

The University of Texas
Rio Grande ValleyTM

IT Governance-Procurement Audit

Report No. RGV25ASCF0004

December 12, 2025

Office of Audits & Consulting Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overall Assessment

The university's procedures for selecting new software systems are generally adequate; however, there are opportunities to strengthen IT governance.

Background: Software systems play a crucial role in the operation and success of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. By carefully selecting and implementing the right software systems, the university can enhance its operational efficiency, security, and overall success. Adhering to strict policies and procedures ensure the selection of the best software system. The university's information technology (IT) governance committees and Procurement Office provide guidance to university departments on the process of selecting a new software system. IT governance can assist with the following:

- project request reviews
- evaluate funding
- manage approved requests
- ensure data is protected
- save resources by checking for existing solutions
- search for best value

The Procurement Office can assist with the following:

- ensure that university procurement policies and procedures are followed
- request for proposals
- software evaluation
- legal contracts

Objective: Evaluate the Procurement Office's role in the IT governance process in relation to the procurement of software.

Scope/Period: Current IT governance process and software systems

Risk Levels Appendix I

Priority
High
Medium
Low

We appreciate the courtesy and cooperation from the Procurement Office and Information Technology department.

Risk		Observations Summary
High	1.	The university's IT governance committees are not currently active.
Medium	2.	Certain university departments bypass established contracting procedures when purchasing new software systems and independently engage with vendors.
Medium	3.	Departments and stakeholders often lack awareness and understanding of UTRGV's IT Governance framework, its objectives, procedures, and the critical role of centralized oversight in technology procurement resulting in bypassing the IT Governance process.

