

UNIVERSITY SENATE ANNUAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Name: Technology Resources 2017-2018

Number of Meetings Held this Year: 2 + multiple online collaborations via Google Docs

Committee Chair: Andrea Vernengo

Committee Members: (list here)

Lee Ann Kung	Marry Ellen Santucci	
Kristine Johnson	Nasrine Bendjilali	
Jill Perry	Julie Haynes	
Mary Staehle	Jon Jiras	
Dustin Cushman	Erin O'Neill	
Heng Yi M (Micheal) Chu	Daisy Garcia	
Tom Fusco	Eileen Stutzbach	
Harold Connolly		

Purpose/charge of the committee:

This committee monitors technological resources to ensure that the needs of the campus community in research and academic pursuits are being met. By soliciting and compiling input from the campus community, the committee attempts to ensure that the faculty, staff and students are aware of the current services on campus that can and do support these efforts.

Summary of Activities this Year:

The goal of the Technological Resources Committee during Fall 2017/Spring 2018 was to compile input from the campus community regarding ways to improve technological services. Following the compilation of this information, Andrea Vernengo (committee chair) met with Dr. Mira Lalovic-Hand, Senior Vice President and Chief Information Officer Information Resources & Technology on March 8, 2018 to relay the committee findings. The issues identified by the committee are listed below in order of priority, with Dr. Lalovic-Hand's feedback indicated in italics.

1. Wireless connectivity

Wireless connectivity on computers and handheld devices is a major issue. The problems include wireless dropping and interruptions in wireless access upon changing the user network password. It was agreed among the committee members that directions available on the Rowan website for connecting to wireless are not helpful with many of the issues faculty and students are facing. Ideally, a system would be developed where faculty can seamlessly connect to the wifi upon opening their computers on campus, without the need for restarting and logging in again. This process would be similar the current setup we have for visitor wireless.

Currently, the University is investing significant money and effort to upgrading the wifi network. Wifi connectivity seems to be location-dependent. For instance, the back-end

infrastructure of certain buildings may not be updated to support dependable wireless connectivity. Improving wireless connectivity is a high priority for the IRT. Employees are encouraged to file tickets (email support@rowan.edu) when connectivity is an issue. This is the most effective way to make IRT aware of the issue so it will be resolved.

2. Administrative privileges

Administrative privileges among faculty and staff seem to be inconsistent. Administrative privileges allow users to install software, change system configurations, and modify other settings on the computer. Non-administrative privileges protect the security of the University computer environment; however, they can also cause significant problems for staff and students. For instance, graduate students are not given administrator rights on their computers. Thus, if particular software is needed on their computers for research, IT has to treat each request individually. It was also noted lack of admin privileges prevent certain staff or adjunct faculty from having control over what they can project on the overhead during teaching.

Is there a way to revise the administrator privileges policy such that it does not interfere with student and faculty productivity? For instance, can users apply for privileges, given that they are the sole user of the system and they require software not provided by the University?

Limiting administrative privileges is absolutely necessary to protect the security of Rowan's computing environment. However, it is understood by IRT that limiting software installation privileges for graduate students hampers research productivity. For the time being, the best solution to this issue is having graduate students contact IRT to be granted the required privileges. Requests will be treated on an individual basis, depending on the nature of the software needing installation. During Fall 2018, the Tech Resource committee may investigate the appropriate contact at Rowan University and devise a plan to expedite this process for graduate students.

Please note that currently everyone at Rowan University (students, faculty, and doctors) shares the same "Rowan Cloud". IRT is working on a network upgrade so that each group has their own cloud, which will allow for users to have more privileges.

3. Encryption

Rowan University faculty and staff are required to employ University-approved encryption solutions to preserve the confidentiality of and control accessibility to sensitive data. External devices such as USB flash drives are encrypted in their entirety, causing problems when a Rowan employee copies files onto a flash drive and needs to transfer it to an outside entity. Clearly, this inhibits communication with outside collaborators. The problem with encryption can possibly be mitigated by assigning a level of sensitivity to data and determining to what degree the data needs to be controlled and secured. The process of classifying data would require the active participation of the data owners (i.e., faculty and staff) in collaboration with IT.

Resolving issues with data encryption has been on IRT's priority list for some time. While data encryption will remain for flash drives, the University is moving to a new security component this summer (from Symantec to McAfee). The new system will have additional features that can be utilized to improve data encryption, including a new mobile device management system.

4. Searching on Rowan University's website is inefficient

The power of the web search utility on Rowan's website is extremely low, making it very difficult to retrieve the useful information requested by the user.

Web services have been working on this issue. By using data analytics to see what people are searching for, web services has made the Rowan website more usable for outside students and counselors, as a measure for promoting enrollment. Jeff Hand is currently working on setting up an 'intra web' for faculty and staff at Rowan, which will facilitate queries.

5. Develop active directory OUs

Active Directory Organizational Units (OUs) should be developed across the university -- with a mechanism in place for specific individuals within the respective units to add and remove users. OUs would greatly simplify permissions, calendar invitations, email lists, etc.

Rowan Information Management Systems (RIMS) currently exist to manage organizational units. IRT is actively working on improving the system to make it easier to assign privileges to faculty and staff depending on their title. RIMS also generates uniform and easy-to-read organizational charts for every division of the University.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

Rowan Information Resources & Technology (IRT) is engaged in a continuous effort to address the problems identified by Tech Resources committee during the 2017-18 academic year. It is recommended that the committee continue to solicit input from the campus community; follow up with IRT regarding the issues identified the current report, and alert IRT of new problems that arise.