A Report to the Members of the

Education Special Interest Group (EDSIG)

of the

Association for Information Technology Professionals (AITP)

prepared by the

AITP-EDSIG Board of Directors

September 1, 2019

Preamble

This report constitutes a response and account of ensuing actions taken regarding the motion from the floor passed at the Education Special Interest Group of the Association for Information Technology Professionals (AITP-EDSIG or, more simply, EDSIG) Members Meeting on November 2, 2018, in Norfolk, VA. The impetus of the motion was to resolve questions related to EDSIG's future as it pertains to changes between 2015 and 2018 related to AITP's subsumption under CompTIA and the imminent dissolution of AITP. The motion was as follows: "*Move to request the board of directors to continue to investigate the option of AITP-EDSIG becoming an independent organization with no parent affiliation. A summary of investigation and any recommendations to be complete on or before September 1, 2019 (60 days before the next members meeting).*" The motion passed with 34 votes in favor and 11 abstentions (a total of 45 AITP-EDSIG Members were present). The term "parent affiliation" is pertinent to the history of EDSIG as a member organization and will be briefly summarized here in this report. This report was developed by the 2019 EDSIG Board of Directors (EDSIG Board) and constitutes the culmination of efforts from the EDSIG Boards from 2016-2018 to comprehend and normalize operations as AITP transitioned to CompTIA ownership. CompTIA will be dissolving AITP on January 1, 2020, which presents the imperative that the EDSIG Membership consider and act on the recommendations from EDSIG Board contained in this report. CompTIA will have transitioned completely to their *ITPro* program on or before January 1, 2020, whereby the AITP name will no longer be in use and CompTIA will no longer permit any reference to the AITP organization.

Summary

The EDSIG Board held its 2019 Winter Board Meeting in Clearwater, FL, on January 25-26. Among our agenda items was to address passage of the November 2, 2018, motion from the floor regarding EDSIG's independence. The EDSIG Board formed an EDSIG CompTIA Liaison Committee consisting of Directors Abdullat and Kovalchick, and EDSIG Past President Hunsinger. As a part of their charge, several members of the committee met in person with CompTIA in March 2019 to determine definitive dispositions regarding the unfolding nature of the *ITPro* program and what implications this would have for the question that the passed "Independence" motion posed. In early July 2019, a report from the EDSIG CompTIA Liaison Committee made the following recommendations:

1. Continue exploring collaboration with CompTIA where clear mutual benefit exists, such as, but not limited to, accreditation, assessment, or curriculum.
2. Have both EDSIG and CompTIA sign the Memorandum of Understanding, forwarded by the EDSIG Board in October 2018, as a predicate to continued collaboration as described in item number one above.
3. Formalize a new Memorandum of Understanding that addresses the type of strategic relationship and collaboration between CompTIA and EDSIG <u>while maintaining EDSIG's independence</u>.

The EDSIG Board understands the above as the following composite action: develop a new MoU between CompTIA and EDSIG that asserts EDSIG's independence from CompTIA as a prerequisite for any further collaboration where such collaboration is clearly beneficial to both organizations. Thus, in our assessment of the EDSIG CompTIA Liaison Committee's recommendations, the EDSIG Board adds these follow-on recommendations:

1. EDSIG, proceeding under a decision to operate as "… *an independent organization with no parent affiliation,*" will continue operational partnership with the Information Systems & Computing Academic Professionals (ISCAP) under the renewable Memorandum of Understanding that has facilitated cooperation between EDSIG and ISCAP since 2015.
2. Work to reconfigure EDSIG's governance and Bylaws to discontinue the use of the AITP brand.
3. Continue to partner with ISCAP in this reconfiguration.

The EDSIG Board recognizes that governance and operational structures between ISCAP and EDSIG will require articulation and coordination from both Boards of Directors in 2020 such that EDSIG will achieve continuity with its conferences and journals. The EDSIG membership should recall that ISCAP was conceived as a complement to EDSIG in 2015 as a matter of exigent necessity for the operational continuity of EDSIG.

Background
From a history arising from both the National Machine Accountants Association (NMAA) – 1949 to 1961 – and the Data Processing Management Association (DPMA) – 1961 to 1996, the Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP) – 1996 to 2019 – operated as a non-profit organization centered on continued professional development and education for its members. Subsumed by CompTIA in 2017, AITP had served as the statutory "parent" organization for EDSIG for 40 years. On January 1, 2020, the long history of AITP will end as CompTIA has elected to transition to a separate subsidiary organization focused on professional development and workforce preparation called *ITPro*. This leaves AITP-EDSIG with a decision to make regarding its own continuity and future that are reflected in the motion passed by the membership at the 2018 annual business meeting in Norfolk, VA.

Operational History
While AITP-EDSIG has never operated as a professional chapter, AITP-EDSIG was an affiliate organization whereby it was possible to hold both AITP and EDSIG membership. Further, an EDSIG-only membership was always available. Primary among the services that EDSIG provides to its members are yearly academic conferences, peer-reviewed journals, and engagement with the wider academic computing community.

