

**Committee on Information Technologies, Infrastructure, Computing
Communications, and Networking (CITICCN)**

**Annual Report to the Faculty Senate
March 23, 2017**

Members

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(* Current Senator)

The Committee on Information Technologies, Infrastructure, Computing, Communications, and Networking contributes to the development and maintenance of the strategic plan in collaboration with Information Technology Services and reviews and makes policy recommendations regarding the implications on academic and research planning, standards, services, physical facilities, and allocation of resources on all matters pertaining to information technology, infrastructure, computing, communications, and networking. [By-Laws 4.85](#)

CITICCN has had an active year with five meetings so far during Academic Year 2016-2017, the second year of engagement for the committee. CITICCN had engaged in a number of topics (as documented in the minutes of the committee meetings posted on the FS website <http://web.uri.edu/facsen/committees/committee-on-information-technologies-infrastructure-computing-communications-and-networking/>) that include the following significant activities:

1. IT Strategic Planning

CITICCN engaged with IT strategic planning in collaboration with ITgov. The IT strategic planning was contracted to the BerryDunn consultants by URI. The plan submitted by BerryDunn was extensively reviewed by the campus community, CITICCN, and ITgov. The plan was revised as a result of comments from the various constituencies. The final version was reviewed and approved by the Provost. The final approved draft version of the plan was issued on February 16, 2017 (<http://web.uri.edu/itgov/files/IT-Strategic-Plan-FINAL-Approved-DRAFT-Feb-15-2017.pdf>).

CITICCN will continue to work with the CIO towards implementation of the plan and most importantly developing metrics for assessment of the implementation of the plan.

2. Internet and wifi and telephone at URI.

CITICCN has been engaged in assessment of the situation with our wireless and internet services. Use of internet and wifi on our campus has become so ingrained in the fabric of our being as a

campus community that it is now as necessary as water and electricity for us to function yet we do not have a firm administrative and budget commitment to maintain and improve our networking (particularly wireless) systems at URI. What we have has been patched together through various sources of one-time funds (e.g., end-of-the year funds). The flexibility and power of the internet services has also absorbed our telephone system with the transfer of our phone system from the traditional telephone switch to voice over IP (VOIP). The VOIP phone system implementation has opened a gap in our security and safety during power outages which must be addressed. Under the current situation, telephone services are only available on battery backup for 20 minutes into an outage and there is no reliable backup system (including cell phone services) for all faculty, staff, and students. Studies of our wifi networks on campus also express the need for significant improvements to achieve ubiquitous wifi service at URI (e.g., see AAUP report on wireless services issued in 2016).

IT is aware of the needs to provide better internet and wifi systems to the campus but they lack a budget category for this function. They have been cannibalizing the funds for telephone services to pay for networking needs. Telephone service fees of \$22.50 per line are charged to departments through a budget mechanism that removes these funds from departmental budget allocations at the beginning of each fiscal year. Some department's budgets are reduced by 50-80% to pay for their phone line charges. Now, IT is considering renaming the telephone fees to internet connection fees since our phones are now connected to the internet. CITICCN believes there are better models for budgeting and paying for our internet services, e.g., in the same way that we pay for electricity and water.

The current telephone chargeback model is archaic and needs to be abandoned. We strongly encourage the university administration to acknowledge the necessity of the internet and wifi services as fundamental utility services (such as electricity and water) necessary for functioning of the university and therefore create a relevant IT budgeting process to fund the maintenance and improvements of the internet services for all campuses of URI with the goal of advancing our position in regional and national rankings, e.g., America's Most Connected Universities (<https://www.forbes.com/connected>).

3. CITICCN conducted a survey of faculty regarding information technologies, Infrastructure, computing, communications, and networking. The survey and results from faculty responses are posted to the CITICCN website under the faculty senate. This information will help guide CITICCN activities into the future. The survey and results can be accessed at <http://web.uri.edu/facsen/committees/committee-on-information-technologies-infrastructure-computing-communications-and-networking/>
4. The CIO position is an extremely important administrative position at URI that affects the entire university. Past experience with search processes at URI reveal the length of time that it takes to complete an administrative search process. Last CIO search took approximately two years. CITICCN strongly recommends that the search for a permanent CIO be undertaken as soon as possible to allow for a smooth transition in IT leadership from the current interim CIO to the new CIO. If the goal is to have a new CIO at URI before fall of 2018, then it is prudent to begin the formation of the search committee as soon as possible and before the end of spring 2017.