Defining and Delivering A Service Level Agreement – OLA Element Discovery

Summary of Findings, Next Steps, and Recommendations

3/22/07
Final

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1 Overview of OLA Element Discovery

The scope of the OLA Element Discovery working team was to conduct internal and external research regarding Operational Level Agreements (OLAs) that would lead to an OLA template for use within ITS. In addition, the team was charged with coming up with next steps for the OLA Implementation Phase, identifying barriers to implementation and documenting the touch points of other work already in progress within ITS.

The team was made up of 7 members from ITS. They are:

- Adele Guerzon – ITS Service Management
- Rich Chew – Core Technologies, Network Services
- John Hammond – Core Technologies, Server Support
- Alan Yoder – Divisional Liaison, UNEX
- Linda Rosewood – Client Relationship Management, Support Center
- Leslie Geary – Application Solutions, Departmental Applications and Web Services
- Ann Berry-Kline – Portfolio Management Group, Project Manager

The working team met weekly from mid-January 2007 until March 2007. The team will disband upon SMT approval of the OLA template and Summary of Findings, Next Steps and Recommendations document.
2 Executive Summary

2.1 Recommendations

- The OLA Element Discovery Team recommends the approval of the OLA template for use.
- As documented in Section 4, Next Steps – Internal Service Catalog, the team seeks approval to launch an Internal Service Catalog (ISC) for use in late April/early May.
- As documented in Section 5, Next Steps – Transitional Service Teams, the team seeks approval of the strategy for creating Transitional Service Teams (TST) in order to determine the scope of the service work to transition a service to the new OLA and SLA template including metrics management, incorporation other data into the internal service catalog and complete certain service definition gaps.

2.2 Dependencies and Needs

To continue to move forward, the DDSLA project needs
- Launch the initial internal service catalog.
- Senior Managers to set the tone with their staff that the transition of services to OLAs and SLAs will need resources; getting to an SLA is a high priority for the ITS Division and trade-offs may be necessary.
- Senior Managers to understand and account for the impact of adopting the supported processes when completing OLAs and SLAs for services.
- Senior Managers to understand and account for the impact of monitoring and reporting of basic metrics.

2.3 Risks and Issues

- The depth to which OLAs and SLAs are implemented reflects the maturity and awareness of roles and responsibilities involved in delivering a service.
- Current workload of staff to complete the transition of highlighted services to the OLA and SLA templates and internal service catalog.
- The penetration or adherence of the supported processes by service providers.
- The ability to monitor, comply and report on metrics identified in the SLAs.
- Staff buy-in to transition services into the SLA Framework.
3 Research Conducted

3.1 Outside ITS

Initial research included searching the Internet for articles, white papers and templates about OLAs and SLAs. The team was given this research to familiarize themselves with the topic. The team reviewed purpose and use of OLAs as well as implementation strategies. The team was presented with 5 different OLA templates from other institutions of higher education. After putting 2 of the templates aside for extreme brevity and extreme length, the team looked at the similarities and differences of the templates. All of the templates contained the same type of information.

3.2 Inside ITS

In addition to the outside research completed, the team reviewed the partial OLA started by the Support Center. The OLA created by the Support Center was very similar to the OLA templates from the external research. The OLA started by the Support Center has not been monitored or reported on.

3.3 Summary of Findings

The team came to a common understanding of the purpose of the OLA and its usefulness. The purpose of the OLA is to define the working relationships between service providers along with response times for the delivery of a service. The OLA plus the service delivery process will align service providers to a service.

The OLA templates that remained from the external research were very similar in content. They varied in presentation. One template was an outline, requiring the user to input text without any leading information. One template was longer as it was very specific of what it required from the user. The third template had a nice balance of prompting the user without being very long or leaving the user to guess what was needed. The team did not like the order by which the information was gathered in this template.

