Information Technology Survey Results

Executive Summary

Pitzer College was surveyed over Spring, 2013 regarding opinions about how information technology is provided and used on campus. The intent was to measure satisfaction in several areas, and to find directions for improvement that should be considered in an upcoming IT strategic plan.

The campus community was largely, although not completely, satisfied with the basic infrastructure, including networking, computers, printing, and the learning management system.   (Resources oriented towards tablets and mobile devices were an exception.) The community was also appreciative of the troubleshooting and helpdesk services.

One area for improvement targets individuals. All groups noted the need for increased training, although the details will depend on the individual. Better communications was also noted, in terms of IT providing notice of upcoming changes, a long term roadmap, a solid catalog of services, and advice on available technologies.

A second area for improvement targets the organizational level. Better automation of business processes and an officially-supported file-sharing service (replacing the need for dropbox) fit this category.

The third major area is pedagogy. Both faculty and students would like to see "somewhat more" technology used, with students slightly more enthusiastic than faculty. But they differ on specific services. Educational games and lecture capture rank fairly low on faculty interest, but much higher with students. Both are interested in web videos.   Students are not enthusiastic about increasing the use of wikis and blogs (and, surprisingly, eportfolios), whereas faculty have a higher opinion.   But generally both faculty and students are looking for more evolution than revolution.

Overview

The Offices of Information Technology and Institutional Research & Assessment conducted a series of surveys in the Spring 2013 semester at Pitzer College. The surveys were designed to poll Pitzer students, faculty, and staff about attitudes toward IT services and support. Separate surveys were created for students, faculty, and staff because of the differing needs each constituency has with regard to IT services/support. All of the surveys had multiple choice questions where respondents were asked to mark their level of agreement with specific questions on a 7-point scale ("Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree") as well as having the opportunity to expand on these multiple choice questions with more open-ended types of questions. The results of these surveys will help IT develop a strategic plan to address the needs and concerns of all constituencies at the College.

Student Results

The student IT survey was distributed electronically to all students on record in the Registrar's Office in the Spring 2013 semester (1055). Each student was individually emailed with access to the survey and a total of 148 responded to the survey (14% response rate). The responses were relatively evenly distributed across the four class years (20% freshman; 25% sophomore; 30% junior; 25% senior) and the majority of respondents identified as female (72%).

General Satisfaction. Students are generally satisfied with technology provided for learning and administrative functions. However, a significant minority sees room for improvement, including effective use by instructors. (See Figure 1.)

Learning Technologies. When asked about specific instructional technologies, many are satisfied with the status quo, but a significant minority would like to see more use of: 1) open educational resources, 2) games and simulations, 3) web videos and 4) lecture capture. Interestingly, the students were not enthusiastic about eportfolios. (See Figure 2.)

Specific Services. All technologies listed were considered important, but wireless and course registration stood out as most important, with printing and checking of grades also near the top. On the whole, these services are felt to be somewhat well provided or better, yet a significant minority sees room for improvement. (See Figure 3.)

Somewhat surprisingly, mobile or tablet oriented resources, and consulting, were at best considered only somewhat important. Not surprisingly, they are not well provided.

Self Assessment. Students almost uniformly agreed on the need to strengthen their own abilities to ensure their success at Pitzer and after graduation. (See Figure 4.)

Device Use. Students generally prefer laptops for most uses. Smartphones are preferred over cell phones almost 3:1. Tablet use is less than desktop use, and much less than laptops.

