

MINUTES OF MEETING: October 6, 2023 APPROVED BY COMMITTEE: ____
Submitted Exec. Committee: ____ Approved by Exec. Committee: ____
Submitted Academic Senate: ____ Approved by Academic Senate: ____

ATC Members Present: Jenn Wolfe (Chair), Sepideh Abolghasem, Jorge Balbas, Cecile Bendavid, Paige Hajiloo, Stephen Kutay, Moira Saltzman, Wayne Smith, Melissa Weininger; *Excused:* Joel Krantz, Ruby Uribe; *Absent:* Myra Stewart, Soheil Boroushaki; *Executive Secretary:* Ron Philip; *Recording Secretary:* Celene Valenzuela; *Permanent Guest:* Helen Heinrich; *Guests:* Ryan Conlogue, Zack Hillbruner, Paul Schantz, Kate Tipton

1. Welcome and Introductions – Members and guests introduced themselves. Jenn Wolfe welcomed the Academic Technology Committee (ATC) members and encouraged participation.

2. Announcement

a. Update on the Computer Science Department’s Laptop Requirement Proposal – Wayne Smith shared that, similar to the Computer Science Department's previous proposal discussed by the committee in the previous academic year, the David Nazarian College of Business and Economics now has similar requirements, particularly for the first required junior-level course in the curriculum, which will focus on Data Literacy and related topics. Students will be asked for specific computing capabilities in the fall. Those who cannot afford a laptop can request a loaner from the Student Device Loaner Program. Wayne Smith emphasized that no further action is needed from the committee regarding policy language and recommendations.

Ron Philip shared that the Division of Information Technology is collaborating with a third-party partner to provide affordable internet access for students. Ryan Conlogue added that this initiative, in collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs and the Office of Basic Needs, is currently underway, offering affordable internet access to students through the Affordable Connectivity Program. Eligible students receive a tablet device that can be used as an internet hotspot. For those who qualify, the tablet can be obtained for a one-time cost of \$11. Pell Grant and Cal Fresh student recipients may be eligible for the Affordable Connectivity Program. Ryan Conlogue further stated that for this initial phase communications will be sent to Cal Fresh recipients inviting them to participate and to visit a tabling event on October 23 and 24 at the CSUN Campus Store complex.

b. Associate Vice President for Information Technology Appointment – Ron Philip shared that Ryan Conlogue has been appointed the Associate Vice President for Information Technology. Ryan has been with CSUN for the last decade and has provided critical leadership for many user-facing functions within the Division of Information Technology.

3. Approval of Minutes – The minutes from the September 8, 2023 meeting were approved.

4. Chair’s Report

a. Faculty Senate Update – Jenn Wolfe shared that at the September 14, 2023, Faculty Senate Meeting, reports were provided by President Erika Beck, Provost Meera Komarraju,

Associated Students President Paige Hajiloo, and Statewide Academic Senator Elizabeth Sussman-Dabach. Associate Vice President, Undergraduate Studies Paul Lazarony and Associate Vice President for Academic Resources Diane Stephens presented the new class schedule proposal, with a focus on the CSUN standard times for three-unit lecture courses. Additionally, there was a presentation and reading of the DEI Language in Section 600 and Preamble to Section 600 and 700 by the Personnel, Planning, and Review Committee, led by Sylvia Macauley, Chair of Personnel, Planning, and Review Committee, and Diane Guido, Associate Vice President of Faculty Affairs.

- b. **ACAT Update** – Jenn Wolfe shared that at the September 25, 2023, Advisory Committee on Academic Technology, there was a conversation about the Student Device Loaner Program inventory, Fall Prep packet, Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI) instructional materials report, technology projects, and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

5. VP/CIO's Report

- a. **ATI Instructional Materials Report** – Ron Philip introduced the Accessible Technology Initiative (ATI). From a system-wide perspective, there are three key areas of focus: first, the accessibility posture in relation to the procurement of information and communication technology; second, the accessibility posture of our web presence, encompassing the entire institution; and third, the accessibility of instructional materials available to all students. As part of this initiative, each campus is required to provide an annual report to the Chancellor's Office outlining their progress on specific qualifiers. The deadline for this year is December 15, 2023. Prior to submission, the report undergoes review, with the Advisory Committee on Academic Technology reviewing it with a particular focus on instructional materials. Ron Philip then introduced Kate Tipton, University Design Center Program Manager, to present on the ATI Instructional Materials report.