The OLA template presented for approval with this document is what the team has decided is the right type of information, in the right order, with the right amount of prompting and flexibility for use within ITS. The team readily agreed about what sections were important in the OLA. The majority of the discussion for each section centered on documenting what is currently in practice versus where we want to move. The team agrees that the sections of the template will support the current working model and our future state. The team agreed that the following sections were necessary for our OLA:
• Parties responsible in the delivery of a service

• About the service
  o Technical description of the service
  o Customer requirements
  o Charges to associated with the service
  o Standard hours of operation of the service (if applicable)
  o Minimum system stability (if applicable)

• Roles and responsibilities of each service provider involved with the service

• Hours of coverage, response times and escalations for all circumstances regarding the service:
  o Service request (how do I request the service and how long before I hear back from you)
  o Incident handling (who is involved and how, response times for statusing for normal incidents associated with a service)
  o Major incident handling (what constitutes a major incident, who is involved and how, and response times for statusing major incidents associated with a service be handled)
  o Problem management (when ready)
  o Service maintenance/change management (when will the service change or be interrupted)
  o Service exceptions (when will the service not be available)

• Reporting, reviewing and auditing. The section describes
  o The duration of the agreement
  o Who is responsible for regular reviews
  o When will metrics be reported on
  o Where will metric reports will be located

It is recommended that the IT Services group maintain and support the OLA template. It will be located on the IT Service web page for all ITS staff to retrieve as necessary.

If the internal service catalog is available for use, completed OLAs will show up there as a link. If the internal service catalog is not available for use, the completed OLAs will need to reside in a centrally located place.
4 Next Steps - Internal Service Catalog

The service catalog project is a key component of the SLA framework. The service catalog currently lists all globally provided services. The service catalog is available to all and is referred to as the external service catalog.

Having a repository for service information which in part includes the completed SLAs and OLAs plus much more is vital to the internal support of services. The DDSLA program has identified a gap in existing infrastructure and request that the internal service catalog be launched in the near term.

Requirements for the internal service catalog for the short term includes:

- A place to link the completed OLAs and SLAs for each service
- A place that is secure but allows all of ITS to view
- A place to hold technical information
- A place to hold the service delivery process flow(s)
- A place to hold contact names and the service team
- A place to highlight key performance indicators
- A place to link to projects that will affect service levels
- A place to hold processes and procedures for components of service delivery
- A place to hold policies and procedures related to a service

Additionally, roles and responsibilities about publishing and managing the content need to be addressed. Some of these roles and responsibilities include:

- Setting publishing guidelines for OLAs and SLAs
- Setting publishing guidelines for other datat (technical specs, process flows, metrics reports)
- Understanding the security needs of this data
- Creating a process to review, update and add data

A very near term solution is requested for the late April/early May timeframe to accompany the transition of service data to OLAs and SLAs.
5 Next Steps – Transitional Service Teams

The OLA Element Discovery working team recommends the following strategy for the OLA/SLA Implementation work package:

If necessary, narrow the list of services recommended by the SLA Element Discovery working team to highlight first. Ensure this list is approved by SMT.

For each service, create a small (3) working team to analyze the state of the service. The team will analyze the work to transition existing service data into the OLA and SLA templates and internal service catalog. Using the service definition checklist, the team will identify gaps in service definition and processes. If multiple service providers are delivering the service it will be noted in the analysis as a potential opportunity to consolidate the delivery of the service.

The initial team to analyze the state of the service will be made up of a project manager, service manager and a service provider representative. In the event any one of these roles cannot be filled, SMT will decide who will fill the role.

The purpose of the team is to

• Analyze the current state of the service and identify gaps
• Create a proposal outlining the schedule and resources it will take to
  1) Transition existing data into the SLA framework
  2) Create service delivery process flow(s)
  3) Set up metrics management
  4) Address other service definition gaps

Not all work identified during analysis will be completed; the completion of gap work will be determined by the volume of work to transition the service information into the SLA framework. All work not completed initially will be given to the service team for further development.

The proposal will include the scope of work; schedule and resources necessary will be brought to SMT for approval since resources need to be allocated for relatively short periods of time. If approved, the proposal would be further developed, if necessary, and completed, in most cases, as a class 2 project. Depending on the service definition and other work identified, the class of the project can vary. A project team at that time would be assembled to complete the work. This project team would have been identified in the proposal and would be called the Transitional Service Team (TST).

