

1. Assuming that centralization of some service or group is warranted what incentives or disincentives work best to convince units to “give up” resources they either already own or are lobbying for?
2. Are certain services (e.g. data network, email or directory) always done best done centrally and others (e.g. support for specialized applications) always done best in a distributed manner?
3. How much is discipline specialization an impediment to centralization (do science departments need more decentralized services and people than humanities)? As an example can the same support staff support a machine in Drama as easily as one in Engineering?
4. Is tiering or layering of services an essential part of any strategy or simply an open invitation to finger-pointing and lack of clear responsibility? As an example where and how do you draw the line between centrally supported email servers and the potential variety of email clients and users?
5. How much should centralization be informed by equity/parity both on campus and across campuses? Should the “richer” departments/schools be able to fund what they want? How do you deal with the justification that service “Q” is needed because our peers at University “T” are using it as a recruiting tool?
6. How do the varying funding models and the "colors of money" impact centralization or distribution of resources? Principal Investigators are sometimes likened to small business owners -- should we tamper with their “right” to choose services & service providers?
7. How do we assess the balance between the need or requirement to optimize/customize versus obligations to the campus community [good neighbor] and economies of scale?
8. Are some services considered so “core” to the University that they should only have centralized options (mandatory central directories and roles, or requirements that all faculty or staff have identifiable email addresses)?
9. Does risk (or even the perception of risk) warrant the declaration that some services be managed centrally or with permission, (e.g. the security examples are obvious but how about rogue DHCP servers that can wreak havoc on the network?)
10. How well can a distributed model deal with human resources issues (progression for those in small non centrals, pay equity, cross training)?
11. One of the arguments that departments make is that centralized services and support are much more expensive than local (primarily student and post doc powered) services and support. How should or do you counter this argument?
12. In fiscally constrained environments there seems to be more of a push toward centralization. Is this the “right” thing to do? Are we merely masking the symptoms until times get better?
13. Economies of scale can usually be generated via consortiums and arrangements on campuses to acquire software and hardware at best price. How far should and can we go to mandate hard and fast acquisition rules?
14. Does the IT reporting chain play a significant role in how centralized or distributed services and people are (e.g. would you get different results if the CIO reported to the president, the provost, or elsewhere)?
15. Does organizational size itself limit the utility of centralized support and resources? Doesn't a very large customer/client base simply mean that you are less likely to achieve high customer satisfaction?
16. Departments that need help (after break-ins or breakdowns) are more apt to engage in dialog about accepting central services. Are we comfortable with that model or is there a better way?
17. Do core service teams need to be led by non-IT (neutral) people? Should we establish advisory and decision making university-level teams to guide policies, set priorities, fund initiatives (committees established by president or provost – not the CIO) for all central services?
18. What are some of the best practices for establishing & communicating policies and standards and Service level agreements?
19. How much should the central IT organization help or consult on issues ranging from support costs, to technical infrastructure decisions to grant equipment purchases?
20. Does how “IT” is defined have an impact on whether something (service or staff) can or should be centralized?
21. Does your institution have a process for identifying distributed services that need to be centralized? How well is that process working?