Planning and Budget

To: Polley McClure
From: Carolyn Ainslie
Date: July 2, 2003
Subject: IT Workforce Planning Interim Report

I am writing on behalf of the Workforce Planning Team as a follow-up to the status update meeting we had with you on June 9th. Team members are pleased with the progress to date with this review. The external review process resulted in constructive recommendations and responses to many of the most challenging issues in administrative computing at Cornell. Team members are supportive of your response to this report.

The feedback I have received from the Workforce Planning Team generally relates to the external team’s finding that “CIT is not positioned as a leader.” Our team agrees with this finding and sees the workforce planning effort as an opportunity to properly establish and reinforce CIT’s leadership role and responsibility for information technology functions and issues. As highlighted by the fact that two-thirds of all IT resources reside in units outside of CIT, improvements in efficiency and overall effectiveness will not be made without managerial support from campus units. However, we believe that more active institutional leadership educating, informing, guiding, and critiquing the use of IT resources is essential to improve the cost effectiveness and quality of IT support across campus.

It is in this spirit that the Workforce Planning Team encourages the IT Lead Team to strengthen the draft outline of roles and responsibilities and the draft statement of best practices in terms of positioning CIT and the Vice President for Information Technologies as the institutional leadership team responsible for Cornell’s overall IT function. Here are some specific comments to consider:

- We support the best practices outlined in the report and we suggest that the framework espoused in these practices be presented as the recommended framework that units will be held accountable to adopt.

- The recommended best practices need to be developed further in terms of identifying a reliable manner to estimate cost savings that might accrue from
their adoption. It may be valuable to estimate the alternative cost of not adopting a given best practice.

- The matrix of responsibilities appears to be very focused on operational responsibilities. This matrix can be strengthened if the overall leadership responsibilities for each functional area were identified and discussed as an introduction to each section, in accordance with the principles discussed in the general overview section of this report.

- The Vice President for Information Technology should identify, promote, and measure indicators of efficiency and effectiveness in each operating unit as well as for the overall campus. The external review team raised the concern that institutionally we are not focused on assessing benefits of our administrative computing effort. We have similar concerns with the unmanaged growth in IT resources and activities spread throughout campus.

- The external review team indicated that administrative computing costs may be 15-20% higher than the norm would predict. We request that the Vice President for Information Technology further examine administrative computing costs across campus and identify specific potential cost savings (e.g., elimination of shadow systems, elimination of multiple developer site licenses, more cost-efficient integration of unit systems with central systems). While we recognize that addressing the recommendations from the external review team will likely result in overall cost reductions long-term, we believe that establishing specific savings targets and opportunities that can be measured, in terms of both real costs savings and improved productivity, will be necessary to maximize the benefit of this review effort.

- The Workforce Planning Team tentatively supports your proposed realignment of system related responsibilities (i.e., programming, system maintenance and support) between central functional offices and CIT and we support you discussing this direction further with the responsible vice presidents. Establishing appropriate accountability measures will be essential to final acceptance of this recommendation by the Planning Team and to the ultimate success of this direction.

There will no doubt be significant challenges to developing the recommendations further and engaging the appropriate campus constituents in this planning effort. All of the
members of the Workforce Planning Team are committed to supporting your Lead Team’s effort in whatever manner that would be most helpful.

The Workforce Planning Team would like a draft set of recommendations by October 1, 2003.

Thank you for your leadership and support of this planning effort.

cc: Workforce Planning Team Members
    Susan Henry
    Phil Lewis
    Inge Reichenbach
    Bob Swieringa
    Paul Streeter