

The CIO's Innovation & Improvement Accelerator Sautter Award Nomination | 2018

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About the Project

The CIO's Innovation & Improvement Accelerator is an innovation grant program designed to engage staff and improve quality—two of the CIO's strategic priorities. Staff self-organized into teams to innovate or improve a process, technology, or experience, and pitched the idea to the CIO's panel. In this first round, three selected teams received support and resources to design and implement the innovation or improvement; seven other teams participated to make this a competitive, exciting and successful program.

About the Team

The *Team* for this nomination is every staff member² who took the time, effort, thought and chance to participate in a new and unknown program. IET staff have the skill, experience, passion and commitment to do wonderful things, and this group of people accepted the challenge. Without the participation of 40+ staff on 10 different teams, this wouldn't have been a competitive program, generated the energy and interest it did, or surfaced 10 different and *viable* ideas of how to innovate and improve. They all deserve the recognition. As one judge put it after hearing the pitches, "I'm blown away; every single idea was good."

The 3 Selected Teams

Khameleon

Karen Anderson, Carson Black, John Jones, Nicholas Penrose

Floorplans

Roger Kunkel, Ron Burt, Shawn Coleman, Erica Millan, Katherine Stoddard

IET Staff Familiarization Program

Jason Fearing, Kevin Loenker, Steven Barkey

The Other 7 Teams That Submitted Proposals But Weren't Selected

100% Classrooms

Mark Kellogg, Virgil Castro, Joaquin Chavez, Janlyn Lopez

Implement System Center Operations Manager for all WAG Customer Servers

Tory Eury, Matthew Bratschun, Justin Woods

¹ The Executive Sponsor of the program was CIO Viji Murali. The designer and coordinator was Jane Harrington, with input and assistance from CIO Chief-of-Staff Carolyn Nordstrom.

² The call for proposals identified who can participate: The program is currently only open to IET staff. Executive staff and managers are not eligible. Supervisor/manager/director approval is not required or requested. Staff outside of the CIO's organization may not be on a team. Staff must be in good standing with no pending disciplinary action.

IT Coaching and Mentoring Program (IT-CAMP) Pilot

JR Jacobe, Ryan Ke

Advanced Account Security Insight

Peter Carroll, Rick Leos, Dan Hull

Develop Automation Tool for Scripted, Versioned Installations & Configurations of Software Using Ansible

Tom Cutter, Matthew Bratshun

Dev Environment

Danh Duong, Scott Aldinger, Kevin Murakoshi

Web Communications Certificate Series

Shawn DeArmond, Carson Black, Jessica Hayes, Steve Faith

The Problem and the Goals of the Accelerator

The Innovation & Improvement Accelerator is designed to:

1. Inspire and enable staff to innovate;
2. Improve quality of process, technology and/or experience;
3. Advance the CIO's strategic priorities of Staff, Customer, Quality, and Security;
4. Promote cross-divisional connection, cooperation and collaboration;
5. Encourage creativity, problem-solving, solution-based thinking and optimism; and,
6. Strengthen user empathy and user-centered design approaches.

The Accelerator is a new way to access the skills, experience, passion, and commitment of IET staff—there is no shortage of that! The problem in many organizations is that staff become so focused on the day-to-day, the fire-fighting, the getting by, that they feel like they don't have the opportunity to step outside of their daily demands. This Accelerator is an invitation stop and think about the root cause or problems, not just keep addressing the symptoms; to create a container to generate ideas and bring visibility to leadership; and to give them the time and space to connect with colleagues. Research shows that the best solutions come from those doing the work, and this program was designed to shine a light on those folks, to solicit their ideas, and to get those ideas directly up to decisions-makers, instead of through past channels where they may have hit obstacles.

The Accelerator Focused on Solutions, Innovations and Improvements, with Workshops and Structure to Support the Teams.

To prepare teams for creating and submitting successful—and innovative—proposals, they were offered two workshops, conducted by business faculty member and director of the UC Davis Child Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in the UC Davis School of Business, Cleve Justis. "Defining the Problem" explored getting past the symptoms and addressing the root of the problem, with exercises like "The 5 Whys" and crafting problem statements. "Making a Pitch" illustrated the importance of describing the problem being solved, not just jumping into the technical solution. Participants were encouraged to use plain language, be clear and succinct, and speak to what is important to the audience. Additionally, participants took advantage of coaching and consultation from others. The impact of the information and support was evident in the quality of the proposals and pitches.

Additionally, the application (attached) was designed to walk teams through the process of ideation, to make their thinking explicit and to structure and utilize what they had learned.

The Number, Quality, Visibility, Viability, Staff and Individual Objectives and Metrics of the Proposals, along with Staff and Customer Impact, were the Greatest Measures of the Accelerator's Success.

