A Structure for Project Management and Collaboration in a Higher Education IT Organization

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ABSTRACT

The University of Pittsburgh is a five-campus Research I institution, with more than 12 schools and interdisciplinary programs. The student population is provided with a robust networking environment and numerous services that support their academic pursuits. In addition to public computing devices (more than 1800 seats) and residential network attachments (6,000 Ethernet ports), the Microsoft Campus Software Program provides every student with a high-quality selection of software. On-line courses and course material are abundant, with nearly 1000 courses available through the CourseInfo environment. With 32,000 students, more than 2,500 faculty and 5,500 staff, the total number of Network Authorization Accounts exceeds 50,000.

Computing Services and Systems Development (CSSD), with a staff of 150 professional and 100 part-time students, provides support in five functional areas: Administrative Applications, Development Services, Help Desk, Resource Services and Support Solutions. A sixth functional area is the Project Management Group (PMG). The PMG has two individuals assigned to the area full-time (one technical, one management). The PMG has eight other members from the five abovementioned functional areas permanently assigned to the team.

The PMG is designed to function horizontally across the CSSD organizational structure, providing guidance and coordination for all project activities. When a project is proposed to CSSD, a meeting is convened by the PMG to review the goals, scope, schedule, and develop a project plan. A project team is formed with representatives from the appropriate areas, and a project plan takes shape. The PMG has responsibility for monitoring activities and coordinating with the various teams throughout the duration of a project. The PMG is designed to provide models for project planning and mentoring to staff who are new to project management.

The presenter will describe the CSSD organizational structure and detail the extent to which the PMG has fostered organizational communications, cooperation and training.

Keywords
project management, organizational structure, project acceptance process