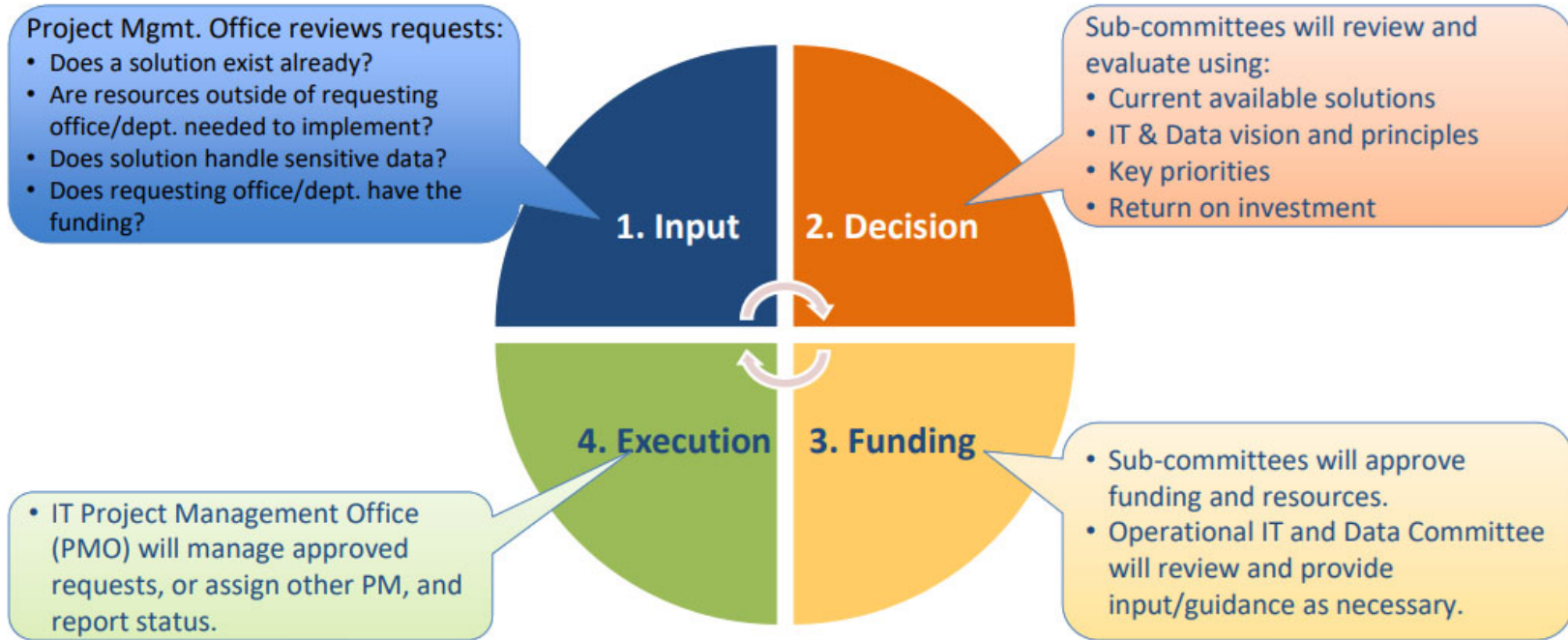
Observation Detail #1	Management Action Plan
<p data-bbox="128 224 296 293">High</p> <p data-bbox="722 248 1087 280" style="text-align: center;">IT Governance Committee</p> <p data-bbox="123 323 1482 574">The university’s IT and Data Governance Program launched in May 2019. The IT and Data Governance Program’s process is summarized in the graphic in Appendix I. It consists of the following committees: IT and Data Strategy Steering Committee, Operational IT and Data Committee, Administrative Services Committee, Research & Educational Technology Committee, IT Architecture & Infrastructure Committee, and Data Governance Committee. The former Assistant Chief Information Officer Governance and Portfolio Management lead the IT Governance Program until his departure. It is currently under the purview of the Associate CIO for IT Strategy and Business Relationships.</p> <p data-bbox="123 615 275 647">Condition:</p> <p data-bbox="123 654 1394 721">The university’s IT Governance Committees are not currently active and have not been active since February 2023.</p> <p data-bbox="123 764 247 797">Criteria:</p> <p data-bbox="123 803 611 836">Information Technology Governance:</p> <p data-bbox="123 842 1474 984">The ability of governance to ensure that organization objectives are achieved by evaluating stakeholder needs, conditions and options; setting direction through prioritization and decision making; and monitoring performance, compliance and progress against plans. In most organizations, governance is the responsibility of executive management. (Source: Information Systems Audit and Control Association)</p> <p data-bbox="123 1027 222 1060">Cause:</p> <p data-bbox="123 1066 1457 1166">The university’s IT Governance Committees became inactive when the former Assistant Chief Information Officer for IT Governance and Project Portfolio Management left the university in February 2023.</p> <p data-bbox="123 1209 222 1242">Effect:</p> <p data-bbox="123 1248 1474 1425">University departments may circumvent IT Governance processes established to align business objectives with IT investments. This could result in purchases of software that may hinder the achievement of strategies and violation of policies and procedures by acting independently from central IT and the Procurement Office. Additionally, departments may approach their preferred vendor, overlooking potentially better alternatives for the university.</p>	<p data-bbox="1507 505 1997 1117">Management acknowledges the observation and appreciates the opportunity to enhance our IT Governance Program. In response to both internal assessments and the departure of the former Assistant CIO, IT proactively initiated a redesign of its IT governance structure. This transformation was undertaken with expert guidance from Gartner to ensure alignment with institutional goals, simplification of processes, and increased strategic accountability. We are actively collaborating with key stakeholders and Gartner to strengthen and evolve our IT Governance framework.</p> <p data-bbox="1507 1161 1854 1227">Action Plan owner: Chief Information Officer</p> <p data-bbox="1507 1271 1940 1338">Implementation Date: End of 1st Quarter of 2026</p>

Observation Detail #2	Management Action Plan
<p>Medium</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Procuring New Software Systems</p> <p>We selected two major IT systems recently acquired by the university to evaluate whether these projects went through the IT and Data Governance Program.</p> <p>Some university departments may not be familiar with the policies and procedures for purchasing new software systems and attempt to contact vendors without IT governance guidance.</p> <p>Condition: Neither of the two systems evaluated went through the IT Governance process. One university department was not aware of proper policies and procedures when purchasing a major software system. Therefore, the contracting process was not followed timely.</p> <p>Criteria: IT Governance Sub Committee Members: These will be selected by IT Strategic and Accountability Board members to represent the divisions, or colleges. This group would vet potential projects that require university funding and evaluate if existing solution exists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department head or designee • Sub-department head or designee • Department chair or designee <p>Will meet monthly to go over project status, priorities, upcoming projects, funding request etc.</p> <p>Cause: Due to inactivity, IT governance committees did not fulfill its responsibilities to engage with university departments in the procurement of new software systems.</p> <p>Effect: University departments circumvented the IT Governance processes resulting in purchases of software that did not follow our procurement processes and requirements.</p>	<p>We are actively collaborating with key stakeholders and Gartner to strengthen and evolve our IT Governance framework.</p> <p>Action Plan owner: Chief Information Officer</p> <p>Implementation Date: End of 1st Quarter of 2026</p>

