



BOARD OF GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

325 West Gaines Street - Suite 1614 - Tallahassee, Florida - 32399-0400
Information Resource Management (850) 245-0418 - www.flbog.org

Draft Information Technology Subcommittee Report to the FAMU Task Force

02/11/08

Authors:

Joel Hartman, CIO, University of Central Florida

Marc Hoit, CIO, University of Florida

Ramon Padilla Jr., CIO, Board of Governors, State University System of Florida

Executive Summary:

The information technology (IT) subcommittee of the FAMU Task Force was formed in August 2007 for the purpose of reviewing FAMU's IT-related audit findings for the period of 2006-2008, examining the corrective action plans (CAP) created by FAMU IT leadership to address the findings to ensure appropriateness and effectiveness, and to recommend to the Task Force methods for verifying and validating that the audit findings have been thoroughly and appropriately addressed.

The volunteer subcommittee, consisting of senior IT executives from the Florida State University System, spent over 150 combined hours in planning, review, discussion, travel, investigation and document creation in its review of FAMU's IT issues and plans for addressing those issues.

With this knowledge in hand, the IT subcommittee submits to the FAMU Task Force that we are comfortable with the overall approach that FAMU is taking to address the audit findings, that the plans that FAMU IT leadership are implementing are reasonable and appropriate, that many of the audit issues have been completely addressed and that verification and validation from an independent third party Information Systems Auditor will show that FAMU has made consistent and appropriate corrective actions in their pursuit of audit compliance.

Lastly, the committee wishes to stress that many of the audit findings require corrective actions that can span months if not years to implement and validate, and which will require an adequate and consistent funding stream, less they revert back to previous conditions. The committee deems this to be an area of high risk for FAMU.

Methodology

Determination of Scope:

The IT subcommittee began its work by reviewing a spreadsheet of audit findings assembled by FAMU IT management to aid them in the creation of their corrective action plan. The purpose for this exercise was twofold: (a) to ensure that all findings related to IT had been captured in the spreadsheet and (b) to determine if all the findings were in scope for IT remediation or whether some items could be discarded or responsibility was shared with some other functional area. It was determined that only two items could be discarded as out of scope and the remainder were either pure IT in nature or mixed IT and Finance or IT and Human Resources (see exhibit I).

Investigation and Assessment:

The next step in the committee's process was to scrutinize the corrective action plans developed by FAMU IT management to determine if the plans were appropriate for the audit finding, comprehensive in nature and realistic in scope. Additionally, the workgroup wanted to ascertain the status of each corrective action plan and whether additional resources were needed to achieve compliance. Because a spreadsheet does not easily accommodate information of this type, FAMU IT management was asked to prepare executive summaries of each corrective action plan associated with an audit finding in a format agreed upon by the IT subcommittee (see exhibit II).

After distribution of the summaries among the subcommittee, the members chose to meet at FAMU to review and discuss each summary with FAMU IT management. In addition, the subcommittee toured FAMU computing facilities and the surrounding campus.

The meeting at FAMU took place on Jan. 11, 2008 at which time the subcommittee spent time with FAMU IT management to understand the audit findings, what brought them about, and how the corrective action plans put forth by FAMU have or are in the process of remediating the associated issues. The subcommittee was pleased with what they observed during their tour and felt that FAMU had done exceptional commendable job in the areas of network infrastructure and physical security of network facilities.

Following the meeting, notes were consolidated, distributed to members of the subcommittee and then given to FAMU IT leadership with a request to modify their corrective action plans as indicated (see exhibit III)

Analysis and Recommendations:

The subcommittee, in concert with FAMU IT management, began the analysis process with twenty-six audit findings. Two were discarded as out of scope for the IT subcommittee and the remaining twenty four were found to have been duplicated among the three audits that FAMU had undergone since 2006. Thus, there were a total of fourteen unique audit findings that needed to be addressed by corrective action plans. During the January 11 review of the corrective action plans the subcommittee found that FAMU IT management had substantive corrective action plans in place for each audit item and that it appeared to the subcommittee that twelve out of the fourteen unique audit items had been addressed completely and/or cleared by the Auditor General. The remaining two items were at or near 50% completion and needed additional resources in order for FAMU to complete these items in a timely fashion.

It is the opinion of this subcommittee that the IT management team at FAMU has made significant progress toward correcting deficiencies found in previous audits. More importantly, these corrective actions have moved information technology at FAMU toward becoming the secure, stable environment required for university computing.

It is at this juncture that the IT review passes from the IT subcommittee of the FAMU Task Force to a third party with IT auditing expertise to verify and validate that the changes put into place, in fact, have occurred and that they are sustainable over time.

The subcommittee recommends that the Task Force make available reasonable and appropriate resources to aid FAMU IT in completing its two remaining unfinished corrective action plans. Moreover, the subcommittee would like to remind all those involved that the corrective actions put into place by FAMU IT management are still new and have yet to be thoroughly institutionalized. Successful IT operations do not come about through one time expenditures or actions, but rather through continuous and appropriate action and oversight. Reductions in funding and personnel could erode the gains made over the past two years.