

Minutes -- Information Technology Committee
September 29, 2011

Present: Beth Barron, Lynnwood Belvin, Victor Bissonnette, Penny Evans-Plant, Austin Gardner, Nadeem Hamid, Tom Hocut, Cameron Jordan, Daniel Robb, Jerry Trammell

Nadeem Hamid called the meeting to order at 11:00

The minutes from the previous meeting of the IT Committee were approved.

Updates/Announcements

- Tom Hocut: wireless on campus – E. and W. Mary will be updated over fall break – campus is pretty well covered by wireless network now.
 - Future networking issue: we need to make a decision about whether future dorm rooms will have both wired network and phone connections – the future networking might include only VoIP technology and a return to the “hall phone”
- Penny Evans-Plant: Paper Cut print management system will “go live” in January of 2012.
 - There will be 500 allocated page units per semester; 250 per summer semester. If a student prints more than that -- \$.05 per page. Faculty and students can request additional units (e.g., WI courses). RAs can get special code for doing printing for someone else.
 - Lynnwood Belvin: what about visitors working in our labs – e.g., outside conferences or workshops? Penny – we can get special codes for printer use.
 - Penny: we have developed a FAQ document – this will be distributed to students soon, and will be posted on web sites for Provost, IT, and Library

Old Business

- Penny Evans-Plant distributed some of the results from the Technology Survey from the Spring 2011 semester. The group made several observations and suggestions for revising the tables in this report.
- Penny: there is now a listing of discipline-specific software packages associated with each of the on-campus computer labs described in this web page:
<http://www.berry.edu/oit/page.aspx?id=2341>
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New Business

- Penny Evans-Plant discussed the possibility of using the TechQual+ assessment instead of our own IT survey for assessing technology use on campus (www.techqual.org). One clear benefit of this approach would be our ability to compare our data to those collected by other institutions (e.g., our peer and aspirant schools). We can also add our own survey questions to this instrument.

- We discussed how we might assess faculty and staff every other year, and then students every other year.
 - Lynnwood Belvin – having comparative data would be useful for reports such as NCATE
- Penny Evans-Plant: SPSS has been purchased by IBM, and postings on public forums suggest that we are in store for a significant increase in the cost of using this software.
 - Good news: now SPSS can be installed on Windows and Mac systems without additional cost.
 - Dan Robb: some in physics have switched to using an open-source substitute for Mathematica.
 - Victor Bissonnette: led a brief discussion on some commercial and open-source alternatives to using SPSS (e.g., R, PSPP, STATA). We discussed the benefits (e.g., lower cost or no cost) and the challenges that would be faced if we were to use an alternative software system in our classes and in our research.
 - Several: what would be the obstacles to changing software packages?
 - Victor: it depends on whether the software is being used in support of an instructor who is teaching basic statistics, or if it is being used in support of more complex statistical problems involved with research. If we are serious about the possibility of reducing our use of SPSS, we will need to carefully examine how it is being used.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00. Our next meeting will be in October.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Victor Bissonnette.