University Senate Committee on Computing and Communications

Meeting minutes of March 10th, 2006. Fourth meeting of 2005/6 Academic year.

The meeting came to order at 2:15 in the European Languages, Literatures, and Cultures Conference Room. Present: Lin, Lagos, Torres, Sutherland, Ledgerwood, Jesty, and White. We began with the refreshments Ledgerwood provided and then started discussing.

1) The first item was the PR 109. Little new was presented.

2) HSC ARCAN network. It is up and running successfully! Departments are being added still and individuals will be added by their IP addresses at some point.

3) The Chair of the Committee gave a report on the Director of Instructional Computing search. Much to his surprise and dismay he learned that the concerns of this committee were, for the most part, not addressed in the ad which was posted in late January without any further consultation with the Search Committee. Rohlf has told the Chair that this is not the first time a DoIT search has proceeded in this manner. This certainly does not follow College of Arts and Sciences policies. Subsequently the Chair has learned that there are more than 22 applications for the post. He has not viewed the applications since they were only available to Notes users.

4) The Committee again remembered that it should invite Dennis Proul to discuss differences in E/W Campus support.

5) No news on wireless.

6) The next stages of making computer authentication a campus commonplace are going well. The conversion of Blackboard to using the new Net ID is one example.

7) Torres reported that the Library has determined that TurnItIn is the premier plagarism detection service on the Internet. He gave pricing for different levels of the service. The Chair also reported that SPD now has paid for this for its classes and instructors. Some follow up on this needs to occur.

8) The Committee agreed to invite Charlie Bowman to a future meeting to discuss the Power Users group and other items.

9) No news about changes to the faculty addendum.

10 The Committee then answered questions that it had been sent by the University of Massachusetts Amherst equivalent committee. Questions and responses are given here.

a) What has been the most significant benefit(s) with the SIS (PeopleSoft) implementation? Students like being able to register on-line and select their own courses.

Like being able to contact faculty about openings/space directly. Registrar likes being able to off-load a lot of its previous work to departments and dept. secretaries.

b) What has been the most significant problem or problems with the SIS? The interface and the amazing clumsiness of the menus have been huge problems. The SBU Division of Information Technology has spent hundreds (thousands?) of man hours changing, refining, and improving the SIS. DoIT's Solar System implementation (web-based interface) is ten times better than the PeopleSoft interface (even improved), yet it is still quite clumsy. Faculty, students, and staff all waste hundreds of man hours due to the interface. Department scheduling of classes continues to be a huge headache as well.

c) Do you perceive any missing features or problems with the SIS? See b) above. We also find that there are some small details such as not being able (despite promises) of moving a student worker from active to inactive. The lack of a back button is very annoying in several menus. Impossible or difficult to check for pre-requisites for courses as well.

d) How has the SIS affected workloads, time, and paperwork? See answers above. However, once again department secretaries hate the system while the registrar and students more or less like it. All users now spend much more time dealing with the SIS and the tasks it covers than they did before it existed. We would view this aspect as a negative on the whole.

e) What can you tell us about how satisfied different constituencies on campus are and why? See d) above.

11) Nothing to report on the Privacy bill.

12) The Provost's Task Force on Technology has now met once. Sutherland and the Chair discussed how it is progressing. It is in its very beginning and more information will come out from future meetings. Sutherland focused on the problems Math has been having getting proper equipment in Manhattan for distance learning between there and SBU here. One of the committee items will be to discuss what needs various disciplines have for distance learning.

13) No updates on mail relay servers being used to scan outgoing mail for viruses, spam, and other indicators that a computer is doing "bad things".

Finally, in new business since the last meeting, the Chair of the Committee, Mike Ledgerwood, has announced his resignation as Chair. He has received an offer he cannot refuse from Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. He was offered more money, Chair of his department, full Professor, in a place where the cost of living is at least 1/3 less than Long Island. Quite interestingly, Stony Brook University chose not to respond to this offer at all, making his decision to accept the offer even easier. He will not actually leave the campus until the fall of 2007, but has decided to forego all non-contractual service items immediately to focus on publications. This includes this

committee, the search committee for the new Director of Inst. Tech. and the Provost's taskforce.

The Chair wants to express his regrets about leaving the Committee and Stony Brook. He really, really, enjoys this Committee especially and wishes it the very best in its continuing good work for the University.

Jim Rohlf will call together the next meeting of the committee to elect a new Chair.

Respectfully submitted to the committee,

Mike Ledgerwood, Chair.