Decommissioning Legacy Administrative Applications

TO: ITS, CTC, OASIS
FR: Fran Dykstra, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enterprise Applications
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After several months of careful research, the ConnectCarolina team has a plan for decommissioning many of the University's legacy systems, which encompass a variety of technologies as well as the mainframe and FACS mainframe security, and decommissioning activities are underway. Among the applications to be decommissioned are those replaced by ConnectCarolina (FRS, HRIS/Inpower, EPA Web, Payroll) and reporting tools (primarily WebFocus).

NOTE: WebFocus reports that use mainframe data will be decommissioned when the mainframe is decommissioned, while research and planning continues for replacing other WebFocus reports.

The planning stage of the decommission project is complete and the implementation stage is underway under the guidance of the project's sponsors:

- Executive Sponsors:
    - Matt Fajack, Vice Chancellor for Finance & Administration
    - Chris Kielt, Vice Chancellor and CIO for ITS, and sponsor
- Sponsors:
    - Fran Dykstra, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enterprise Applications
    - Ethan Kromhout, Interim Assistant Vice Chancellor for Infrastructure & Operations

The planning and implementation team includes representatives from Infrastructure & Operations, Reporting, Human Resources, the Registrar's Office and Finance.

Initially, the team hoped to decommission legacy systems by the end of this summer, but the planning has identified some open issues that remain to be resolved. Some systems will need to stay up and running into 2016, while the dates for others were pushed back only a few months. The team's goal is to decommission systems running on the mainframe this calendar year. Other systems may go sooner and some later.

To find out the current plan for each system, refer to the Legacy Systems page on the System Help tab of the ccinfo.unc.edu website. This page will be updated as plans are solidified and target dates are finalized.

Next Steps
Many tasks are sufficiently defined so work can proceed (some work is actually underway), while for some systems, open issues remain to be resolved. Since some of the decommissioning work will be quite significant, it will be coordinated with other work and tracked so that ITS and customers are aware of milestones and status.

What you can do to prepare and help
Please think about legacy applications and systems with which you work. Please also think about your customers who may have departmental systems that rely on legacy data sources. Contact the project manager Mimi Bennett (mimib@email.unc.edu) if you have concerns.

Why not keep all the systems up and running?
There are a number of reasons why we need to decommission the legacy systems:

- UNC risks the loss of access to electronic records stored on obsolete technology;
- Very few staff remaining technical staff have the knowledge necessary to maintain these systems and fix problems that arise;
- Systems running unsupported software run the risk of malicious of unintended exposure of sensitive data
- Legacy systems no longer have up-to-date information and data is steadily growing staler;
- The costs of maintaining legacy systems exceed $1,000,000 per year;
- UNC resources need to be focused on maintaining and improving the new systems rather than old systems

FYI: Key decisions
Some key decisions that factor in to the approach for decommissioning include:

- Avoid maintaining multiple sources of the same data on legacy platforms and in the data warehouse.
- Maintain the right amount of data; preserve what is critical and delete the data that is not critical(throughout the planning process, ITS has consulted with functional data stewards to determine what data is critical).
- Determine legal data retention requirements and migrate that data to other storage platforms during the required retention periods.

Options have included replacing old software with new, identifying new locations for storing required data either to be archived to comply with data retention requirements or kept readily available for convenient access, and removing unneeded data and processes.

To bring these issues to closure, the team leveraged existing Enterprise Applications processes, including the Analysis Review Board (ARB), the Design Review Board (DRB), and the Quality Review Board (QRB), to:

- Review options for each area and select the preferred approach
- Review the design and schedule the work
- Sign off on development, testing, and final execution.

We welcome your input as the project proceeded and will update you periodically on progress.