

February 24, 2023

AISHA JACKSON  
Vice Chancellor Information Technology Services

**Re: ITS Annual Survey**

Dear Aisha,

The Academic Senate has reviewed your request for consultation on the ITS Annual Survey. The committees on Information Technology (CIT), Research (COR), Teaching (COT), Planning and Budget (CPB) and Graduate Council (GC) have responded.

The Committee on Information Technology agrees that the survey appears to be well framed and well laid out. The motivation is clear, and every question appears to have a clear goal and thought process behind it. Members were additionally pleased to see that specific questions were geared towards different cohorts through survey mapping. CIT is encouraged to see a survey such as this that clearly states what the surveyors want to learn, and commends the VCIT in seeking the answers to these important questions from the various cohorts of IT users in our campus community. CIT found no “red flags” in either the Annual Research Plan, or draft questions, but offers the following comments and improvement recommendations.

CIT members did comment that the survey appears to be a bit long. CIT recognizes that VCIT Jackson’s likely eager to gather as much information as possible. However, if a survey of this length is sent out every year, it could be seen as a burden, and some may choose to ignore the survey altogether due to its length. In order to maximize response rates, members questioned whether the first page of the survey could bullet point the four major areas of the survey (e.g. Access, Research, Instruction, Learning and Student Life), and provide direct pathways to each area so that respondents can chose what areas to opine on and do so quickly. Completion of each section would be optional. In this way, if faculty would like to opine only on research IT needs, they may be quickly routed to that section, and provide useful feedback.

Members additionally noted that much of the framework of the survey, particularly in the Research and Instruction sections, is framed in terms of needs (e.g. “I have the tools I need”). As faculty are always finding ways to work with less and make do, CIT is concerned that the answer to such a question will always be “yes”. Instead, members suggested that it might be more productive to frame these questions in terms of aspiration (e.g. “Are we providing all of the tools that we can in terms of technology to support research and instruction?”). An aspirational question such as this is likely to provide a more realistic picture of satisfaction and unmet needs, and could replace Question #27 (“From my experience, UCSC is investing enough in technology capabilities and services.”), which our committee found problematic as most respondents have no idea what the campus is actually spending, and would therefore not be able to provide an educated opinion.

Although they appreciated the spirit of the question, members noted that question #28 – “If the Chancellor gave me \$100,000 to spend... I would spend it on the following,” implies that

respondents have an understanding of IT cost structures. A more aspirational framing might be, “How can we improve our support for educational technology?”, or even “What do you see as the highest or two highest priorities?”

The Committee on Research observed that faculty wear many hats, and it can be difficult to compartmentalize when answering questions. Are faculty expected to respond as individual investigators, as representatives of their department/division, or a mixture of the two? This could be clarified in the survey instructions. COT is concerned about the accessibility and efficacy of support and technology tools (13-14) given students’ challenges accessing support in off times, like weekends. Similarly, intermittent problems can have particularly significant effects for online courses in which students work in off times. Some students find the ITS ticket system to be challenging to navigate; might there be complementary methods for students to seek support that might be more accessible? Intermittent communication about the timing of planned technology changes (e.g., the migration to WordPress for campus websites) sometimes raises concerns about the timeline for implementation. Clear communication about schedules for changes, including changes in those schedules, along with information on how access support for changes would support successful technology transitions.

CPB appreciates that ITS is seeking to understand campus perspectives on their tools and services, as well as campus needs. While generally outside our purview, CPB had two minor recommendations:

- First, we’d encourage those drafting the survey to consider whether some of their questions might be difficult for respondents to answer given their frequently double-barreled nature. We understand that this is likely intended to keep the survey brief. However, the frequent collapse of technologies, tools, and services all into the same question(s) is likely to lead to less precise information, making the survey results somewhat less useful (see for example, Q24).
- Second, CPB members expressed some concern about the implications of framing campus constituencies as “customers.” While we appreciate the orientation toward service-provision and user experience, we suggest that the framework of “customers” does not reflect our understanding of the relationship between campus community members and internal campus resources and may have unintended negative consequences for that relationship. COR shared this concern.

#### COR Comments on Specific Questions

- **Question 1:** Would postdoctoral scholars fall under “Researchers” or “Staff”?
- **Question 2:** Will the list include ORU’s? Some staff identify with an ORU rather than a department.
- **Question 5:** “College” has an ambiguous meaning here. Suggest “Institution” or “University” instead.
- **Question 9:** This appears to be an empty question
- **Question 12:** Hard to comment without seeing the list.
- **Question 14b:** Current answers depend on an individual's definition of timely. Consider offering specific time periods for responses

- **Questions 18-24:** Are we supposed to comment on the availability of hardware, software/licenses, infrastructure, all of the above? It might be nice to give some examples (non-exhaustive) for each question as a starting point for thinking about whether their needs are being met.

