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Securing a Seat at the Table: The CIO's Role on the President's Cabinet

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Welcome to today’s Industry and Campus webinar: Securing a Seat at the Table: The CIO's Role on the President's Cabinet. This is Adam La Faci, Online Event Producer with EDUCAUSE and I'll be your moderator for today. EDUCAUSE is pleased to welcome today's speakers: Matt Jones and Sonya Watkins. We will introduce them in just a moment, but first let me give a brief orientation on our session's learning environment. comments, share resources, or to pose questions to our presenters. We will hold Q&A until the end of the presentation, but we encourage you to type your questions into the chat throughout the webinar. If you have any audio issues, click on the link in the lower presentation “Securing a Seat at the Table: The CIO's Role on the President's Cabinet.” As technology continues to drive transformational change in higher education, engaging an institution's CIO in the strategic decision-making process will become even more critical. During this session, CIO's will learn how to secure You'll hear real-world experiences from a CIO who sits on her President's Cabinet and from a higher education consulting leader who has worked within a wide range of college and university environments. Be ready to engage in a lively discussion regarding common challenges that many higher education CIO's encounter and learn practical ideas for better positioning yourself for a seat at the table. It's my pleasure to now turn the floor over to Mary Jane Mortell, Solutions Marketing Manager at Huron Consulting Group, to introduce today's presenters. to this session where CIO's will be providing several practical and tangible steps that can be experience understanding and implementing higher education technology and communications strategies that will best set their institutions and/or clients up for future success. Our first speaker is Sonya Watkins, CIO at the University of Central Oklahoma. Sonya plays a key advisory role at UCO and has been instrumental in leading the implementation of several major technology initiatives to support the university's mission. These include the Student Transformative Learning Record and a university-wide, data compliance task force. She is a strategic influencer on the President's Cabinet at UCO. Our second speaker is Matt Jones, a managing director at Huron Consulting Group. Matt has more than 20 years of experience as an I.T. consulting executive specializing in higher education. He has deep expertise in I.T. Strategic Planning, Governance, Assessment, Organization Structure, and Program Management. Sonya and Matt, please feel free to begin the presentation.

>> Matt: Thank you, M.J. and Adam. Appreciate it. And thank you everybody for joining us today. We are really, really excited to be able to have this audience in this form and share some ideas and thoughts with you all. I am going to quickly walk through the agenda for our discussion today. We are within the background and introduction area right now. And in a few moments we'll turn towards the three areas that Adam walked you through, first being life without a seat at the table. And really the interesting thing about this discussion will be that yeah, we can all talk about the impacts of life without a seat when it comes to how that affects our I.T. teams and our I.T. function. But what you'll see is we're going to focus a lot more heavily on how the CIO not having a seat at the table impacts the entire institution in some pretty serious ways. So, we'll focus on that during that piece of the discussion. Then we will pivot and talk about some really practical, tangible actions that any CIO could take to better position him or herself to get that seat at the table. We will ask you to think about as we go through those actions, think about them as one building on the other, not for discreet or siloed activities. But more a gradual build on things that are getting you closer to having a position at that table. And then finally life with a seat at the table. The interesting thing there will be that it's a much better place to be than not having a seat. However, there are some challenges in that area as well and we'll talk you through some of those challenges and we will really focus up on what you need to do to keep that seat. So, we're really excited. Once we go through those areas we will open it up for questions and anyone we will wrap up. So, the first thing I wanted to do and thank you, M.J., for giving a little bit of background on both me and Sonya. I wanted to just share with everyone fairly quickly how Sonya and I met. Sonya being the CIO at UCO, we had the opportunity to partner together really to use Sonya's word, reimagine I.T. at UCO and really look at how we could align the I.T. organizational structure more effectively in terms of meeting the institutional strategic goals, objectives, vision, mission. So, that was the whole sort of goal of the project. It was an eight to ten week effort. We did interviews with folks across campus, not just I.T. individuals, but also I.T. customers and stakeholders. We did a fair amount of focus groups. We conducted surveys of the I.T. team to get an organizational view of skills and activities from a perspective of where everyone was spending their time. There are distributed I.T. resources at UCO so we did include those individuals within the engagement and particularly within the surveys so that we could see where there might be duplicate activities. We used computer economic benchmarking efforts and recommends or a road map on how to move forward. Sonya and I often talk about the impact of the project and of the assessment and to use Sonya's word, it really empowered the organization to reorient a bit and have better alignment in terms of I.T.'s operations and structure with the institution strategy. This realignment will go towards increasing the productivity of the team. Everyone is more focused in terms of what they're responsible for as a sub-team. It will improve funding on the priority areas and it is in fact improving the efficiency of I.T. operations as well. So, we really enjoyed working together. That's kind of how we met and started on the relationship that we have now, the professional relationship that we have now and we're very, very happy to spend some time with you today. So, that's enough about us. We wanted to take a moment and just find out a little bit about you all, who we are speaking with today. So, we have two poll questions and the first one is, are you a member of your institution's President's Cabinet or some equivalent senior decision-making body? So, please go ahead and tell us if you are or aren't a part of your President's Cabinet. Sonya and I have had many discussions about what we thought the result of these poll questions might be and I'm seeing a fairly high number at 40% of the individuals on the call having a seat at the table, which is great.