Kate Tipton shared that the CSU system-wide statement on accessibility is outlined in Executive Order 111 and is supplemented by coded memoranda that adhere to federal and state laws, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 508 of the U.S. Rehabilitation Act. The Chancellor's Office has provided each university with a set of goals for instructional materials, and the universities have established success indicators for each ATI goal area. The reports comprise self-assessments against each goal area, success criteria, and status levels.

The baseline in the report is referred to as 'established,' indicating whether we have a process within the university. We have identified strategies, resources, individuals, software, and documentation for meeting the success criteria. Kate Tipton also mentioned that CSUN has defined level-managed metrics and the corresponding reporting for each. Additionally, an optimizing review process takes place annually. This year, our efforts across all levels have remained highly consistent, much like last year. Kate Tipton further noted that the implementation of the CSUN Canvas Template places significant emphasis on accessibility, contributing to the improvement of our posture in the report.

Kate Tipton added that recent legal developments have underscored the importance of accessibility in instructional materials. One notable case is Payan v. Los Angeles Community College District in the Ninth Circuit, which focused on blind students encountering accessibility issues at Los Angeles Community College, particularly concerning course materials and educational technology. The students prevailed in this case, leading to several key lessons that universities, including CSUN, can use to enhance compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 508 of the U.S.

Rehabilitation Act guidelines. This emphasizes the need to ensure that campus communication and information technology are accessible to everyone. This is a primary reason why we have the University Design Center (UDC), which provides training and support for both faculty and staff. Kate Tipton further noted that the ruling also emphasized the importance of making materials accessible before the beginning of the semester. Ron Philip shared that in addition to the UDC, there are various offices across CSUN, including the Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) National Center on Deafness (NCOD), which work collectively and collaboratively to support the institution on various fronts related to accessibility.

- b. Academic Technology Open House** – Helen Heinrich invited faculty to the second annual Academic Technology Open House, in collaboration with the Office of Faculty Development, scheduled for October 24, 2023, from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the University Library Garden Level Academic Technology office spaces.

- c. Information Security Awareness** – Ron Philip shared that October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. There is concerted activity from the federal level down to state governments, private sector companies, and higher education institutions, all emphasizing the importance of information security awareness. With each passing day, this collective responsibility grows. It's crucial to understand that a single office on campus cannot bear the full responsibility for information security; it requires efforts from individuals in both our professional and personal lives. This year's theme is 'Securing our World,' with a focus on four critical cybersecurity practices, highlighting one theme per week in October. The first theme centers around best practices related to passwords and multi-factor authentication, including understanding the benefits of password management and dispelling myths surrounding password security and ease of use. Week two will emphasize best practices for secure browsing and maintaining privacy with modern security tools. Week three will concentrate on recognizing phishing activity, which remains one of the primary threat vectors cybercriminals employ today. It's important to note that the email in your inbox is still the number one entry point for accessing our campus data and personal accounts. Finally, week four will highlight the importance of staying safe through regular patching and updates.