Graduate Council has opted not to provide formal feedback. However, GC remains keenly interested in reviewing the findings and analysis the survey results, especially findings related to graduate student and graduate program responses. The Academic Senate will be including GC in the future review when ITS shares its report.

The Senate appreciated the opportunity to comment on the proposed ITS Annual Survey. Thank you for the opportunity to opine. We are so grateful for your leadership, Aisha.

Sincerely,



Patty Gallagher, Chair  
Academic Senate

Encl: Senate Committee Response Bundle

cc: Peter Alvaro, Chair, Committee on Information Technology  
Michael Hance, Chair, Committee on Research  
Catherine Jones, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Andrew Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council  
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate

February 22, 2023

Patty Gallagher, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: Divisional Review – ITS Annual Survey**

Dear Patty,

During its meeting of February 8, 2023, the Committee on Information Technology (CIT) reviewed Vice Chancellor for Information Technology (VCIT) Aisha Jackson's request for feedback on the ITS Annual Research Plan, and associated draft questions. Members agree that the survey appears to be well framed and well laid out. The motivation is clear, and every question appears to have a clear goal and thought process behind it. Members were additionally pleased to see that specific questions were geared towards different cohorts through survey mapping. CIT is encouraged to see a survey such as this that clearly states what the surveyors want to learn, and commends the VCIT in seeking the answers to these important questions from the various cohorts of IT users in our campus community. CIT found no "red flags" in either the Annual Research Plan, or draft questions, but offers the following comments and improvement recommendations.

Members noticed that the survey appears to be a bit long. CIT recognizes that this is VCIT Jackson's first survey, and would assume that she is eager to gather as much information as possible. However, if a survey of this length is sent out every year, it could be seen as a burden, and some may choose to ignore the survey altogether due to its length. In order to maximize response rates, members questioned whether the first page of the survey could bullet point the four major areas of the survey (e.g. Access, Research, Instruction, Learning and Student Life), and provide direct pathways to each area so that respondents can choose what areas to opine on and do so quickly. Completion of each section would be optional. In this way, if faculty would like to opine only on research IT needs, they may be quickly routed to that section, and provide useful feedback.

Members additionally noted that much of the framework of the survey, particularly in the Research and Instruction sections, is framed in terms of needs (e.g. "I have the tools I need"). As faculty are always finding ways to work with less and make do, CIT is concerned that the answer to such a question will always be "yes". Instead, members suggested that it might be more productive to frame these questions in terms of aspiration (e.g. "Are we providing all of the tools that we can in terms of technology to support research and instruction?"). An aspirational question such as this is likely to provide a more realistic picture of satisfaction and unmet needs, and could replace Question #27 ("From my experience, UCSC is investing enough in technology capabilities and services."), which our committee found problematic as most respondents have no idea what the campus is actually spending, and would therefore not be able to provide an educated opinion.

Although they appreciated the spirit of the question, members noted that question #28 – "If the Chancellor gave me \$100,000 to spend... I would spend it on the following," implies that respondents have an understanding of IT cost structures.. A more aspirational framing might be, "How can we improve our support for educational technology?", or even "What do you see as the highest or two highest priorities?"

CIT once again lauds the efforts of VCIT Jackson in collecting this important data to assist our

administration in the allocation of resources and in the fine-tuning of existing IT services and programs. Just as CIT routinely shares its IT survey data with the administration, CIT requests that the results of this survey be shared with the Academic Senate. We look forward to participating in this survey, and reviewing the results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Alvaro".

Peter Alvaro, Chair

Committee on Information Technology

cc: Michael Hance, Chair, Committee on Research  
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Catherine Jones, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
David Cuthbert, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Andy Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council

February 21, 2023

PATTY GALLAGHER, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

**Re: Senate Consultation on the ITS Annual Survey**

Dear Patty,

During its meeting of February 21, 2023, the Committee on Research (COR) discussed the request for Senate consultation on the ITS Annual Survey, from Aisha Jackson, Vice Chancellor for Research (VCIT). After a review and discussion of the materials, COR had the following observations.

**General Comments:**

- Emphasis on serving “customers” is not appropriate in a university setting. ITS is, and should be viewed as, a partner in fulfilling the university’s mission.
- Suggest ITS emphasize why it is in everyone’s interest to fill in this survey (begin from the end users’ interests and needs—new software licenses for example)
- Maybe end with the demographic questions rather than beginning with them (e.g. your position in the university, etc) begin with the main questions about/use and interests instead.
- It seems like a long survey, with many questions that try to capture similar ideas. Completion rates may suffer as a result. Consider distilling into a shorter survey.
- Faculty wear many hats, it can be difficult to compartmentalize when answering questions. Should they respond as individual investigators, as representatives of their department/division, or a mixture of the two?