The success of the Accelerator can be assessed at two levels: the success of the Accelerator overall, and the success of the individual proposals—selected and not—and how their projects evolved and impacted staff, customers and the larger UC Davis community.

Launching a new program—and quickly—in any organization can be a risk. The submission of 10 separate proposals from over 40+ individuals affirmed that there was an appetite for this opportunity. The quality of each proposal clearly captured the skills, experience, passion, and commitment of the staff, and the time, effort, thought and chance they took to make it happen. The panelists affirmed that, with immediate, positive and sincere feedback to all participants.

Of the selected projects, all 3 have hit some of most of their intended goals and outcomes. Two have required extensive work with other groups around campus, including Contracts, Procurement, Facilities and others. All participants have comments in one form or another that they never would have been able to drive these ideas forward without the vehicle of the Accelerator.

Of the projects that weren't selected, many have still gotten traction, including meetings with executives, interest from other staff in and outside of IET, and slating for future funding or action.

Many of the proposals, on their own merits, would be excellent candidates for the Sautter Award.

Collaboration across locations, departments, teams had a positive impact on IET and the larger UC Davis IT community.

Teams self-organized across the entire organization.

"We're so siloed". The application encouraged staff to collaborate with others outside of their smaller organization. Every team that submitted a proposal had members from different organizations in IET. Individuals that had never met or never worked together came together very quickly to participate.

Teams presented to staff, sharing ideas around the organization.

Teams were required to pitch their ideas to the CIO's panel in a public forum open to IET staff. Staff met individuals for the first time, put faces to names, and got to hear their colleagues speak with passion and expertise about something they could do to make things better. Staff were also given the chance to provide an advisory vote: one the panel could take into consideration in making their selections.

Panelist from outside of IET were impressed

The CIO's panel had 4 members, purposely with only one from inside IET: Chief-of-Staff Carolyn Nordstrom. Jenna Makus, Associate Directors of the Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship,

provided a less technical more business/idea perspective. An unexpected outcome came from the participation of two well-known and regarded IT staff from the larger UC Davis IT community. These individuals commented on being “so impressed” and “blown away” by the innovative thinking of IET and got a glimpse into the talent that isn’t always visible outside of the organization. It improved relations with the larger community and holds the promise of future opportunities.

The Timeframe Was Quick, Designed for Impact, and Encouraged Iteration.

The Accelerator was designed to walk the talk: It was a new and innovative idea, designed for impact and outcomes, that was launched based on the potential of the idea, not the perfection of it. The timeline for the Accelerator was equally as quick:

August 1	Program announced to staff
August 15	“Defining the Problem” workshop
August 30	“Making the Pitch” workshop
September 8	Proposals due
September 15	Pitch to panel and staff
September 25	Selected proposals announced
October 1	Work begins
January 15	Projects close

Participants were reminded that, while their idea could be bigger, they needed to break it down into a chunk doable in 3 months, coming forward with a proof of concept, and that iteration was encouraged.

The Innovation and Improvement Accelerator Can Be Launched Anywhere.

The program was designed from the start to be replicable. With a little momentum now, a second run of the program would be successful. Future idea includes opening it to the UC Davis-Wide IT community.

Any UC Campus can also launch an Accelerator. A proposal to present this Accelerator was accepted and will be presented this August at UCCSC.

Additionally, many of the proposals addressed issues that are common across the UC-system, and provide innovative and solutions that can be used system-wide.

The Innovation and Improvement Accelerator and Staff That Participated Embody the Purpose and Promise of the Larry L. Sautter Award for Innovation in Information Technology.³

³ This nomination may have raised curiosity about the proposals. While fantastic, the details of those could not be adequately captured here. This nomination was intentionally focused on the teams that *wanted* to innovate and that took that chance, without getting into the technical merits of each idea.



THE CIO'S
**INNOVATION &
IMPROVEMENT**
ACCELERATOR

What is name of this proposal?

Who is proposed for the team? (3 or 4 people; name, role and IET unit)

Have you organized a team that taps expertise and enthusiasm *across* the organization?

Yes No

What problem **do** you want to solve? Please describe the pain point/s.

Is this a technology, a process or an experience?

What is the root cause of the problem? Please use the *5 Whys* to break it down.

What impact **does** this problem have on the organization? Include data if you have it.

What are the goals in addressing this problem?

What are the current ideas for solving this problem?

Which of the IET priorities and strategies are you addressing by solving this problem?

What are the short- and long-term benefits you believe solving this problem will achieve and how will you measure them?

What resources are requested? (Consider software, equipment, time, training, funding.)

Have you limited the scope of the problem to something that can be addressed in the 3 month *Accelerator* program?

Yes No