

## Architecture Review Board Charter

June 19, 2007

### Purpose

The Architecture Review Board (ARB) is a governance unit of Information Technology Services that oversees the application, creation, maintenance, and change management of the diverse lines of technology architecture standards at Saint Louis University. The ARB also coordinates communication, consultation, and issue escalation with technology stakeholders outside the architecture governance framework.

As a cross-team forum, the Architecture Review Board reviews and approves proposed architectural additions, changes, and exceptions from the perspective of multiple technical disciplines. *Decision requests* on the ARB agenda may originate from the Architecture Council members, VP staff, or Enterprise Architects. Additionally, the group may review “FYI” items on trends, architectural strategy, and IT activities relevant to architectural decision-making. It may also *refer issues* for additional decisions or input to members of the Architecture Council, to the Change Control Board, to the Project Management Office, to the VP staff, and to other IT governance bodies.

### Scope

The members of the ARB include the Enterprise Architects and technical architects representing four key IT areas: University Business Process (general and academic), Technical Infrastructure (servers and network), Applications (enterprise and desktop), and Information (data and integrity). EA staff may also serve to represent one of the four areas directly at VP staff direction, in lieu of separate persons for each function. In addition, the Information Security Officer, the Senior Project Manager, and the chair of the Change Control Board participate in the ARB as non-voting ex-officio members. The ARB will develop and maintain certification criteria and processes for adjusting its own membership and that of the Architecture Council as University/IT organizational changes require.

The primary function of the ARB is to decide as the final authority on requests that impact published University IT architectural standards, to manage exception requests, and to assure that approved updates are maintained in the Product Item Master (PIM) as a documented expression of Saint Louis University IT standards. IT actions requiring ARB review and approval include any plan, implementation, or production change that is outside the currently approved PIM, including:

- New IT products requested or intended for purchase that are not on the PIM (*Decision request*)
- Products to be tested for probable use in the production environment that would move to the PIM “R&D” category, including project support products, “try & buy” products, and evaluation software that will be tested against production systems (*FYI request, may be referred or deferred*)

- Products proposed for moving from the “R&D” to “Implemented Standard” categories in PIM status (*Decision request*).
- Products requested for installation or deployment in the “Supported Legacy” or “Actively Retiring” categories (*Decision request*)
- A nonstandard use of a PIM product in the production environment (*Referred decision request from CCB, Business Office, etc.*).

Examples of the above could include purchase requests for nonstandard desktop computers, planned rollouts of new authentication systems, replacements of enterprise scheduling products with a new generation IT product, or the use of a desktop computer in a server role.

Cross-cutting technical architecture standards and planning issues that are not explicitly addressed in the PIM will also be reviewed by ARB, with the intent of delivering recommendations to the Enterprise Architects for VP staff consideration. Business and organizational changes within the University may also require periodic referrals of architectural issues to the ARB for review.

For projects, RFQs, and other processes that would likely involve adopting new products as exceptions to the PIM, an ARB “FYI” item should be submitted early in the process to assure rapid approval before a financial commitment is made. Enterprise Architects would typically initiate this from the Project Initiation Gate Review, and update ARB after the project passes the second gate review (Project Definition phase). ARB will need to issue a Build Permit before a project proceeds to final planning and implementation. Enterprise Architects will participate in project close-out meetings as well to assure that the ARB-approved implementation of standards was followed, or if further ARB review is indicated.

The Architecture Review Board will further refine its procedures for in-scope decision-making as the governance model matures. Major changes to the ARB role in architectural governance will require modifications to this charter under the direction of the Enterprise Architecture staff. Appeals of legitimate ARB decisions may only be directed to the VP-CIO or his/her designee, and written approval is required for exceptions to the standard process. Non-compliance with ARB decisions without the documented consent of the CIO will result in VP staff notification and significant sanctions.

The Architecture Review Board does not govern standards-based changes to in-production systems; such requests are appropriately directed to the Change Control Board. CCB requests that may impact architectural standards maintenance will be referred by that body to the ARB agenda for approval before CCB authorizes the change. Nontechnical architecture planning issues, including governance over the “future state” architectural targets, is the province of Enterprise Architecture and is also outside the scope of the ARB.

All submissions to or referrals from the Architecture Review Board will be tracked as to status and outcomes in auditable form, and the Board will be responsible for timely communication of decisions and status of open items to the Architecture Council, VP staff, and other stakeholder.

**Architecture Review Board process artifacts:**

Standard Inputs (requestors):

1. Decision requests (architects)
2. Referred decision requests (other IT governance units)
3. “FYI” requests (architects, executives, other IT governance units).

Standard Deliverables (action options):

1. Decisions (approve, reject)
2. Conditional decisions (deferral, contingent approval/rejection)
3. Request for Information – RFI (to originator or stakeholder when additional data is needed)
4. Deferral of decision (future meeting)
5. Referral (to a more appropriate governance unit).

Forms and information required for inputs and deliverables are TBA; while most architecture organizations specify written artifacts SLU EA would likely leverage a Remedy-based methodology for auditability and compatibility with other IT processes.

**Governance Structure/Responsibility Matrix**

- R** Responsibility. Stakeholder responsible for getting the work done. Not necessarily a decision maker, but drives the group to make decisions in a timely manner.
- A** Accountable. Oversees and stays informed on the outcome of this activity. Reviews for compliance with policy, strategy, and other drivers.
- C** Must be consulted. As work is performed this stakeholder contributes information. Does not make decisions, but is asked for input prior to decisions.
- I** Informed after a decision is made. Wants to stay updated on progress of this activity.

| Tasks/Roles   | EA | Architecture Review Board | Architecture Council | CCB, PMO, Others |
|---|----|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Owns the PIM  |    | A                         | R                    |                  |
| Defines process/resolves exceptions to the PIM  | A  | R                         |                      |                  |
| Provide input/expertise to PIM  | A  |                           | R                    |                  |
| Propose changes to the PIM  |    | A                         | R                    | C                |
| Approves changes to the PIM   | A  | R                         |                      | C                |
| Governs Architectural Changes within EA framework   | A  | R                         |                      | I                |
| Professional Development Plan for Architects  | A  | R                         |                      |                  |
| Initiate/propose architectural discussions  | A  |                           | R                    | I                |
| Decide or escalate proposed architectural items   | A  | R                         |                      | C                |
| Project Initiation/Definition Gate Reviews  | R  |                           |                      | C                |
| Post-design review before Build Permit  | A  | R                         |                      | C                |
| Project Close-out Meeting Participation   | R  |                           |                      | C                |
| Execute the processes defined by EA for architectural change control, project gate review, security review, and standards enforcement in business processes | A  | R                         |                      | I                |