



Minutes of the Computing Advisory Committee Meeting
May 26, 1999

Those attending: Al Allen, David Blakesley, JP Dunn, Geoff Nathan (recorder), Duke Koch, Jim Duggan, Dennis Leitner, Ray Gering, Ruth Bernhardt

The meeting began with a report from Al on recent IT activities. He has been asked to join a group representing midwest universities which is looking into software licensing. In addition, informal negotiations continue with Comdisco, who is offering a plan to take over responsibility for all desktops on campus, supplying computers, software, support and repair as well as upgrading. These discussions are taking place under the auspices of a subcommittee of the Chancellor's Budget and Planning Council.

New MVS and VM upgrades are planned shortly to make them Y2K compliant, and a number of UNIX servers are also being made compliant. 192 new 56K modems are on order, and a several new firewalls are being implemented to deal with recent security threats. In a further note to the proposal to Midwest Internet Al noted that the company has been purchased, so the RFP is probably moot.

On the issue of the wiring of the east campus residence halls he stated that the fiber has been laid, but plans to install wiring in the halls have been stalled due to legal issues and the bid process will need to be repeated from the engineering study phase onwards, which will significantly delay proposed implementation plans.

Geoff reported on the Faculty Summer Institute on Instructional Technology that he and JP attended the previous week. In addition to attending workshops on various aspects of computer-oriented teaching, the ten-person SIUC team met to talk about strategies on returning to campus. A number of ideas were proposed:

1. Establish an advocacy group for academic computing, especially new teaching methods. The council should be represented by college, with the larger colleges having subcouncils. It should report to the Provost, and would have responsibility not only to represent faculty interests upwards, but also to educate colleagues on possibilities for improving teaching through technology.
2. Set basic computer literacy standards for graduating SIUC students. This would require improving student access to computing facilities.
3. Report back to the campus on the results of the Institute with workshops.

4. Encourage the implementation of a centralized registry of web-based courses (and perhaps also web-enhanced courses), including a central website, and perhaps setting standards for web-based course descriptions. Susan Logue and Susan Edgren are already working on this at the instigation of Associate Vice Chancellor Winters.
5. Survey incoming students on computer skill level and whether they own computers.
- 6 Work on recognition of faculty effort in this area.

Discussion of these points centered around point 1, with the committee generally in agreement with Geoff that the CAC and this committee have quite different focuses that would not, in general, overlap. Geoff promised to attempt to promote this idea campus-wide.

Geoff then presented a set of topics that could serve as the basis for subcommittee meetings, and Duke presented a second set, which overlapped to a certain extent. The first issue to be discussed was the question of the faculty desktop replacement plan. It was noted that placing the money in the equipment line and tracking expenditures using Oracle would solve the problem of accountability. The problem of computers going to faculty who don't have a need for them was seen as a very delicate issue, because decisions about appropriateness of research and teaching style are at least partly protected by academic freedom. In general, however, faculty who do not use computers are mostly in the later stages of their careers, and new faculty in general cannot complete their education without relying on technology, in all current fields. It was proposed that the University make a statement that computer use is a normal part of a faculty member's job (and already students have come to be annoyed on finding faculty who don't answer their e-mail). Geoff promised to write a position paper on this issue which he will circulate to the group and then forward to the Chancellor and Vice Chancellors.

Three distinct subject areas were proposed for subcommittees (with membership as follows):

- 1) Bulk purchasing/site licenses Duke, Ruth, JP, AI*
- 2) The three-level help system/faculty-staff reward and compensation Ray, David, Dennis, Duke, Ruth*, Carolyn
- 3) Renewal of infrastructure/future directions (e.g. labs vs. ubiquitous ethernet ports) David*, Dennis, JP, Relevant rep. from IT, Pierre

Other topics, such as intellectual property, policies on ergonomics, and others were to be addressed at a later date. The names marked with an asterisk are responsible for calling the first meeting, at which a chair could be elected if people so choose.

The next meeting is set for Wednesday, June 23 at 3 P.M., location to be announced.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

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