>> Sonya: Really great.

>> Matt: That's the point of today's discussion. We wanted to see more of that. We did suspect we would have more folks on the line who aren't a part of the President's Cabinet. And looks like we are starting to slow down on responses now. We got about 35% who do have a seat. Very good. Let's look at the next question. The next question is to whom do you report at your institution? The chancellor or the president, the chief operating officer or chief administrative officer? The chief financial officer or your provost or other? So, this is another interesting one, the correlation between this one and the last one I think we landed at around 35% as having a seat at the table. I'm wondering if we're going to see a similar number in terms of how many of you all report to your president or chancellor. And it is looking like a little bit of a lower number as the folks start to settle down, which is interesting. So, we have about 35% of folks who do have a seat but only 25% who report directly to the chancellor or the president, which is really interesting. CFO, we suspected that would be the next highest. We are seeing across the market quite a few institutions where the CIO is reporting to the provost. More of an academic bench in some cases. Thank you so much for sharing. Helps for us to know a little bit about who we have on the line. And I am going to turn it over to Sonya for the next slide.

>> Sonya: Hi everyone. So, just as technology is ever changing, what we're seeing is that the role of the CIO continues to evolve. And as a result, that utility mindset that some may have about I.T. will no longer suffice in this change. So, if you conduct a quick web search of top business issues in higher education or top strategies, you will identify that information technology is the strategic asset which colleges and universities tend to use to leverage or change their goals and an organization's capabilities to the point it is transforming entire industries and the information industry which we are in or education. We can see it in teaching around learning. Not just how we teach, but what we teach. I really enjoy having conversations with faculty on our campus to really learn how technology has altered the very nature of their discipline. Or how they modified learning outcomes to ensure that the students leave knowledgeable not just in the subject matter, but also tech literate with the tools of the trade in which they are entering. We also see in research the capabilities that are now there with high performance computing and internet of things, data analytics. What we are able to do in those spaces and the level of services that our students, faculty and staff have come to expect all in the palm of their hand. We can definitely recognize that it has significantly changed deliver education. How we provide credentials to our students. So, what this really shows is that CIO's have an opportunity to support and even drive our institution's vision. But at the same time, we still have to keep the lights on in terms of those foundational services we deliver with network and infrastructure and support. So how do you strike that balance? So what we're going to look at is -- next challenges that can happen with that. When we have a seat at the table and when we're talking about that, what do we mean? Well, what we mean is that you are a part of the strategic decision-making bodies on your campus. Where senior leadership is at the table and you are with them making those decisions. You're providing input and perspectives and analysis before major investments are made. And a lot of times I.T. is thought of as the first or early on in the process and not at the end when decisions have been effectively made and there's no time to alter or change and you just have to make it work. We often find we have to put that square peg in a round hole when that happens. Also collaborating with other senior institutional leaders on strategic plan and enabling the business of the university by having those -- being a part of those critical initiatives that are happening on your campus. And also recognizing how technology can support and impact business outcomes and strategies. And that's not just the CIO bringing that to everyone's attention. But that goes around the table recognize that as well. Seeing that technology is not an add-on to what we're doing, but it's actually integrated with what's going on with the business. That's what we mean when we talk about having a seat at the table. But if there's no seat at the table, what happens? What are the impacts of that? Well, as alluded to earlier, there can be key institutional decisions that are made without that I.T. input. And then that results in unanticipated expenses, costly rework of a project or delays in achieving an organization's goals. If I.T. and the business are moving in different directions, that can present a significant challenge in an organization because you will not be able to get where you're trying to go if one is going east and the other is going west. I.T. maybe standarding on a particular -- I'm going to use digital signage. And then you have another area that invests in a large quantity of displays that will not work with that new standard that you've created so you have misaligned or they decide to go cloud but it doesn't integrate with existing business processes. So, with that misconnection, then you cannot achieve the desired business goals. And then you may have campus leadership missing those critical I.T. risks in terms of security and other technical risks that can happen when I.T. is not involved in that decision-making. Also campus stakeholders may miss opportunities to leverage technology to help them achieve their goals. Then that value of that I.T. is not realized when they go to execute their solutions. I.T. teams are often tasked with unplanned activity and so what that may mean is interruptions in completing other critical I.T. tasks. Sometimes we need to work on a lot of things internally to improve the service delivery we have. But if we can align those with what the organization is doing and being able to have time to do those things, then again, you miss the mark and it impacts the level of service that you can deliver. And in the end, you could be perceived in a negative way as being the barrier and not the enabler. Those are the real concerns when I.T. doesn't have a seat at the table.