Typical deliverables of the project will be

• A completed OLA
• A completed SLA
• A plan in place to manage metrics identified
• Linked additional service information in the Internal Service Catalog
• New external service catalog page (available with the next service catalog update)
• Completed service definition work from approved proposal
• Service team identified if one does not exist already
• Service definition gap analysis handed off to the service team

This team will disband when the deliverables from the proposal/project are completed and closure materials are handed off to the service team. If a service team is in existence already, this is the Transitional Service Team.

The timeframe for completing the OLA/SLA Implementation phase will be determined by the number of services to highlight and the work determined to transition the services into the SLA framework. It would be most beneficial for this phase to end around late June to align to the SLA Deployment work package.

The recommendation of services to highlight will be ready for the 3/26 SMT meeting where they will be presented for approval. Initial project proposals will be started promptly after SMT approval.
6 Risks and Issues

6.1 Determining the depth for OLA Implementation

Situation
The OLA Element Discovery team has extensively discussed the level to which the OLA should be implemented. The depth to which OLAs and SLAs are implemented reflects the maturity and awareness of roles and responsibilities involved in delivering a service.

The two ends of the spectrum are one OLA for a service and multiple OLAs for a service. There are pros and cons to both. The OLA Element Discovery team does not have any mitigating strategies at this time but want to note it as a possible barrier to implementation. The team agrees that no matter what level of granularity the OLA is implemented, the OLA template will be applicable.

6.2 Current Workload of Staff to Complete the Transition of Highlighted Services

Situation
The OLA Element Discovery working team acknowledges that managers are very busy. Making the time to transition each service into the OLA and SLA templates, populating the internal service catalog and possibly filling easy gaps in service definition is necessary to get to the desired state of SLAs. The transition of the data into the appropriate formats and validation of service delivery processes can be tedious. Getting to an SLA is a very high priority for the division.

Recommendation
The OLA Element Discovery team recommends a mitigating strategy of having the Transitional Service Team to create a proposal that identifies scope of work to be completed, resource needs and a timeline for each service gaining SMT approval before transitioning a service. This proposal, once accepted, will be run as a class 2 project.
6.3 Supported Process Penetration/Adherence

**Situation**

Through discussions at the OLA Element Discovery meetings, it is apparent the supported processes are not consistently used. As work is started on the highlighted services, the lack of penetration or adherence of the supported processes is a barrier to OLA implementation and SLA deployment.

**Recommendation**

A mitigating strategy is to have Senior Managers work with their staff for implications of adopting the supported processes.

The transitional service team will move existing data into the new OLA and SLA templates and also attempt to negotiate the service to the supported processes rather than create unique process flows.

6.4 Roles and Responsibilities

**Situation**

Clarity around roles and responsibilities needs to be documented. It needs to be clearly stated how ITS monitors OLA and SLA compliance, and who reports on metrics. This work will be completed later in the program however as we embark on the highlighted service work, it will be necessary to identify, understand and document the roles and responsibilities.

6.5 Tools to Support the SLA Framework

**Internal Service Catalog**

Having a repository for technical service data is an integral part of the DDSLA program. If resources cannot be allocated to the Internal Service Catalog, the quality of the DDSLA program will suffer.

**Recommendation**

Launch the initial Internal Service Catalog tool by early May. Policies and guidelines for use will be developed. Security requirements need to be worked out.

**Metrics Management**

A valid case will be made by managers that monitoring, reporting and complying to metrics for service levels will be difficult for even the most basic metrics.

**Recommendation**

Senior Managers are to explore ways with their staff to monitor and report basic metrics for minimal cost (staff time or $). The Transitional Service Team will make
every effort to identify meaningful metrics for each of the highlighted services however it is acknowledged that a gap exists in order to move forward with metrics management.