**Comments on Specific Questions**

- Question 1: Would postdoctoral scholars fall under “Researchers” or “Staff”?
- Question 2: Will the list include ORU’s? Some staff identify with an ORU rather than a department.
- Question 5: “College” has an ambiguous meaning here. Suggest “Institution” or “University” instead.
- Question 9: This appears to be an empty question
- Question 12: Hard to comment without seeing the list.
- Question 14b: Current answers depend on an individual's definition of timely. Consider offering specific time periods for responses

- Questions 18-24: Are we supposed to comment on the availability of hardware, software/licenses, infrastructure, all of the above? It might be nice to give some examples (non-exhaustive) for each question as a starting point for thinking about whether their needs are being met.

Sincerely

/s/

Michael Hance, Chair  
Committee on Research

cc: David Cuthbert, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy (CEP)  
Peter Alvaro, Chair, Committee on Information Technology (CIT)  
Catherine Jones, Chair, Committee on Teaching (COT)  
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB)  
Andy Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council (GC)

February 15, 2023

Patty Gallagher, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: Request for Senate Consultation on ITS Annual Survey**

Dear Patty,

The Committee on Teaching (COT) has received the request for review of the first Information and Technology Services (ITS) Annual Survey, transmitted by Vice Chancellor of Information Technology Aisha Jackson and has reviewed the materials provided. We understand the survey to be primarily aimed at establishing a baseline of information on how students, faculty, and staff experience their interactions with ITS. The committee greatly appreciates ITS's work and the essential role it plays in much of the teaching and learning going on across campus. We look forward to learning about what the survey reveals, particularly around students' experiences of ITS and its impact on their learning. Given ITS's collaboration with IRAPS in designing the survey, we will not attempt to provide granular feedback on the design but will share some general thoughts from the committee prompted by the survey.

- Survey questions about the accessibility and efficacy of support and technology tools (13-14) will likely get at some of these concerns, but the committee notes concerns about students' challenges accessing support in off times, like weekends. Similarly, intermittent problems can have particularly significant effects for online courses in which students work in off times. Some students find the ITS ticket system to be challenging to navigate; might there be complementary methods for students to seek support that might be more accessible?
- Intermittent communication about the timing of planned technology changes (e.g., the migration to WordPress for campus websites) sometimes raises concerns about the timeline for implementation. Clear communication about schedules for changes, including changes in those schedules, along with information on how access support for changes would support successful technology transitions.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,



Catherine Jones, Chair  
Committee on Teaching

cc: Peter Alvaro, Chair, Committee on Information Technology  
Dard Neuman, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Michael Hance, Chair, Committee on Research  
Andrew Fisher, Chair, Graduate Council



February 21, 2023

Patty Gallagher, Chair  
Academic Senate

**RE: ITS Annual Survey**

Dear Patty,

CPB briefly discussed the ITS survey and research plan sent by VCIT Aisha Jackson at our meeting of February 9, 2023. We appreciate that ITS is seeking to understand campus perspectives on their tools and services, as well as campus needs. While generally outside our purview, we have two minor recommendations.

- First, we'd encourage those drafting the survey to consider whether some of their questions might be difficult for respondents to answer given their frequently double-barreled nature. We understand that this is likely intended to keep the survey brief. However, the frequent collapse of technologies, tools, and services all into the same question(s) is likely to lead to less precise information, making the survey results somewhat less useful (see for example, Q24).
- Second, CPB members expressed some concern about the implications of framing campus constituencies as "customers." While we appreciate the orientation toward service-provision and user experience, we suggest that the framework of "customers" does not reflect our understanding of the relationship between campus community members and internal campus resources and may have unintended negative consequences for that relationship.

Sincerely,



Dard Neuman, Chair  
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: COR Chair Hance  
GC Chair Fisher  
CIT Chair Alvaro  
COT Chair Jones  
CEP Chair Cuthbert

February 7, 2023

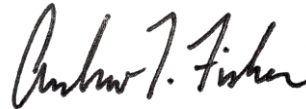
Patty Gallagher, Chair  
Academic Senate

**Re: ITS Annual Survey**

Dear Patty,

Graduate Council (GC) has received the request for review of the first ITS Annual Survey, transmitted by VCIT Aisha Jackson. The survey is intended to better understand campus constituent (“customer”) needs, how ITS currently meets those needs, and how to focus efforts for improvement. Given the short timeline for responding to this item, GC has opted not to provide formal feedback. However, GC remains keenly interested in reviewing the findings and analysis the survey results, especially findings related to graduate student and graduate program responses. We request that GC be included when ITS shares its report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew T. Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Andrew T. Fisher, Chair  
Graduate Council

cc: COR Chair Hance  
CPB Chair Neuman  
CIT Chair Alvaro  
COT Chair Jones  
CEP Chair Cuthbert