>> Matt: Thanks, Sonya. Again, if you look at that list, particularly the right side of that slide, it's not really about I.T. impacts. These are institutional impacts. What I wanted to do for the next few slides is walk you through some of the common viewpoints or perspectives that I.T. stakeholders have of their I.T. shops on campus. The service provider is probably the most common relationship that I.T. stakeholders have with their I.T. functions. And at the end of the day, the service provider relationship is really not optimal. It is more of I'm going to tell you what I need. Here's what you need to do for me without sort of the interaction or collaboration. A lot of our clients here at Huron, when we get called in a lot of our clients fall into this type of category. And the really destructive part of this is the missed opportunity. Again, per Sonya's comment, in regards to missing that strategic I.T. value. How can I.T. really be impacting institutional mission vision goals. Many of our clients, I'm sure many of you on the phone how are in the throws of determining how business intelligence and data analytics can be used to improve student success, to track student success, to figure out ways to more aptly support students who need that support. It's all empowered by data, data management, data reporting, a those kinds of things are technology based. And at the end of the day, having good two-way interaction and collaboration with your I.T. team will benefit those I.T. stakeholders who are trying to get their mission, vision, mission Oriented work completed. So, the service provider relationship really not optimal. The second relationship or perspective that we often see campuses have of their I.T. shops is the call center. We need you to -- cost center. We need you to cut your costs again and again and again. Really painful. I will caveat that with saying we completely get -- Sonya and I completely get that there are times where if there are enrollment challenges or other budget crises, there are times when everyone across campus have to take a cut and all administrative units at times and sometimes even academic options have to take a hair cut. Where I get concerned is when we get into one of our client's spaces and this has happened a couple of times where we get in and I.T. has percentage of an institution's budget is 1% or lower. That to me doesn't look like it has been an equitable set of cutting. It looks like I.T. is getting the short end of the stick in some ways. And being targeted as an area for making cuts. And at the end of the day what that leads to is an underfunded I.T. shop, which is not going to get the kind of customer service that is needed and demanded from our campus stakeholders. Risk profile will go up if you're not spending appropriately. One of the things that Sonya mentioned earlier on one of the slides were security risks. There is some expenditure needed to ensure that the right security protocols are in place. At the end of the day, I will bring this back to the institutional impact, critical stakeholder needs are not going to be met if I.T. is underfunded. So, this cost center relationship or viewpoint of I.T. also not optimal. Here is my least favorite. The royal pain. I'm sure everyone has had stretches of time with the campus stakeholders are vocalizing or maybe not saying the words but acting or behaving as if to portray you folks can't do anything right. It's the royal pain. You I.T. folks are just a pain. This is the most destructive relationship. And when you think about it, it's really not realistic. At the end of the day, our campuses are so dependent on I.T., on I.T. services, on infrastructure. There's no way that a campus can be running if I.T. can't get anything right. We have to be doing something right if the campus is running. Yet in some situations, you have this I.T. stakeholder voipt kinds of morale issues and subsequently really strains the stakeholder relationships with I.T. So, clearly my least favorite place to be, royal pain. And finally, there's the strategic partner. I feel like I can exhale when I get to this slide. It's let's work together to meet