A follow on effort needs to take place to set goals for where ITS wants to go with metrics and SLAs.
7 Tool and Process Needs

7.1 Tool Needs

The OLA template is a new tool to ITS to document working relationships and response times for a service.

It is expected that the Identify and Document work package will identify tool needs to support the management of service data.

Additional tool needs may be recommended as part of the OLA Implementation phase when the service teams are required to manage and report on metrics.

7.2 Process Needs

The Transitional Service Team strategy leverages the existing project and service management methodologies.

Adoption of the supported processes including incident, service and change management and major incident handling.

To launch the Internal Service Catalog, processes or guidelines created to help support and maintain the data will be necessary.
8 Appendix A Maturity /Follow On Project(s)

A deliverable of the DDSLA program is a plan to complete the transition of all services to the new OLA and SLA templates, utilizing the internal service catalog and service management best practices. This plan will be created after the highlighted service work has been completed.

A project to determine a long-term solution to better house, monitor and utilize service management data. Additionally, a gap exists in the integration of service data for client groups. As more customers call the helpdesk for service requests, it will become difficult to navigate the amount of service data to figure out what services and service levels are for a customer in a timely fashion.

A project to document and transition LITS services into the SLA framework including service catalog, internal service catalog, OLAs and SLAs.

A gap exists in ITS’ ability to adopt management of process metrics at this time. ITS lacks the tools and staff to complete this work. Metrics management will need to be added to the list of infrastructure needs for ITS.
9 Appendix B Intersections with Other Project/Work/Infrastructure/Processes

Identified in this section are the many touch points or intersections of other work that is already in-progress in the division. These are not specific to the OLA Element Discovery work package but have been identified as the program has progressed.

The creation of the OLA template has touch points with the supported processes within ITS. The OLA template references use and/or adherence of service requests and service delivery processes in Service Management, Incident Management, Change Management and the Outage Announcement Process. Although the template references the use and adherence of these processes, the implementation of the OLA will be made more difficult due to inconsistent process usage. The processes are a necessary elements of the SLA framework that help ITS manage services consistently. No gaps exist for the creation of the template however gaps will be identified as services are transitioned.

The CRSP project has touch point with this program when a service is requested. This has to do with how work is identified and properly processed in ITS. Additionally CRSP is interested in normalizing service definitions across all services. This will be coordinated with the final deliverable for the DDSLA program where a plan will be created to transition all services into the SLA framework.

Campus dollars spent on services pie chart will be a necessary piece of the SLA framework in order to provide more data to DLs and campus about where ITS spends its dollars. This will be requested as part of the global SLA and for use by the DLs when getting their SLAs signed.

The internal service catalog is a key component of the SLA framework. This is where many different types of data (technical, managerial, future, related policies, etc) could reside for a service. There are 2 touch points with the OLA template. First, the OLA will be a link from within the internal service catalog. Second, having the internal service catalog helps to keep the scope of the OLA template about relationships between service providers. Without the internal service catalog ready to be populated, the OLA template will have the burden of carrying overly detailed data such as technical specifications or the service delivery process.

During the OLA/SLA Implementation phase, one of the data management solutions of the internal service catalog will be the collaboration tool. It is still too early to know if the collaboration tool will be used for the internal service catalog so this is a tentative touch point.

Another touch point that is not realized yet but will become apparent during the OLA/SLA Implementation phase is the management of metrics. The OLA template has a place for setting key performance indicators and when, how, who will report
on them. When the metrics project is further along, it will be able to help ITS managers determine where to set metrics based on the supported processes.

The IT Services web page, in the references section, will be the location of the links to the OLA and SLA templates.

The update process for the Service Catalog is an intersection with the OLA/SLA Implementation phase of this project. Service transitions will need to work into this process.

As part of service management, using the service definition checklist to identify gaps in services will be used as part of the transitional service team analysis.

A touch point between the existing governance structures for services will use the data generated from SLAs to alter service levels or change service definitions.

The Major Incident Handling process work that is being completed will be folded into the OLA template. A placeholder exists in the template already.

When Problem Management is reopened, a placeholder exists in the OLA template for this process.