Communications. Students like email for most communications, although portal messages and TXT are often acceptable. Social networking is acceptable for some informal announcements.
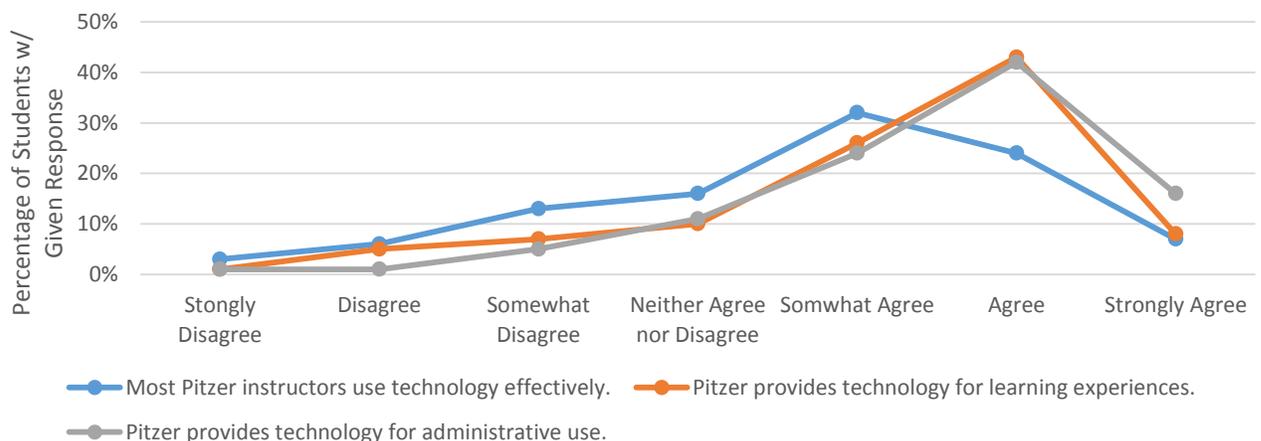
Figure 1: Student Opinions

Figure 1: Student Opinions — line chart. Y-axis: Percentage of Students w/ Given Response (0% to 50%). X-axis categories: Stongly Disagree, Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somwhat Agree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

Legend:
- Most Pitzer instructors use technology effectively.
- Pitzer provides technology for learning experiences.
- Pitzer provides technology for administrative use.

Figure 2: Student and Faculty Interest in Increasing the Use of Instructional Technologies

Categories (left to right): Open Educaional Resources, Simulations or Educational..., Sakai, eBooks, Web Videos, Lecture Capture, Podcasts, Webcasts, Addt'l Online Resources, Online Forums, Blogs, Wikis, ePortfolio

Legend: ■ Student ■ Faculty
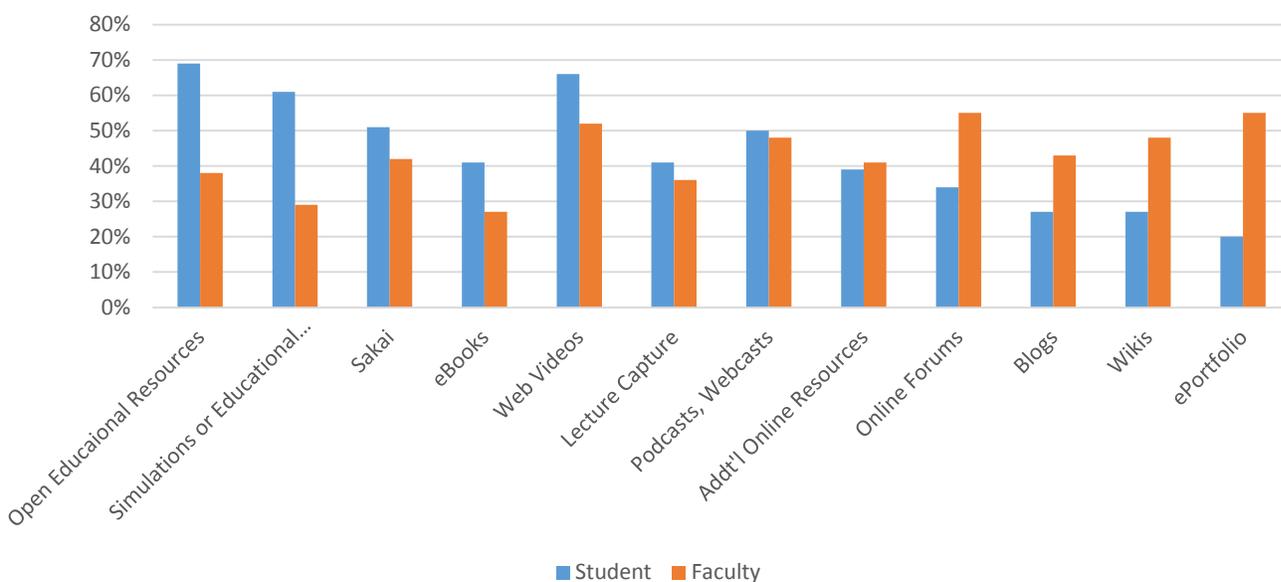
Figure 3: Students: Importance and Quality of IT Services

