A Resolution of the University of Alaska Anchorage Faculty Senate

Whereas the June 27, 2016 Educause article cites, "From nearly four decades of technology project-management experience…five main risk factors that lead to technology project failure."
1. Inadequate or Incomplete Definition of Requirements
2. Lack of Stakeholder Involvement
3. Unrealistic Schedule
4. Scope Creep and Inadequate Change Control
5. Ineffective Documentation and Training,

yet UA CITO Karl Kowalski, with over 20 years' experience in information technology and charged with leading IT for the UA system, should clearly know, understand, and seek to avoid these well-known IT project failure risk factors; and

Whereas UA CITO Karl Kowalski's recommendation to the UA President to move all University of Alaska mail and calendaring to Google, as evidenced by the After Action Review of that recommendation and subsequent decision, left every one of the risk factors unmitigated. Specifically, he:

- Did not involve UAA and UAS in the decision-making process to determine the extent to which those universities were using MS Exchange
- Clearly mischaracterized and/or misunderstood the technical processes and level of effort required for migration
- Used a one dimensional, overly simplistic, and inaccurate rubric for selecting Google (greatest number of UA users).
- Did not include stakeholders from other entities with which the university communicates regularly (such as local business, the Anchorage School District, and the State of Alaska)
- Did not consider protection of FERPA and HIPAA information used by all three universities
- Scheduled the transition to complete within an unrealistic time-frame
- Scheduled the transition to occur simultaneously with another major IT project (Single Instance of Blackboard – which also was scheduled to complete within an unrealistic time-frame) requiring the same IT resources, and thus removing those resources from other scheduled projects
- Scheduled both projects to take place during the end-of-semester/final exam week, a period that traditionally has a freeze on any substantive IT changes
- Proceeded with a project that suffered from lack of expertise of resources, lack of training, lack of documentation, and lack of a project charter documenting specific goals
- Did not attempt to mitigate the obvious risks by assigning a project manager until seven months after the project deadline
- Recommended a decision that resulted in the loss of a Global Address list, mail messages with attachments that exceed 25 mb, recurring calendar appointments that have no end date, calendar attachments, voice-mail forwarding, MS Outlook rules and signatures, large distribution lists, integrated presence, Skype integration, and public folders; and

Whereas the transition to Google has resulted in the loss of many thousands of dollars and lost productivity (IT personnel, faculty, and staff); and

Whereas the transition to Google has contributed to a significant loss of morale at UAA; and

Whereas it is the role of leadership to provide the strategic and tactical measures to ensure successful outcomes and provide stakeholder value, and when IT does not fulfill this role, it has lost its purpose and becomes an obstacle;

Therefore, be it resolved that the University of Alaska Anchorage Faculty Senate has no confidence in the leadership of University of Alaska CITO, Karl Kowalski.

From: **James Johnsen** <jrjohnsen@alaska.edu>
Date: Thu, Apr 6, 2017 at 7:07 AM
Subject: Re: UAA Vote of No Confidence in CITO Karl Kowalski
To: David Fitzgerald <dafitzgerald@alaska.edu>
Cc: Karl Kowalski <karl.kowalski@alaska.edu>, Gloria Oneill <goneill@citci.org>, Dianne Milke <dlmilke@alaska.edu>

Hi David,

This is in response to your request to discuss the UAA Faculty Senate's resolution of no confidence in CITO Karl Kowalski resulting from the transition to a common Google mail and calendar platform across the UA system.

The short answer to you request is yes, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the resolution. By copy of this email, I ask Dianne Milke to set up a time to discuss this issue with you.

As I shared with you and the UAA Faculty Senate some months ago, I deeply regret instances of lost data, lost productivity, and the frustration that resulted when technology on which we all rely became a barrier instead of a tool. I know that I speak for Karl as well in this regard.

In that same meeting, I noted that in recognition of the concerns you and your colleagues at UAA raised, I commissioned an After Action Review (AAR) of this project. That review leaves no question that the implementation at UAA (and to a more limited degree, at UAS) could and should have been implemented differently and gone much more smoothly. While Karl accepts significant responsibility for this poorly managed project, this should have been a joint effort where all involved demonstrated more leadership, collaboration, and cooperation.

In addition, while steps were taken to ensure that Google platforms were themselves FERPA and HIPAA compliant, these tools, like any other, must be configured and used in a manner that does not permit defeat of security safeguards. To varying degrees, that is an issue regardless of platform. Nonetheless, and consistent with recommendations in the AAR to ensure appropriate implementation and compliance, a HIPAA compliance audit is actively underway.

One aspect of leadership is to seek out and celebrate success. The university community will have the opportunity to do just that in a few weeks as the students you and your colleagues have taught walk across graduation stages and receive their degrees. Another--perhaps more important aspect of leadership--is to be made aware of failures, learn from them, and implement improvements. Thank you and the Senate for your efforts to identify issues. I believe the path forward set out in the AAR is the right one and I am informed that we have already begun to implement improvements, including the HIPAA audit and IT governance processes.

Jim Johnsen