Information Technology Committee Minutes

12 September 2017

Attendees: Curt Hersey (Chair), Matt Walker (student rep), Anne Marie Marshall, Penny Evans-Plant (IT Director), Cameron Jordan, Basil Englis, Christopher Diller, Jeremy Worsham, Sherre Harrington, Mary Boyd (Provost), Tom Hocut, and David Slade

The minutes of the 28 March 2017 meeting were approved with minor revisions.

Old Business

1. The OIT director reviewed summer OIT projects and accomplishments including retrofitting of classrooms—all during the Governor Honor’s program. However, furniture in Green 109, the computer lab, is postponed to Christmas break due to backorders. (Labs actually do attract students with laptops.) Classrooms in Evans 103 and 200 received new processors and related equipment as well as many rooms in Cook. New projector and screens and lecture capture were installed in selected classrooms. In addition, Evans 225 was converted into a “sandbox” like space.
2. The committee discussed getting usage data on the advantages of integrated lecture capture cameras and projectors versus separate equipment. A survey question on the existing and new user surveys (see below) would be helpful. Some faculty are using lecture capture, although it is probably underutilized at least in HASS, but committee members noted that student presentations can also be captured to facilitate student learning and even faculty meetings could be.
3. Jeremy Worsham updated the committee on the possible formation of an Instructional Design Advisory Group and the likely use of a knowledge/needs survey called TPAC (Technology Pedagogy Content Knowledge) to assess faculty familiarity and need regarding instructional technology. The committee discussed possible venues for outreach; Jeremy will meet with the Deans Council soon.

New Business

1. Penny Evans Plant noted that she updated OIT’s Institutional Effectiveness Plan given the last year’s accomplishments. She also noted that OIT is moving to a new technology quality survey called MISO—a more intuitive survey for both those surveyed and for the interpretation of results—which will go out at the end of each January or in early February. Many smaller schools are moving to this survey, although there is work to do to narrow down the survey questions to a manageable length (each being of equal weight) for different campus groups (faculty, students, etc.). It was suggested that the core questions of the current Tech Qual survey could be used to begin this decision-making, and a new subcommittee was created to begin this task (Curt and Anne Marie).
2. The committee then discussed two concerns expressed at the last Faculty Colloquium meeting. The first was a request for faster uploading of freshmen pictures to Viking Web before the fall term begins. Penny said this could and would be done by adding freshmen pictures on a rolling basis after each SOAR session.
3. The committee then discussed the second faculty concern: the quality and departmental cost of MAC computer upgrades. The committee noted that the $700 allotted for each replacement has not changed since 2007. Penny noted that there is no “out of pocket” expenditure for the department to replace a Mac desktop (Mac mini) as it is fully covered in the replacement plan. It has an Intel i5 processor, 8 GB of RAM, and a 1 TB hard drive. Faculty may choose to add more memory, etc. for an additional charge. However, the departmental expense for a MacBook Pro is $549. (Departmental expense for Windows laptops is either $139 for the standard laptop or $554 which includes a docking station). And finally, she noted that the sub-performance that faculty have observed is due to the fact that Apple has not updated the specs of the Mac mini since 2014 (much longer than their usual refresh cycle of ~400 days).
4. Moving forward, it would be best if faculty wait until the end of the fiscal year to replace their Mac mini in the hope of an update; if Apple doesn’t update it by then, OIT will need to come up with a Plan B. The committee discussed other ideas of addressing the replacement quality/cost issue, including the possibility of leasing (OIT is scheduled to meet with a new company about this option soon) and the suggestion that individuals with multiple devices (funded from multiple budget lines) could consolidate upgrade/replacement funds for a single unit.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher Diller