Categories (left to right): Course Registration, Financial Aid Information, Checking Grades, Wireless, Printing

Legend: ■ Important ■ Well Provided

Figure 4: Students: Importance of IT Abilities

X-axis: Disagree, Neutral, Agree

Legend:
— To ensure my success at Pitzer, it's important to strengthen my own abilities with IT.
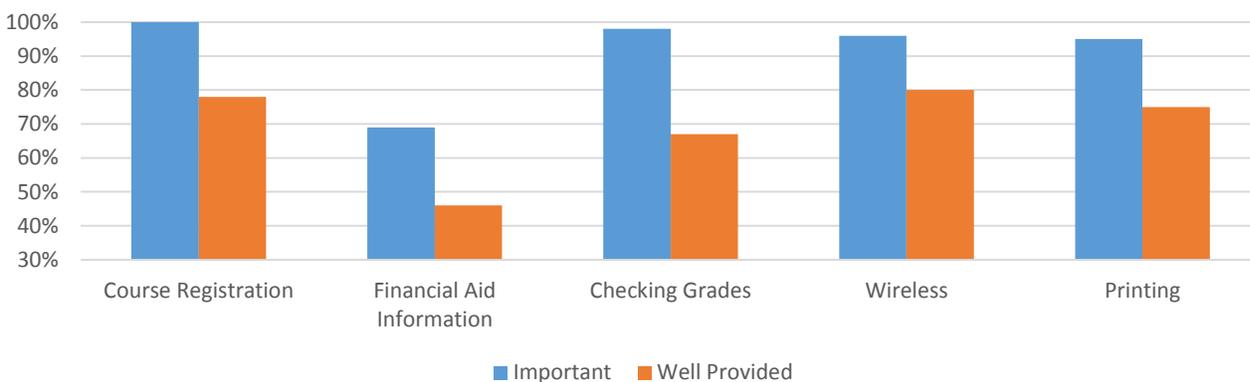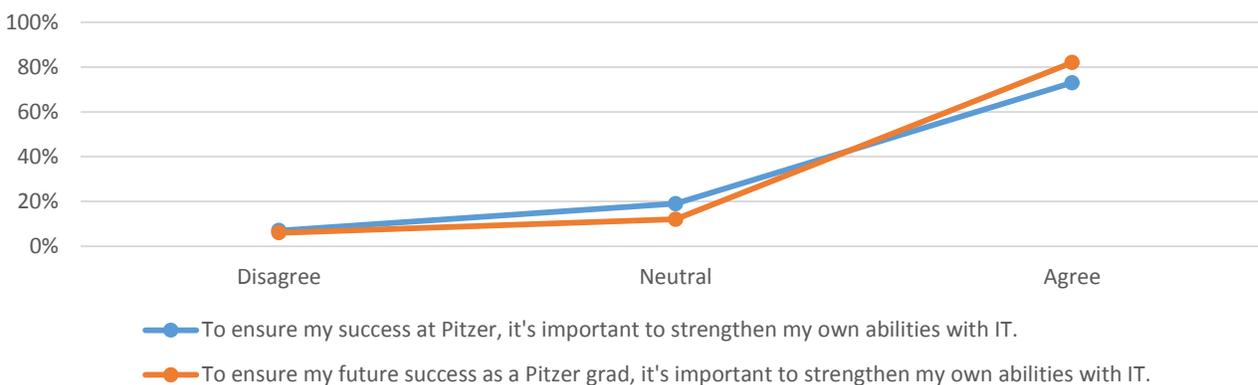— To ensure my future success as a Pitzer grad, it's important to strengthen my own abilities with IT.