However, we recognize that not all devices connecting to the university network are owned by the university. Today, devices encompass more than just laptops. There are also phones, watches, and various other wearable devices. Ron Philip added that in September 2022, we had a record 34,000 devices concurrently connected to the Wi-Fi network, higher than any other time in our history. This fall, we reached a peak of 54,000 devices connected simultaneously, marking a 60% increase. This underscores the reality of the rapidly growing number of devices relying on Wi-Fi and highlights the collective effort needed to maintain the organization's information security posture. Ron Philip encouraged committee members to share this information with their colleagues. Ron Philip further noted that in February 2023, a sister institution in the CSU experienced a cybersecurity attack from an external source. Within four hours, the campus' internet service provider connection was disconnected to allow it to assess the situation and move on prudent next steps, resulting in the cancellation of classes the following day. This incident demonstrates how deeply integrated technology has become in every aspect of teaching, learning, and work on campus. There are numerous lessons to be learned from this experience, and it's clear that threats are becoming more sophisticated and prevalent.

- d. Student Google Account Quota** – Ron Philip mentioned that the committee discussed last year the changes Google implemented at the beginning of 2022 regarding their pricing structure for all clients, including those in higher education. We are actively

adapting to these adjustments in line with Google's modifications. Zack Hillbruner informed that CSUN has been diligently working to align with Google's timeline and the specified quotas. Initially, Google indicated that our deadline for compliance was November 2024. However, we recently learned that they are now holding us to a November 2023 deadline. Zack Hillbruner also shared that discussions with Google are in progress to potentially extend this timeframe. With our focus on the November 2023 deadline, there is an accelerated timeline emphasizing deprovisioning and quotas for individual Google accounts. The deprovisioning process will significantly impact this effort, as well as the identification of accounts belonging to inactive students based on the existing criteria. Meeting Google's requested limit will entail more than just deprovisioning and managing storage space; it will necessitate the implementation of a 25GB quota for our students.

Out of the entire student body, approximately 1,800 students would be affected by the quota, as they currently use over 25GB. Ron Philip emphasized that in previous discussions about student Google accounts and the deprovisioning process, there was a strong focus on the relevance of information security, particularly in CSUN's provision of accounts to alumni spanning several decades. This relevance is both critical and tangible. Data indicates that only a minuscule percentage of those accounts were actively in use, with the vast majority being dormant accounts—making them fertile ground for malicious activity. The legitimate owner is typically unaware of this, once an attacker gains access to an unused account. Malicious actors exploit these accounts to gain access to the enterprise and subsequently infiltrate other assets, causing harm.

Ron Philip mentioned that another aspect to consider is Google's tiering structure, which they provided guidance on. Based on the size of our institution, we need to stay within 280TB, but we were using over 800TB of storage. The initial steps were taken 18 months ago, in collaboration with the Office of Alumni Relations, and other campus partners to remove accounts and offer alumni the option to retain their email addresses and forward them to their personal accounts using a forwarding privilege, should they be interested. With these steps over the past year, we've managed to reduce our Google storage usage from over 800TB to about 440TB today. However, this is still more than 150TB over our institutional limit. Ideally, the plan is to go well below the threshold in order to adequately serve our current student population. Ron Philip also mentioned that he's been in discussions with Google to arrange a meeting with their senior leadership, allowing us more time beyond the November 2023 deadline to achieve our goals.

Ron Philip added that this kind of change is likely to happen with many more vendors; today it's Google, and next month it might be Microsoft. CSUN needs to comprehend what this entails for the institution and how we can move forward prudently, bearing in mind that we must judiciously allocate the available funding for the most effective teaching and learning experience on campus.

6. Discussion Topic

- a. Research Infrastructure - Where are we and where are we going?** Jenn Wolfe shared that faculty in the university utilize NVivo and ATLAS.ti software for qualitative data analysis, in addition to SPSS. The committee will engage in more ongoing and deliberate conversations regarding research infrastructure, and brainstorm how to implement more equitable recommendations and solutions.

Ron Philip shared that in previous academic years, the committee had discussed research infrastructure and our current institutional posture. In collaboration with Dr. Amanda Quintero, Senior Advisor to the President for Inclusive Excellence and Equity Innovation Officer, we submitted a funding request, intending to study CSUN's research posture and

identify any existing gaps. This understanding will potentially be leveraged to request additional funding for high-impact research initiatives aligned with the university's goals. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of Dr. Amanda Quintero and the appropriation from Senator Alex Padilla's office, the university was awarded \$70,000 to conduct this study.

