Information Technology Council Meeting

Thursday, October 8, 2026
3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
Cheek Hall 150C

Minutes

Members' Present: Jeff Coiner (Chair), Greg Rainwater (Deputy Chair), Dr. Dave Meinert, Dr. Heidi Backas, Tucker Starkey, Angela Barker, Kevin Piercy, William Hader, Eric Shively, Brad Davidson (Remote), Brian Hayes (Remote), and Drew Marcum.

Also present: Theresa McCoy (Remote), Nicole Muse, and Dr. Kristin O. Hamm (Remote)

1. Welcome — Jeff Coiner

    - Jeff Coiner called the meeting to order at 3:34 pm and welcomed members and guests. The Council briefly discussed the previous meeting minutes. No questions or comments were raised.
    - Approval of minutes from 09.28.2026
    - Nicole to post the meeting minutes to the website.

2. Innovation Proposal from COB — Dr. Kimberly Swanson Church & Dr. Kristin O. Hamm

    Dr. Kristin Hamm provided clarification regarding a proposed classroom pilot using virtual reality (VR) headsets and augmented reality (AR) technology. The proposed approach includes Meta Quest 3 headsets and iPads running an app that allows students to explore immersive environments and view AR overlays. Examples included virtual tours of manufacturing operations and visualizing business concepts that students may not be able to experience in person.

    The committee discussed the proposal's potential educational value, the possibility of expanding beyond an initial accounting-course pilot if results are positive, and the potential to use the equipment for other courses or outreach activities for prospective students. Members also discussed technology life span, vendor support, market changes, equipment costs, and the importance of assessing learning outcomes rather than adopting technology solely because it is engaging.

    The discussion emphasized starting with a limited pilot rather than making a large-scale investment immediately. Members noted that the value will depend on the quality of the simulations and whether the experience supports student understanding, retention, and course learning objectives.

    Motion: Approve the VR/AR innovation proposal as presented.

    Moved by: Dr. Dave Meinert

    Seconded by: Dr. Heidi Backas.

    There were no oppositions, and the voting members approved.

3. Review October BOG Written Report — Jeff Coiner

Mr. Coiner shared a new approach used to create an upcoming Board of Governors report. Information from leadership team one-on-one meetings was summarized using AI-assisted tools and further refined using Microsoft Copilot to produce a board-ready report.

Strategic Priorities Reviewed

The following IT strategic priorities were highlighted:

- Advancing innovation and operational excellence.
- Developing a modern enterprise systems roadmap.
- Modernizing and simplifying infrastructure.
- Enhancing cybersecurity and data privacy.
- Strengthening governance and partnerships.

Major Accomplishments and Projects

Updates were provided on:

- Approval of approximately $1 million for classroom technology upgrades.
- Progress toward broader AI adoption.
- Enterprise systems planning activities with Ellucian and Banner modernization efforts.
- Relocation and modernization of the university data center.
- Technology infrastructure support for The Alliance project.
- Increased infrastructure redundancy and network modernization efforts.
- Migration from internally developed network-management tools to SolarWinds.
- Evaluation of West Plains data center consolidation opportunities.
- Current technology staffing vacancies and recruitment efforts.
- Partnership with the Community Foundation of the Ozarks to maintain critical fiber infrastructure access while a long-term solution is developed.

4. AI Update — Jeff Coiner

The council received an update on university-wide artificial intelligence (AI) initiatives, including the availability of Microsoft Copilot for faculty, staff, and students, reduced pricing for advanced Copilot licenses, and growing interest in AI agents and automation tools. Discussion included concerns regarding governance, support, sustainability, and ongoing maintenance of AI-developed solutions, as well as resource limitations related to staffing, expertise, and funding. Mr. Coiner also provided an update on the development of an institutional AI purpose statement in collaboration with university stakeholders. Draft principles include human-centered use of AI, responsible use, academic literacy, equitable access, transparency and trust, and continuous learning and adaptation. The drafted statement will continue to be refined and shared with the council for feedback at a future meeting.

5. Other Items — All

1. A significant discussion focused on the pilot implementation of ProctorU for online exam proctoring.
2. Discussion was held regarding implementation and administration of newly approved Innovation Fund projects.

6. Reminders/Updates — All
    - **Sunday, October 25, 2026**
    - Banner Q3 Upgrade - During this time, you should plan for Banner and related systems to be unavailable between **6:00 am** and **6:00 pm**.
7. Next meeting on Thursday, November 5, 2026 — All

    - 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm
    - University Hall 0212

The members of the IT Council did not have any other business to discuss.
The meeting was adjourned at 4:22 p.m.