

# University of Washington's EA Practice

EA Practice at a Glance	
Year formed	Initial forming started 2011, Director hired in 2013
Submitted by	Jim Phelps, Director of Enterprise Architecture and Strategy
EA team is located in	UW-IT (central IT for the UW)
Roles on EA team	Director; Enterprise Solutions Architect; two Enterprise Business Architects
Narrative	Our focus is mostly on the business and solution architecture for the central IT unit. We are working on Strategy Management for UW-IT, refactoring and improving our investment/service management business processes along with solutions for shared DevOps tools and monitoring among other things.
Maturity	See <a href="#">University of Washington EA Maturity Review</a>

## What is your name and title?

Jim Phelps, Director of Enterprise Architecture and Strategy.

I have been at UW for 3 1/2 years now.

## How did your architecture practice get started?

The EA practice was started here before I was hired. A group of interested people (mostly central IT but with some campus partners) came together and established the EASG (Enterprise Architecture Steering Group). As a group, they wrote principles and did a couple of EA whitepapers. They then made the recommendation that UW-IT (the central IT group) should hire an EA.

The practice here started as a grassroots effort inside of UW-IT

## What is the focus of your practice – e.g., enterprise, business, technical, solution, data architecture?

We have an Enterprise Business Architect, we had an Enterprise Information Architect and we have an Enterprise Solution Architect.

Our focus is mostly on the business and solution architecture for the central IT unit. We are working on Strategy Management for UW-IT, refactoring and improving our investment/service management business processes along with solutions for shared DevOps tools and monitoring among other things.

## How big is your practice and where is it located in the organization?

We were 4 FTE until very recently. We are now 3 FTE located in the central IT unit. I report to an AVP who reports to the VP-IT/CIO.

## What is your practice model for working with related teams – e.g., federated architecture practice?

## Our top projects (August 2017)

- Building out the Strategy Management Practice inside of UW-IT.
- Rebuilding/Refactoring/Redesigning (something like that) our Strategic Planning Investment Project Portfolio Processes inside of UW-IT.
- Establishing common DevOps practices in UW-IT.
- Supporting Organizational Development in a variety of ways (helping one team to think about their reorganization, teaching /speaking about new skills, etc).
- Support our Finance Transformation during the project definition /discovery phase.

## Related links

UW's EA practice is working towards a federated model of EA.

- [Spreading EA Skills Across the Organization.](#)

Business Architecture is a core practice within our EA group.

- [Business Architecture at UW](#)

We see the needs for new skills across the organization.

- [Changing Skills Presentation \(Google Slides\)](#)
- [Facilitator Training at UW](#)
- [Using Capability Maps for Common Discussion Points](#)

We manage our work using Scrum/Agile

- [EA Practice BP Models \(gdoc\)](#)
- [EA Scrum Practices \(gdoc\)](#)

Our major focus has been building a Strategy Management practice

- [Strategy Management Presentation \(Google Slides\)](#)
- Jenni Laughlin's [Change Engine](#)

## Example Position Descriptions

(Note: these may no longer be current - even when recently posted but they give you a starting point)

[Director of EA PD 2013 - Univ. of Washington](#)

[Enterprise Business Architect PD 2017 - Univ. of Washington.pdf](#)

[Ent-Solution-Arch-Final.docx](#)

We are building a federated architecture practice. We have run several courses teaching campus members things like capability mapping, business process mapping, brick diagrams. We have a Community of Practice where my team brings together 30ish people to work on topics and learn about best practices.

My vision is that we have a well linked distributed EA function where there are architects in place in various groups and domains who contribute to the overall architecture best practices, artifacts, etc. (see [Spreading EA Skills Across the Organization](#) and the CEB articles linked in the sidebar)

## How would you describe the maturity of your architecture practice in terms of:

- See the [Higher Education Enterprise Architecture Maturity Model](#) for more about:
  - Scope definition
  - Engagement
  - Impact assessment
  - Delivery
  - Management

## What are major trends you see in your practice and your enterprise?

The problems we are dealing with are big and broad and based on some systemic issues in the institution. We have had to take a much bigger and more thoughtful approach (including a lot more change management, communications, managing up, inspiring people to action) as we try to solve these issues. A lot of our work is educating leaders about the issues and then giving them visuals and analysis so they understand the landscape and options.

We do little analysis of current state of the technical landscape. We do much more community building and education.

## How does your team manage its work internally and on projects?

We engage in a more ad hoc way with projects until it becomes necessary to create a statement of work. We create these statements of work to make sure everyone understands the scope and outcomes. This is especially true in really squishy areas or areas where there is a lot of maturity needed (in these maturity engagements it is just to be clear about how far we are trying to get towards perfect).

We use JIRA to track stories for our teams. Those stories are bundled into Epics. Each Epic is focused on an aspect of a project or our work (e.g., Financial Transformation - Risk Assessments, Financial Transformation - Business Process Mapping, etc.)

Our sprints run 2 weeks. We load the sprint with stories that represent about 40 points per person. Our points are 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32. 1 is a small task that you can get done quickly. 2 is a task that takes some time but you can get 2 or 3 of these done in a morning. etc.

## What are your major challenges?

Budget cuts mean I lost one person. We have just gone live with one ERP (the first for UW) and we are starting another ERP project which means there is very little headroom for any other changes.

We don't have the relationships with campus that I wish we had. This means we are operating in a vacuum to some extent.

Culture.

## What projects have been your major focus lately?

Strategy Management for UW-IT. Rethinking, refactoring our Project Portfolio Management, Investment Management processes. Finance Transformation and HR/P Go-Live. Preparing the University and UW-IT for the digital transformation conversations we need to have (impacts of IoT, BYOE, Big Data, Machine Learning/AI, etc).