Ron Philip added that Zack Hillbruner has been spearheading efforts to engage with faculty researchers and Principal Investigators (PIs) on grant activity, to lay the groundwork for enhancing our institutional research infrastructure. Zack Hillbruner expressed excitement about the ongoing research endeavors at CSUN, and his deep gratitude for the opportunity to collaborate with Dr. Wayne Smith on these efforts. Regarding our infrastructure, in partnership with the Division of Academic Affairs, we have identified a substantial area in our MDF Datacenter suitable for the expansion of academic research infrastructure servers and compute equipment. Zack Hillbruner also mentioned that, in addition to the existing internet connection available to the campus, we are in the process of allocating a separate 10GB of network bandwidth capacity for a dedicated research network. This will ensure that research-related traffic does not impact day-to-day campus operations, and vice versa. The university is also collaborating with CENIC, our internet provider, to implement a high-performance research network. Further opportunities involve partnering with the National Research Platform (NRP) to offer distributed high-performance computing resources for all faculty. The implementation of a node within the national research platform is currently underway.

Zack Hillbruner shared that other grant proposals are in progress, including an NSF grant proposal with Dr. Xunfei Jiang from the Computer Science Department, and a separate joint proposal with San Diego State University for regional high-performance computing. Stephen Kutay expressed awareness of many faculty members who are interested in these technologies. He also suggested that it would be beneficial to have a webpage dedicated to providing general information about the involved technologies on-campus and on a local scale, as well as updates on our progress and future directions.

Zack Hillbruner also mentioned that the Amazon Research Awards program has issued a call for proposals. Faculty members seeking additional information can visit the [Amazon Research Awards webpage](#).

- b. Artificial Intelligence (AI)** – Helen Heinrich shared that AI is a transcendent topic across all divisions at CSUN, encompassing both policy and pedagogy. She also mentioned that, along with Dr. Zeina Otaky-Ramirez from the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development, she has presented on AI academic integrity to various campus stakeholders. The following questions have been posed, and she would welcome the committee's feedback.

- Do we know from our respective colleges, what is the current practice of faculty using AI in teaching?
- Do your faculty lean toward embracing and integrating AI or trying to prohibit students from using it? Is there a clear preponderance of preference?

Jorge Balbas shared that he is not currently aware of the practices in his college or department related to AI. Many faculty members may be completely unaware of it or the extent of its application. Conducting a survey would be helpful in understanding the perspectives of the faculty. This could serve as an excellent opportunity to raise awareness and educate. Cecile Bendavid suggested that each college directly associated with CSUN should have a statement and policy in place. The Academic Technology Committee could take steps to provide guidance on this matter. Jenn Wolfe mentioned that at the College of

Education, an ad hoc committee organizes workshops and discussions on this topic. Paige Hajiloo shared that there is a policy included in her gender studies class, which is also used department-wide. Having a consistent policy across all departments, along with guidance on the best use of AI in education, would be beneficial. Paige Hajiloo also noted that some faculty choose to address the use of AI in their syllabus, while others do not mention it at all. Stephen Kutay agreed that conducting a survey among different departments would be valuable in understanding the limitations based on the field of study. Melissa Weininger pointed out that having one general approach across all colleges may be challenging, as different content may benefit one field more than another. Helen Heinrich requested that committee representatives initiate discussions within their colleges and share their perspectives at the next committee meeting to further the conversation.

7. Department/College Roundtable

- a. **CFA Vote** – Wayne Smith mentioned that probably one of the top concerns on faculty members' minds is what to do when the strike vote takes place at the end of the month. Technology plays a crucial role in students' activities. Wayne Smith suggested that it's worth having a discussion at the next committee meeting. Jenn Wolfe agreed and confirmed that this topic will be added to the agenda for November.

8. Policy – None

9. New Business – None.

Meeting adjourned at 3:02 p.m.