our campus' strategic and operational needs. Collaboration, partnership, that's where you're going to realize the true value of I.T. This is a win-win situation. And to the extent that this is the category, I will say unfortunately not a whole lot of our clients when call fall into this bucket. The reason they're calling is because they want to make moves that position them closer to this kind of relationship with their stakeholders. So, at the end of the day, it's the strategic partner relationship will not only benefit I.T., it will benefit the institution more broadly. So, we have four different viewpoints or relationship basises with our I.T. stakeholder groups. What I would ask you to do is consider which of those four would you say is closest to how your institution's I.T. stakeholders view your team. And this is exactly what Sonya and I thought, the service provider. That is by far the most common relationship that we see when we get -- when our Huron team gets into our client's situations, we do see the service providers being the most often encountered relationship. I think it's really sad that somebody out there clicked -- multiple of us clicked the royal pain. Just such a destructive relationship and so far from reality. We were to some extent being a bit tongue in cheek but realizing the reality that that really does exist out there. So, for all the folks who did not click the royal pain, take that in for a moment that there are several of us on this line who are perceived as a royal pain. It is really painful for me interesting, Sonya, because I was hoping to see that bar be a little bit higher when I saw that 35% of our participants have a seat at the table. I would have thought maybe a closer number would have also been perceived as a strategic partner. That's very interesting. So, we have a seat at the table but we are still being perceived as a one directional do this for me, do that for me service provider. Very interesting. Okay. One more poll question for you. So, we know that there's some 65% of you on the line who don't have a seat at the table at this point in time. Would like to ask what do you think? What are you chances? What is your level of confidence that you might be able to get there? Piece of no way, no how? Just not going to happen. And this is pretty much what we -- well, I wouldn't say what we were expecting, but I would say what we were hoping. That there's hope it is possible. Which is awesome. That's great. Okay. So, with that, I am going to turn it back over to Sonya who will get us can get there and you talked about a long, winding road. That is probably going to be the case. Recognizing that the disclosure about me and my role and how I acquired this seat was I was fortunate in that I inherited the seat. To give you some context. When my predecessor was hired as CIO, she was actually the seat at the table. And then when the next president came in, he made sure that I.T. continued to have that seat at the table and even adjusted process to ensure I.T. was more involved in those early design stages in our organization. So, the progress of this institution in terms of technology infrastructure and capabilities is notable because of these visionary leaders recognizing that strategic value of I.T. just to talk about how to get a seat at the table but also to keep it. These are some things you want the continue to make sure you're reinforcing so you are viewed as that strategic partner in the organization and not just a service provider. Securing a seat is a process that will come to fruition over time. And how much time, it really depends on how you're perceived today. We did that kind of quick analysis. You may want to do that gap analysis in your organization to figure out what it may take to get there. And not just evaluate yourself, but your team members as well. Perceptions of I.T. happen at every level within the organization. So, if they have talked to one programmer, that's I.T. If they have talked to the service desk, that's I.T. So, it's not just a personal assessment of you as leader, but also your I.T. organization as a whole. So -- sorry. Matt, I think I jumped.

