A prime goal of the IT assessment is to improve the efficiency and transparency of IT decision-making. Over the past few weeks, the Advisory Committee and the ITS leadership team has been working on a revised model for IT governance to support annual and long-range IT planning, establish priorities for significant IT investments, create IT policies and continuously improve IT services. While there are many details that the team is still working through, this update provides a sense of the principles and directions that are emerging.

**What is IT Governance?**
IT governance refers to the committees and processes the University will use to make and communicate decisions that establish our technology strategies, priorities and outcomes.

**Why improve IT Governance?**
Effective IT governance is critical to Penn State’s future in three ways. It aligns our technology investments with our highest institutional priorities. It oversees and coordinates the University’s total investment in technology (about $250 million per year) and makes sure that we extract the greatest benefit from our resources. It creates a focal point for decision-making about technology and technology services that is inclusive and efficient.

**What are the shortcomings of our current IT governance?**
While the University has a series of advisory committees that are used to inform ITS decision-making, the present governance is insufficient to manage the scale and complexity of IT at Penn State. As our consultant interviewed budget executives and IT leaders from around the University, several challenges were repeatedly identified including:

- A lack of clear and consistent mechanisms to set overall technology goals and priorities;
- No structured forum for discussing and making decisions about the optimal balance between common and distributed IT services;
- Difficulty setting relative priorities among competing areas of need (e.g., across administrative applications such as IBIS and ISIS);
- No recognized, University-wide body to establish IT policies, standards and technical directions; and
- The processes and structures to evaluate the performance of IT services are ad-hoc.

**What will the new IT governance structure look like?**
While the details are still being worked out, the new IT governance structure will adhere to the following principles:

- Executive governance will be provided by senior, non-IT leaders (e.g., deans, chancellors, vice presidents) who will make recommendations to the Provost and the Senior Vice President for Business and Finance;
- IT governance processes will focus on the entire scope of technology at the University and not just ITS;
- IT governance groups will have responsibility for strategic technology planning, IT planning, large project prioritization, maintaining an optimal balance of common and distributed services, and assessing IT effectiveness;
- Input from faculty, students and staff will come from standing advisory committees and ad-hoc forms of outreach tailored to particular decisions (e.g., surveys, requirements workshops, focus groups, etc.).
- Governance structures will leverage the newly formed IT leadership council as a forum for communication and consultation and as a source of expertise;
- Working groups will formulate recommendations and in some case make decisions in key technology domains such as enterprise systems, institutional technology, research computing, information security, IT support services and technology architecture.
- ITS leaders will participate throughout the governance structures alongside other campus, college and administrative leaders.
- The Office of the Vice Provost and CIO will be responsible for facilitating the governance structures and processes to maintain efficiency and transparency.

**When will the new IT governance be completed?**

Final recommendations will be provided to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Business and Finance as part of the overall IT assessment recommendations by the end of June. Changes will begin to be phased in over the next academic year.