

EA Workshop - Teaching & Learning and Research and EA

EA Workshop - November 5, 2014 1PM to 3PM at the HUB Room 332. Drawing a clear line of sight back to the business and linking Business and IT strategies are core goals of EA. In this workshop, we will first hear from Maria Mckinley and Phil Reed about the issues and challenges surrounding Research and Teaching and Learning. The attendees will capture problem statements for each domain. We will do group work on a selection of problems statements asking, "what services and processes are impacted" and "what bright ideas do we have to help address the problems".

Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Presentations
 - a. Maria Mckinley - challenges for researchers at UW
 - b. Phil Reed - challenges for instructors at UW
3. Clarifying Questions
4. Working Session
 - a. Capture 3 problem statements for each domain
 - b. Identify the Services and Processes most impacted by the problem
 - c. Sketch a work plan to solve the problem
 - d. Capture any big ideas did you come up with while discussing the problem
 - e. Focus: "How does this relate to me?"
5. Report Out
6. Closing Action Items

Write Up (Heidi Barta)

The twenty-two Information Technology professionals that gathered on November 5 were asked to capture the problem statements within the teaching and learning domain and within the research domain as they listened to guest speakers, Phil Reid, Professor and Associate Vice President for Academic Services Learning, and Maria McKinley, Software Developer in the Buffalo Research Lab. The speakers reflected on the challenges within teaching, learning and research at the University and provided context for great discussions.

Participants from all-levels and from central IT and departmental IT listened to the current environment being described, to the challenges, and to the desires for technology enhancements within each domain. Teams then worked together to articulate problem statements based on what they heard, including:

Teaching & Learning

- Instructors and departments don't have tools and data with which to measure outcomes of a classroom teaching experiments
- Lack of information about students to effectively tailor instruction
- Delivering effective / excellent instruction to individual students (tailored to each student) while leveraging the proven benefits of group participation.

Research

- Research staff don't know the value of IT, in other words, "you don't know what you don't know"
- Inconsistent data practices to support research
- Isolation of researchers which leads to best practices or rigor not being shared or accessible

Participants then worked their way through identifying services and processes that might be impacted by the problems and then began looking at solutions or noting their big ideas. Jim Phelps, UW's Director of Enterprise Architecture and Strategy, explained that this thinking process is a model of the architectural mindset. He says too often we move directly to solutions, saying, "Oh if we just built a...", oh if we just bought a...", before clearly defining the problem and understanding impacts and affected capabilities.

While the teams came up with many big ideas and great solutions, the highlight of the activity was recognizing and seeing that many services and processes are impacted by the challenges we face and the solutions we design. So, it is the architectural mindset that will help us as we explore some of the big ideas generated in this session, including:

Education Big Ideas: collect related data and allow for institutional reflection on data, self-identify learning styles, create own learning profile, expose student preferences to each other, recommendations for majors, course and professors based on preference, offer more sections of classes with different learning styles.

Research Big Ideas: Inter-professional collaboration, on-boarding, awareness of and building skill sets, advocacy, needs-based solutions, building service catalog for research sets, fit-for-use, advice up-front for grant administration, IT being yes, here's how you do it instead of a barrier, consulting with deans and program heads, research ninjas, leverage e-science, crowd-source solutions

Jim also underscored that a highlight of the workshop today is to always be tying our work back to the core functions of the University - research and education.