>> Matt: You're good. Go ahead.

>> Sonya: I'm ready to go. Sorry.

>> Matt: So, practical sort of tangible actions you can take and again I will reflect on the comments I made earlier, I would say the more interesting part about this is how these activities build one on the other. These are road map to getting to that seat at the table, I think this could be a bit interesting. The first piece, we talked about the negative aspect of a service provider relationship earlier. So, I'm going to flip that now and ask you to lean into being a service provider. of meeting your customer's needs. Right. Providing exceptional service. So, what we feel that does is it builds a certain level of credibility across the campus with your end point customers. So over on the left for each of these four steps, you will see how this builds. Step one, build a foundation, win over your customers. Consistently provide exceptional service in all that you do. And we think that that will position you to have that foundation, that level of credibility to then move on to the next step. Sonya, I will turn it back over to you.

>> Sonya: All right. The next thing you want to do is win over your peers. And so, we're really talking about finding ways to build relationships with your peers, leaders across the organization. One way you can do that is by having -- establishing effective I.T. governance within your organization. What that does is allow you to have those quality communications, conversations, collaborations with your peers and understand what their needs are. Outreach is essential for I.T. because often we're perceived as don't call us, we'll call you or we're holed up in our data centers where we are inaccessible to the organization. So, that is a dynamic you will want to look at and effectively change and make that a 2-way Street. You want I.T. to be included, but how much do you include your customers in your decision-making aspects as well? Some practical impacts is maybe have some advisory councils. We have a faculty technology advisory council that we use. We have a wonderful relationship with our student government organization. We gather, collect input and feedback from across the organization on service delivery on a regular basis. And so, doing that again, showing it's not that one time outreach but you are having continuous and ongoing input and feedback so you're working with your organizations. Maybe how you prioritize your processes. We have a university wide project organization committee that helps us to do that and it is comprised of representatives from every division of the institution. Even user groups or leadership teams related to strategic solutions on your campus. Maybe you have an ERP that you have a leadership team that helps to govern how you implement those services. The emphasis is on relationship. To build those and to Sonya. So, you have won over your customers by providing exceptional service. You have won of your peers through establishing governance. Now we're going to ask you to lean into building an I.T. strategic plan. Now, again, a lot of us have strategic plans. But there's a couple of things we are going to ask you to do in the context of building a strategic plan. First of all, we want you to build a strategic plan that directly aligns strategic plan. Okay. So, it shouldn't be that you have a strategic plan that has a whole bunch of activities and goals and sometimes even metrics, but none of it relates directly, none of it is tied directly to your institutional strategic plan. So, we want you to focus up on doing it in that regard. The other thing about this is what does the strategic plan do for you? So, it really -- in you put it in the context of institutional mission vision, institutional strategic plan, what that does is it really establishes the value that I.T. can add to your campus. The strategic value. So, you're elevating yourself from that service provider to now an entity that provides strategic value to the mission space. The other thing that a strategic plan does is provide clear direction to your team. But I want to focus more on the second piece of the sentence at the top of the slide. Elevating I.T.'s brand. And Sonya and I had some conversations about this. Some folks might say why are you focusing on brand? We should be focusing on as a royal pain, but also for the service provider folks, if you have been viewed that way for many, many years, you really have to change your brand. You have to figure out how to make people think differently about your group. And we think that having a strategic plan that is very thoughtful, that is very aligned with institution strategy, that is socialized appropriately, it changes your brand. It changes how people view you, how people think about I.T. So, I'd asking you to lean into figuring out what can I do to change my brand on campus. And at the end of the day, we think that step three, what that does for you is it starts to win over your leadership team. So, you're senior leadership team because now they view you as a strategic asset if this strategic plan is pulled together and socialized right, they start to view you as a strategic asset. So, you've got your customers. You've gotten your peers. You've gotten the leadership team. There's one more individual who you need to get. Sonya.

>> Sonya: And that is your senior buy-in or your president. You really want to gain that support of the president so that he can establish that mandate for change and getting you a seat at the table. So, ways you can do that are find a way to communicate the effectiveness of I.T. or the value of I.T. to your president. Maybe a way to report project success on a broad perspective. Not just from a technical aspect, but how that project helped to enable the business of your organization or your institution. Make sure you're reporting that all the way up through your senior leadership. EDUCAUSE has an article in the EDUCAUSE review for November/December that I would strongly recommend you check out. It is on leadership and what presidents want from their CIO's and what CIO's would like from their president. Because it talks about the dialogues. So, by having that good die hog and communication and interaction with your president, that's one way that you can again help to establish that senior buy-in as to the value of I.T. and how important it is that you're a part of those strategic conversations. Go ahead, Matt.

>> Matt: I was just going to add one thing. I think if you methodically work through the first three steps, providing exceptional service, establishing a solid governance model, creating a real I.T. strategic plan, I think it's going to be pretty simple for you to win over your boss. It is going to be pretty simple to win over your president. So, I think this is again a building upon -- these four steps build upon each other. Think about it that way.