Faculty Results

The faculty IT survey was distributed electronically to the faculty listserv at Pitzer College. A total of 26 faculty members responded to the survey, a 21% response rate. It is unclear whether the faculty that responded were all tenure/tenure-track faculty or if some adjuncts also responded. No identifying information was collected with regard to faculty responses.

General Opinion. The faculty who answered the survey rate themselves as fairly proficient with technology. But 35% disagreed with the statement that Pitzer faculty are proficient at using IT for research and pedagogy.

Quite possibly the faculty responding to this survey are the ones more proficient and more interested in information technology. Even so, they would appreciate further consultations and training.

This view is similar to the students, roughly 20% of whom disagree with the statement that faculty use IT effectively in teaching. In turn, some 30% of the faculty disagree with the statement that students are effective in their use of learning technology.
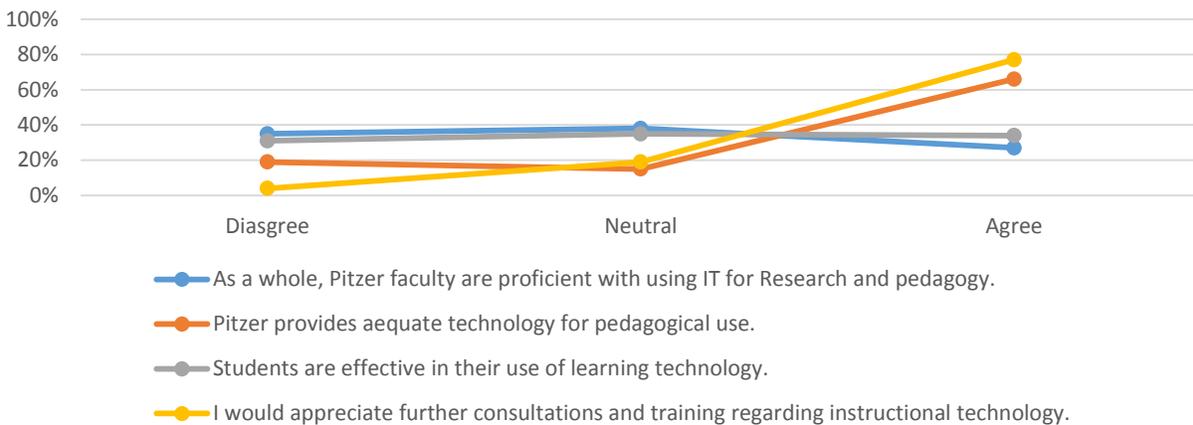
Overall, the faculty seem satisfied with the level of technology provided for research and teaching, with some 10%-30% seeing room for improvement. (See Figure 5.)

Teaching Technologies. The faculty were asked about the same specific technologies as the students. Roughly half would like to see more technology used in the classroom. Both faculty and students favor more web videos. But where students prefer open educational resources, games and lecture capture, professors want more podcasts, online forums and wikis. Lecture capture, in particular, seems to show a mixed vision among faculty, indicative of a large spread of attitudes. Faculty favor eportfolios much more than students. (See Figure 2.)

Hardware Use. Cellphone and smartphone use was below that of students. There is substantial use of third party services, like dropbox, that are not supported by Pitzer IT.

Communications. The faculty prefer email for almost all communications, but TXT is also acceptable for emergencies.

Figure 5: Faculty Opinions

Legend:
- As a whole, Pitzer faculty are proficient with using IT for Research and pedagogy.
- Pitzer provides aequate technology for pedagogical use.
- Students are effective in their use of learning technology.
- I would appreciate further consultations and training regarding instructional technology.

Staff Results

The staff IT survey was distributed electronically to the Staff listserv at Pitzer College. A total of 37 staff members replied to the survey, a 20% response rate amongst exempt and non-exempt staff. Similar to the faculty survey, no identifying information was collected for staff members to protect the anonymity of responses. This does make it difficult to know which offices are represented in the responses given to the survey.

General Opinion. Staff members were generally positive in their attitudes toward the services and support provided by IT. Ranked most highly, staff were very positive of the timeliness of support for IT related issues. From text comments, although many respondents appreciate support from the IT staff, they acknowledge that the staff is small and do not expect IT to lead with a lot of innovation

Staff also agreed heavily that the hardware infrastructure and software tools at Pitzer are adequate for helping staff complete work-related tasks. Many use 3rd party software (e.g. dropbox) for their work, however, and would appreciate better or official support for such technology.

