The need to leverage current resources more effectively and also to recognize that addressing major challenges will require additional resources

Information Management

- Broader, timelier access to data and analytical tools
- Consistent, accurate data
- Integrated data across all subject areas and spanning the lifecycle of activities

Business Processes and Information Systems

- Business process improvement
- Administrative systems that fully support UW business needs
- Core system replacement

Information Architecture

- Build a community of developers to share knowledge and expertise
- Leverage distributed knowledge and expertise
- Establish security as a top priority
- Develop best practices and development standards

B. Stakeholder Comments

The following are comments collected from stakeholders, organized under the four broad themes:

Strategy, Policy, and Partnership

- *We need to get the compliance and utility pieces funded* and “out of the picture” so we can focus on the new and innovative and on future strategic directions.
 - Base funding needs to include continuous improvements.
- *We need to pursue strategic partnerships, both corporate and higher education,* to identify completely new and creative approaches to information systems and information management.
- *Moving forward will take strong leadership.* There is a sense of immediacy that calls for decisive action.
- *The 80/20 Rule* – There is agreement that most colleges/schools have 80 percent of business processes in common and recognition that there also are local, specialized needs.
 - Currently, there is a great deal of redundant effort in each school that is not an efficient use of resources.
 - If there is significant input into the process and clear benefits, colleges and schools would be OK with a more centralized approach.
 - Any approach must also enable local solutions for specialized needs. The goal is both to enable local solutions for specialized needs and to provide central solutions for shared needs to reduce redundancy.
- *We need to build a culture of trust and transparency* that enables information sharing across the university.
- *There is agreement that the UW will not be distinguished by having premier, top-of-the-line information systems.* We need to invest in systems that are good enough to support institutional needs.
- *We need to make the right choices and investments.* We need to do enough due diligence to get it right without becoming mired in process and analysis.
- *If we focus on the biggest challenges faced by those closest to the work,* we will identify most of the major IS/IM issues that need to be addressed.
- *We need to address our governance structure as part of this process.* We need more clearly defined roles and responsibilities among the various committees advising on information technology and decision-making authority.
- *Any approach needs to recognize the unique needs of the Bothell and Tacoma campuses.* UW Bothell and UW Tacoma have needs that are different from the Seattle campus and from each other.
- *We need to leverage best practices* from other higher education institutions, corporations, and internal efforts.
- *We need to focus our resources on high-impact projects* that produce the greatest benefits for the largest number of people.

- *Success will come through business process improvements and partnerships!*
 - We need to leverage existing staff toward common solutions that will lead to greater efficiencies and greater innovation. We also need to recognize that addressing the major challenges will require additional resources.
 - There is a great interest in working together towards common goals and contributing to common solutions.
 - Through collaboration we can effectively leverage resources for innovation.

Information Management

- *We need broader and timelier access to data* to enable both operational and strategic decision making and to serve a range of users.
 - Data: Find it, store it, access it.
 - Ability to track money, people, space.
 - Ability to explore, manipulate, and analyze data at the local level. Units need access to their own data. Access to accurate, real-time data is critical.
- *We need integration across systems and data that spans the entire lifecycle of information on*, for example:
 - Students: Applicants through alumni.
 - Faculty and staff: First hired through their entire UW career, including promotion and professional development.
 - Grants: Pre-award through post-award, with the ability to track proposals by different categories including when submitted, when and how funded – *the ability to track funding is critical!*
- *We need accurate, consistent institutional data* that provides the same answers to key questions regardless of who is asking them.
- *We need a single view of the customer.* We need a unique ID for each person that will allow us to track all of that person's relationships and interactions with the UW.
- *We need to offer one-stop shopping* through a portal that provides easy access to all the information, tools, and resources a person needs (and is authorized to use) in one place and through a common interface.
- *We need a central resource where people can easily find the expertise, tools, and resources available* throughout the university community.

Business Processes and Information Systems

- *Core, central systems (financial, HR/payroll, student, etc.) are not meeting institutional needs.* As a result, a great deal of redundant effort and money is being spent on shadow systems and workarounds.
- *Incremental solutions to our administrative systems are creating inefficiencies* through fragmented processes and systems, and they are not adequately addressing the need for business process and cultural change from a holistic approach.

- *We need to rethink our business processes and look for opportunities to streamline and make them more efficient.* This includes creating more consistency across business processes and reducing the number of steps and people involved.
 - We need to understand how work is organized and how business processes should change to support future needs. This will take compromise!
 - We need to retire old tools, systems, and practices as new ones are introduced.
- *We need to offer IS/IM expertise and consulting help to units that need it* so that they can make good choices and investments when selecting systems and approaches for their specialized needs.
- *We need workflow management tools* to help with tracking, routing, and approvals.
- *We need to continue to involve users* as we streamline processes and systems

Information Architecture

- *We need to develop a distributed development environment* to enable access to common, central services while also providing local development capabilities for specialized needs.
- *We need to build a developer community* across the university to share knowledge and expertise. This should include:
 - Common services, interfaces, and data definitions
 - Best practices and standards for development environments (tools, programming languages, etc.)
 - Good architecture
- *We need a way to leverage the expertise and tools* that have been developed by individual units and departments
- *We need to keep security a top priority* as we develop new systems and information architecture.

2. Stakeholder Groups Interviewed

OIM met with the following key stakeholder groups:

- December 13: School of Dentistry, Health Sciences Administration, School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, School of Social Work
- December 20: College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Business School, College of Forest Resources, Information School, School of Law
- January 17: UW Libraries
- January 19: College of Arts and Sciences
- January 22: College of Architecture and Urban Planning, College of Engineering, Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs
- January 22: Data Management Users Group
- January 22: Executive Vice President Management Team

- January 23: Medical Affairs, School of Medicine
- January 23: College of Ocean and Fishery Sciences
- February 1: UW Bothell
- February 2: UW Tacoma
- February 5: College of Education
- February 6: Computer Science & Engineering (Ed Lazowska, Erik Lundberg)
- February 13: Development and Alumni Relations
- February 16: Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Student Life, Minority Affairs
- March 2: Graduate School
- March 8: Academic Human Resources, Global Affairs, Retirement Center, Equal Opportunity Office
- March 19: Office of Research, UW Technology Transfer
- March 20: President's Cabinet
- March 21: Board of Deans
- March 28: Planning and Budgeting
- April 2: External Affairs
- April 5: Shared Systems Group
- April 12: Office of Educational Assessment