

AACRAO 94th Annual Meeting

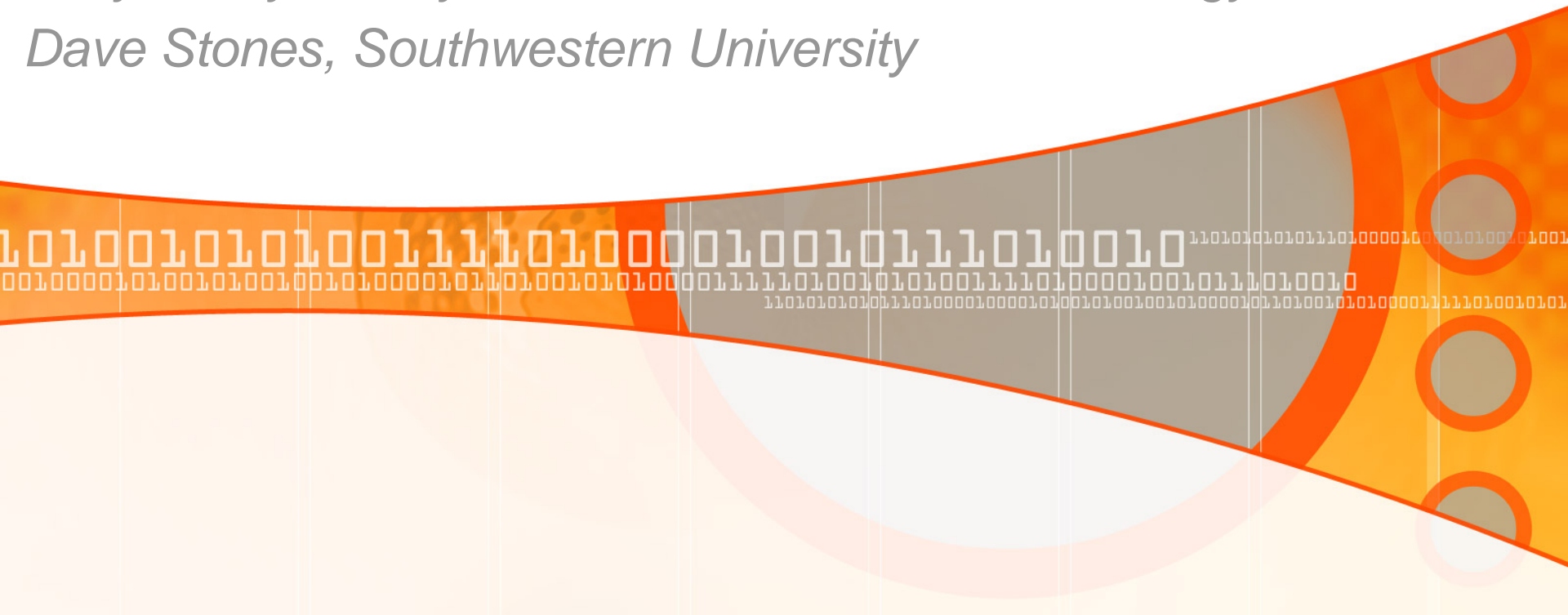
Technical Issues at Small Colleges

Tuesday, March 25, 11:00-noon

Brad Barron, Furman University

Mary Neary Morley, California Institute of Technology

Dave Stones, Southwestern University





- Highly selective, very traditional, liberal arts institution located in Greenville SC
- 2,600 full-time undergraduates, 300-500 adult students pursuing undergraduate or graduate education on a part-time basis
- Brad appointed Associate Dean & University Registrar in December 2002 after 5 years as the Registrar at another small liberal arts college



- IT staff of just under 30 employees, 6 staff members dedicated to the support of administrative systems
- Datatel “ERP” went live summer 1999 to avoid Y2K meltdown, now v.18
- R25 (Scheduling), Recruitment Plus (Admissions), and Raisers Edge (Development) also installed and supported



- Caltech - primarily a research institution focusing on science and engineering
- Enrollment is 2,100 students (900 undergraduates, 1200 PhD students)
- 31 Nobel Laureates (6 in the last 10 years)
- Faculty-driven institution - pride in defining the Institute as a “loose confederation”
- Shadow databases were abundant
- Became Registrar in May 2004



SIS

- 1996 - move from home-grown mainframe to beta-partner with Exeter Student Systems
- 2001 - Exeter purchased by SCT but we remained on an unsupported version
- Exeter system never fully implemented
- Prior to 2004, school had a two-step student systems:
 - Hardcopy records
 - Student information system (Exeter)
- 2004 - began front-ending Exeter with web-based student self service in Registrar's Office
- 2007 – Undergraduate Admissions moved to Recruitment Plus and Financial Aid to PowerFAIDS

Dave Now and Then:

At UT Austin 1965–2000, 22 Yrs SIS Manager

50,000 FTE

Supervised 25 systems analysts

Homegrown systems

Registrar at Southwestern University 2000–pres

1250 annual FTE

Total of 4 staff in admin computing

Datatel Colleague v18

Gummed Labels in the Gym for Reg until 2006

Technical Issues at Small Colleges

We will address four categories of challenges:

- People challenges
- Governance/cultural challenges
- System challenges
- Time challenges



People Challenges:

- Lack of technically savvy staff in IT and in user offices
- Fewer SIS support staff
- Location and reporting line for technology resources
- On-going training and skills upgrades
- Reliance on resources outside of your control
- Resistance to change

People Challenges, Staff Skills:

- Lack of investment in training for IT staff & users
- Hiring our own grads who have little real world experience
- Overcoming inertia – level of work was pretty comfortable
- Redefining position descriptions as people leave updating technical minimums
- Lots of management time spent directing and clarifying best practices

People Challenges:

- Lack of technically savvy staff in IT and in user offices
- Fewer SIS support staff
- Location and reporting line for technology resources
- On-going training and skills upgrades
- Reliance on resources outside of your control
- Resistance to change

Governance/Cultural Challenges:

- More faculty-driven
- Unstylish to promote efficiency/automation and losing the “personal” touch
- Institution-wide management of IT concerns
- Priority setting
- User participation in IT decisions
- Consistent data-sharing and reporting
- Federal and state compliance requirements

Technical Issues at Small Colleges

Cultural Challenges, Automation as Impersonal:

- Thus, Automation must be bad (in eyes of some).
- Use surveys, committee recommendations
- Eliminate references to paper docs in catalog
- Emphasize service to students, access to info
- Give faculty useful info online, wait for automation approvals
- Use bird flu, other contingencies to promote electronic systems

Systems Challenges:

- Aging systems or lack of systems
- Hosted services
- ERP versus best-of-breed
- Surviving upgrades
- Community/Open Source participation more difficult
- Software that “fits” our size and purse
- Difficulties with customizations
- Web development and maintenance
- Shadow databases

Time Challenges:

- Are we even looking at new technologies?
 - Document Imaging Workflow
 - Electronic delivery of official documents (transcripts)
 - Course Management Systems
 - Electronic Portfolios
 - Single sign-on, portals, etc.
- Are we even thinking about emerging technologies?
 - Educause's *The Horizon Report (2008)*
 - Grassroots video; collaboration webs; mobile broadband; data mashups; collective intelligence; and social operating systems

Technical Issues at Small Colleges

Contact information:

Brad Barron, Associate Dean & University Registrar,
Furman University, brad.barron@furman.edu

Mary Neary–Morley, Registrar, California Institute of
Technology, mmorley@caltech.edu

Dave Stones, Registrar, Southwestern University
(Georgetown, TX), stonesd@southwestern.edu

Questions?