Observation Detail #3	Management Action Plan
<p>Medium</p> <p>IT Governance Framework Awareness</p> <p>Condition: Departments and stakeholders often lack awareness and understanding of UTRGV’s IT Governance framework, including its objectives, procedures, and the importance of centralized oversight for procuring technology investments leading to bypassing the IT Governance process.</p> <p>Criteria: Strategic alignment and effective oversight of technology acquisitions and initiatives ensures the organization’s strategic goals, security protocols, and interoperability standards are achieved.</p> <p>Cause: Departments receive individual budgets and procure software independently running the risk of bypassing the IT Governance process—a safeguard designed to oversee, harmonize, and maximize the value of technology across the enterprise.</p> <p>Effect: Bypassing the IT Governance process leads to redundancies and fragmented solutions, inefficient resource allocation and systems. Also, this could lead to noncompliance with established security protocols, data privacy standards, and legal/regulatory requirements.</p>	<p>We are actively collaborating with key stakeholders and Gartner to strengthen and evolve our IT Governance framework. Once completed we will</p> <p>Action Plan owner: Chief Information Officer</p> <p>Implementation Date: End of 1st Quarter of 2026</p>

APPENDIX I

IT and Data Governance Process



Source: <https://support.utrgv.edu/TDCClient/1849/Portal/KB/ArticleDet?ID=158068>

IT Governance-Procurement Audit

APPENDIX II

Risk Classifications and Definitions

Priority	High probability of occurrence that would significantly impact UT System and/or UT Rio Grande Valley. Reported to UT System Audit, Compliance, and Risk Management Committee (ACRMC). Priority findings reported to the ACRMC are defined as <i>“an issue identified by an internal audit that, if not addressed timely, could directly impact achievement of a strategic or important operational objective of a UT institution or the UT System as a whole.”</i>
High	Risks are considered substantially undesirable and pose a significant level of exposure to UT Rio Grande Valley operations. Without appropriate controls, the risk will happen on a consistent basis. Immediate action is required by management in order to address the noted concern and reduce exposure to the organization.
Medium	Risks are considered undesirable and could moderately expose UT Rio Grande Valley. Without appropriate controls, the risk will occur some of the time. Action is needed by management in order to address the noted concern and reduce the risk exposure to a more desirable level.
Low	Low probability of various risk factors occurring. Even with no controls, the exposure to UT Rio Grande Valley will be minimal. Action should be taken by management to address the noted concern and reduce risk exposure to the organization.

APPENDIX III

Criteria & Methodology

Criteria

- UTRGV's Data Governance Committee Charter
- UTRGV's Handbook of Operating Procedures ADM 10-403 Centralized Purchasing
- UT System Policy 165
- Texas Administrative Code (TAC) 202

Methodology

The audit methodology will consist of institutional policies and procedures. The methodology will also be to conduct interviews of the individuals involved in the procurement of information technology systems. Additionally, we conducted this audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. The Office of Audits and Consulting Services is independent per both standards for internal auditors. These standards are also required by the Texas Internal Auditing Act.

To achieve our objective, we performed the following:

1. Reviewed policies, procedures, and other supporting documentation.
2. Interviewed those involved in the procurement of information technology systems.

APPENDIX IV

Report Distribution & Audit Team

Report Distribution

Mr. Frank Zecca, Interim Chief Information Officer
Mr. Alex Valdez, Chief Procurement Officer
UTRGV Internal Audit Committee
UT System Audit Office
Governor's Office - Budget and Policy
State Auditor's Office
Legislative Budget Board

Audit Team

Eloy R. Alaniz, Jr., Chief Audit Officer
Norma Ramos, Director of Audits
Joe Gomez, Senior Information Technology Auditor