>> Sonya: Yes. So, then with all of that, ta-da. You have life with a seat at the table. We are going to talk about that, what that looks like and how to keep it as well. You have it. Now get ready to work even more because your job is harder than ever. Because you really have to -- now that you have the seat, it's just really important that you make material, thoughtful contributions to cabinet decisions. Not just -- you really want to be part of that strategic conversation and now that you have that seat and I.T. considerations are missed in the conversation, then that's really on you at this point. You want to have input on the aspects of the organization. You will need to understand all aspects of the business and how I.T. can help with that. So, you want to continue to do those listening tours and engaging with your campus community. Continue building the relationships and trust that ones have come to have with you in the organization. You always want to make sure that you're relevant and relatable to those business units so they continue to see you as a strategic partner. You want to be strategic but also continue to meet all the operational needs of your campus. Make sure you're delivering that quality service that they know and come to expect. One thing I would suggest as well, when -- if you get a seat at the table, it is good to continue that strategic conversation with your peer leaders. One thing I did that I found very beneficial for me was I met with each of the VPs. I meet with them periodically throughout the year so I can take the information back and incorporate that and see how I.T. can align with their strategies or make recommendations. I have also attended the professional organizations of my peers jointly with them or members of their team. So like for student affairs, for finance or operation officers, going to those organizational meetings so that you can hear the challenges of their profession and see how technology has enabled them to achieve or overcome those challenges. And that really is one way that you can continue to be a strategic partner. There are the politics of being a part of a senior decision-making body. So, you want to carefully navigate those. Ultimately, you're seen as part of the team and you want to present that united front within that organization and a lot of times it gets to consensus. So, a lot of times you will have to work with the team and figure out how you can navigate through that process to make it work for everyone. But then it's worth it in the end because your thoughts, your inputs and perspectives are now a part of those critical decisions that are made on the academic and administrative sides of the house. You are now an early integration point in these discussions and you're able to recognize when they have these technical needs and align yourself to that business and they have the services they look for. You're now in the know. It limits last chance for those last minute surprises that can be put on your team. I can tell you that's been very beneficial for us. Even with construction projects that we have on campus, there's so much that I.T. is involved with now in terms of -- and now surveillance systems, access points, the active learning spaces. They are all heavily integrating technology. Even sensors for the heating and air systems and all of those things. So, having I.T. from the design aspect, we're brought in at the design discussion now. Not just after the plan has been built and we're having to make it work. So that has been very beneficial for us to be part of those conversations. You really now have an opportunity to ensure that your team's strategic value is fully realized. You are able to continue to communicate the value of I.T. to your organization and how we can help the organization meet its strategic objectives. I'm happy to include a quote from my president on how he perceives the value of I.T. and the role that it plays in the organization, showing that it really needs to have that same pan university perspective as a president and it is important to have I.T. fully engaged at the initial discussions and throughout the process so that as a member of the senior leadership team. Again, I really do value that role here at the University of Central Oklahoma and I hope for those in the audience today that you reach that reality as well.

>> Matt: Very good, Sonya. Questions. So, Adam, will you cue us up for questions?

>> Adam: Definitely. A big thank you to both of you, what a wonderful presentation and nice clear steps for people to follow as well in exploring their relationships with reframing things as you have suggested. Quick note to our participants. Now is a great opportunity for you to type your questions into the chat box on the left side of the screen. We have a few minutes reserved for questions here at the end of today's session. I would like to kick things off. Sonya, if you are currently a service provider, how long does it take to become an influencer with a seat at the table?

>> Sonya: If you are a service provider, how long it takes to a strategic partner and have a seat at the table. Again, it depends on the perceptions of where the organization sees you right now. But again, I think the more you include the organization in your own planning process, really working to get that I.T. governance structures in place, you're bringing them to you or you're going to them. They will start to see the value of having I.T. in those discussions early on. Again, I think a lot of organizations recognize that they need technology to help them achieve their own strategic objectives. Making sure that you are always aligned to that. Sometimes I.T. is seen as an organization of no and what we want to do is say yes and here's how we can get there. That's what I think will help you get there faster.

>> Matt: I will add to that. I appreciate Sonya's context of it really depends on not only how you're viewed but it also depends on the culture of your campus. We are notoriously known in higher education for things moving slowly. So, whether or not you can make this happen in six months or 18 months really kind of depends on the campus culture. But I say if you really focused up on -- if you're already at that service provider, if you're viewed as the service provider and an effective one where you are providing exceptional service, I think it really gets down to exactly what Sonya said. Turn the corner quickly into getting a really solid governance model in place which is something that can be built over an eight to ten-week, 12-week period with your campus stakeholders. You can build it and establish it but then you need to get it running. You have to get it running for some period of time before your peers start to really buy in to what you're doing as an asset to the institution. Then you really sort of lean into that building of the strategic plan. That's another thing that can occur over a 12-week period of whatever it might be. But with your governance in place, it's a little easier to build that strategic plan and get buy-in on it and get widespread -- to socialize it using that governance model you have in place. If you follow those steps and then -- Sonya, one of the things I really like about the way you handle this -- promote this presentation and the four slides and that last step being establishing your buy-in. Ask. You got to ask your president. If you're executing on all these other cylinders, you got to just sit him or her down and ask for a seat. Be confident. Explain what you're trying to do, why you're trying to do it and ask for the seat. Many of us just don't have it because we're not asking.