They have access to necessary data, but have some concerns about how well the data is collected and maintained. They see room for improvements in automating more business tasks. (See Figure 6.)
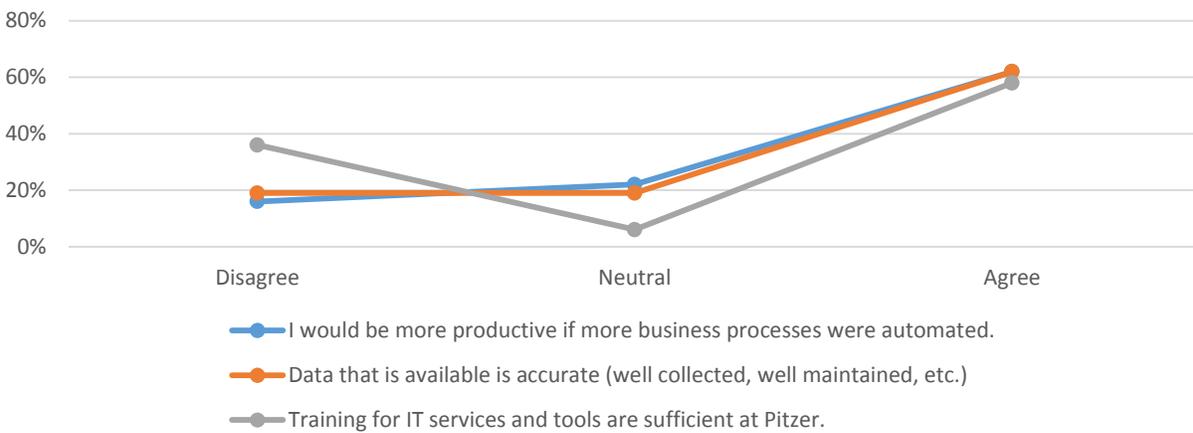
Hardware Use. Cellphones/smartphones, laptops, desktops are well used, but tablets only somewhat.

Communications. Though not as high as the demand faculty had for consultations and trainings, many staff members felt that there could be more provided in this area. An area for potential improvement among staff members may rest in educating staff about the technologies available at Pitzer.   A substantial minority did not feel they were aware of available technologies at Pitzer.

Many would like to see improved (and more formal) communications from IT in terms of changes, catalog of technology available at Pitzer (and more generally) and a roadmap of future plans. Some mentioned the ability to propose new projects, and they are generally willing to bring forward ideas for improvements.

Overall, staff prefer email for communications, with TXT for emergencies.

Figure 6: Staff Opinions

Line chart with x-axis categories Disagree, Neutral, Agree and y-axis from 0% to 80%.

Legend:
- I would be more productive if more business processes were automated.
- Data that is available is accurate (well collected, well maintained, etc.)
- Training for IT services and tools are sufficient at Pitzer.

Summary

A general summary of campus opinion can be categorized as follows:

- **Communications**
    - People are not always confident they know what technologies are available
    - All groups like email. Students additionally use other channels of communication.
    - Student use of smartphones leads that of faculty and staff.
- **Pedagogy**
    - Faculty want more support and training, but they are not a homogeneous group.
    - A small percentage want to push lecture capture, others web video, but many prefer to move slowly in this area.
    - Student interest in new classroom technology is not fully aligned with faculty for specific technologies, although there is overlap.
- **Infrastructure and Technical Services**
    - Document management and file sharing are not well provided by Pitzer, so third-party services such as dropbox are used by individuals on an ad hoc basis.
    - Wireless coverage and printing services are very important to students. Most, but not all, are satisfied. Similarly for course registration and grade checking
    - Business automation and data collection have room for improvement.
    - Tablet and mobile resources are not well provided, but not yet of great importance.
- **Customer Service and Training**
    - Good customer service is noted and well appreciated.
    - All groups want more training. But different groups clearly have different needs.