Prior to 2015, AITP-EDSIG worked in partnership with the Foundation for IT Education (FITE) such that EDSIG handled the academic content – papers, reviews, sessions, etc. – for the conferences and journals, and FITE organized and assumed principal risk for logistics related to the conferences – hotel contracts, conference planning, and registration. At that time, the EDSIG/FITE shared conference was called the Information Systems Education Conference (ISECON). Later, EDSIG expanded the portfolio of annual conferences to include the Conference for Information Systems Applied Research (CONISAR) for non-pedagogical and non-curricular applied research in the computing discipline. EDSIG also maintained three peer-reviewed journals as a service to its membership and the discipline: The Journal of Information Systems Education (JISE), the Information Systems Education Journal (ISEDJ), and the Journal of Information Systems Applied Research (JISAR).

Subsequent to 2014, and upon an inability to agree on FITE's unacceptable terms in the renewal of a contract for cooperation, FITE and AITP-EDSIG severed association whereby FITE retained their ownership of the ISECON name and ceased to provide conference support services. Thus, at the close of 2014, AITP-EDSIG was left in a situation where our operational partnership with FITE no longer existed. Upon appeal to AITP to provide the conference support in lieu of FITE's support, the EDSIG Board found that AITP was either unable or unwilling to provide the conference support (primarily signing hotel and other conference contracts). This left serious doubt that any AITP-EDSIG conferences going forward were possible, placing EDSIG's survival in doubt.

In response, in advance of the January 2015 EDSIG Board meeting, a non-profit limited-liability corporation in North Carolina was established to enable a legal entity to sign conference contracts: Information Systems & Computing Academic Professionals (ISCAP). As a separate and distinct legal entity, but a philosophically sympathetic partner, ISCAP insured EDSIG's continuity by committing to underwrite and manage future conference logistics and provide for the uninterrupted publication of JISE, ISEDJ, and JISAR under EDSIG's editorial authority. These organizational developments precipitated a successful EDSIGCON and CONISAR in Wilmington, NC, in October 2015.

At around the time that AITP-EDSIG held its 2016 conferences in Las Vegas, NV, the EDSIG Board and membership learned of the impending acquisition of AITP, and its assets, by CompTIA. By 2017, this transition was complete whereby EDSIG president Waguespack and past president Hunsinger continued to liaise with CompTIA to represent EDSIG's interests during the transition. In October 2018, EDSIG presented a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to CompTIA to articulate and normalize operations with CompTIA. It was under these circumstances and history that the "independence" motion was adopted in November 2018. Although the 2018 EDSIG/CompTIA MoU was received by representatives from CompTIA in 2018, it was not acknowledged any further and, in 2019, the EDSIG CompTIA Liaison Committee was informed that, as an unsigned document, the MoU was non-binding and advisory at best. In this regard, the 2019 EDSIG Board finds itself operating with CompTIA-AITP under a high degree of uncertainty.

Principal Options

The 2019 EDSIG Board recommends that the EDSIG membership seek and capitalize on the strengths and benefits of the existing partnership between EDSIG and ISCAP. What the EDSIG Board has learned is that, from February to May 2019, all AITP professional chapters were given the following options regarding their operations with respect to the January 2020 dissolution date:

1. Dissolve the AITP chapter.
2. Transition fully into the *ITPro* structure.
3. Break away from CompTIA and retain a chapter structure independent of the AITP brand.

As such, the EDSIG Board recommends option three above: <u>independence</u>.

Impact on Assets
EDSIG's principal assets include oversight of the editorial process for its members' peer-reviewed intellectual contributions which are presented at the conferences and published in the conference proceedings and/or journals. Additional assets include the product of volunteer activities as they relate to initiatives such as model curriculum development and other similar and related efforts. Lastly, funds generated from the collection of membership dues are maintained and utilized in a manner that is accounted for in our annual budget and demonstrated as consistent with EDSIG's mission.

Through an EDSIG/ISCAP Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that is annually reviewed and ratified, these assets have been preserved since 2015. The EDSIG Board holds that the continued preservation of these assets is assured as a result the maintenance of this MoU which will provide EDSIG support and continuity.

Organization Moving Forward
EDSIG is governed by Bylaws which specify and codify our operations and structure. Currently, the entirety of these Bylaws is predicated on our existence as an affiliate of AITP. As such, an update of these Bylaws must reflect EDSIG's independence and otherwise vacate association with AITP. With the EDSIG membership's interests in mind, the EDSIG Board finds that the preservation of EDSIG's legacy and heritage remain of utmost importance such that the EDSIG name is not subsumed. Patently, a vote for independence carries the assumption of this continuity.

Conclusion
The EDSIG Board requests the membership's support on the following key actions moving forward:

1) EDSIG will proceed as an independent entity.
2) EDSIG Bylaws will be updated following the November 2019 members meeting to reflect independence.
3) EDSIG shall extend a relationship with ISCAP as an associated partner with the stipulation that, for a period of at least three years, the EDSIG name is sustained in any organizational nomenclature.

Sincerely,

The 2019 EDSIG Board

Jeffry Babb (President 2019), Les Waguespack (Past President), Eric Breimer (Vice President 2019), Rachida Parks (Membership Chair and Director 2019-2020), Michael Smith (Secretary and Director 2019-2020), Niki Kunene (Treasurer and Director 2019-2020), Amjad Abdullat (Director 2018-2019), Lisa Kovalchick (Director 2019-2020), Lionel Mew (Director 2018-2019), Jason Sharp (Director 2018-2019), Li-Jen Lester (Conference Chair 2019), Lee Freeman (JISE Editor)