>> Sonya: That's true.

>> Matt: So, I say if you follow those steps, it could be a six-month endeavor, 18 months. It sort of depends on the campus culture.

>> Adam: That's great. Thank you. I see we have a question that popped into the chat here. Wondering how do you get your CFOs specifically to understand that I.T. needs to have a seat at the table?

>> Sonya: Again, communicating that value of I.T. What information are you providing to them or sharing to them so they can see wow, yes, definitely that would have been informative if we could have had that conversation early on. We talked about how expenditures are made, decisions about solutions are made that end up being costly errors or mistakes or delays in a process. And so, if you can quantify that in terms of dollars, I think a CFO would pay attention to that very quickly. If you're able to quantify some of those aspects, use key indicators for that aspect. Maybe in terms of how I.T. can provide efficiencies in the organization. Again how an organization can leverage I.T. to achieve its strategic goals. It can create economies in scale in the organization. So, I think sharing those points with the CFO would be very beneficial.

>> Matt: I cannot agree more. Sonya, so many of our clients here at Huron talk to us about how I.T. not being included in those upfront discussions -- we're talking about major campus moves or building renovations. I.T. not involved at the front of those discussions leads to a lot of extra expenditure down the line. And to the extent that your CFO can understand, even from a software purchaser's perspective, a lot of our clients are in situations where duplicate software functionally is being purchased across the campus because I.T. is not at the decision-making table. There's not an effective means for vetting what expenditures are going out of the door from an I.T. perspective. We could tell you, you already own software that has that functionality. You don't need to buy that package. You can turn on this module. To the extent you can quantify like Sonya said the impacts of not having I.T. at the table, I think it will go a long way with the CFO.

>> Adam: Excellent. Thank you. Another question has come in. Acknowledging that I.T. must be a strategic partner and agreeing that I.T. must always consider the needs of the university and there are tie into the institution's goals. Do you have any thoughts of how to create goals or plans if the stated strategic goals of the university are vague or not to that governance conversation or the strategic plan, if you're creating a new strategic plan again maybe create advisory councils surrounding these others to have that conversation about what are their hopes and dreams. How do they perceive these strategic goals and how do they align with their own organizations. Again, getting that conversation going, that communication, the collaboration so everybody is on the same page so when we see the goals at the university, what does that mean to you in your organization and how do you think I.T. can help. I think that is one way that you can help them to gather that information and then it can help produce the framework for your own I.T. strategic plan.

>> Matt: That's perfect. The only other thing I would add is, you know, what is your desire to align with the institutional strategy is the impetus for the institution to be more clear on what their institutional goals are. What about I.T. driving that discussion? Look, if we want I.T. to be aligned with the strategy of the institution, we really need to sit down and clearly articulate what that strategy is. You're already moving yourself into that seat at the table if you're driving the institution clarifying its goals and objectives, wow. That's really powerful. So, I would say have a discussion. If you don't feel like -- I like Sonya's piece around tapping into the right individuals across campus to build that strategic plan. I would also say make it known that you would like to be the impetus for the institution to clarify those goals. It's going to be helpful way beyond I.T. actually.

>> Adam: Excellent. Well, thank you both. I do see we are nearing the end of our scheduled time. I want to turn the floor back over to M.J. Mortell to share a few closing remarks with everyone.

>> Mary: I want to thank everyone for coming and participating in the webinar. We certainly hope you found it valuable and informative. If you are interested in learning more about trends and news in the higher education industry, please consider subscribing to Huron's monthly newsletter, called “The Future of Higher Education.” You will receive updates on technology, leadership and student success. And if you're interested in that, leave us a little note in the chat box and we will make sure that you the fact that are just a little more information about Huron and about University of Central Oklahoma. So, thanks again. Adam.

>> Adam: On behalf of EDUCAUSE, thank you all for joining us today for an engaging session and conversation. Before you sign off today, please click on the session evaluation link, which you will find in the bottom left corner of your screen. Your comments are very important to us. Take a moment to click the link. I have pulled it up on the middle of the screen as well. The session's recording will be posted to the website later today. Please feel free to share it with your colleagues. On behalf of EDUCAUSE, this is Adam La Faci, thanks for joining us. Take care everyone.

 [Webinar concluded]

**End of Session**