Academic Computing Steering Committee
Meeting Minutes
November 7, 2007

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm

In attendance:
- D. Cossey, M. Parlett-Sweeney, T. McFadden, F. Davis, S. Sargent, K. Fox, H. Hanson (proxy for V. Barr), S. Parrotta

1) Minutes from the 10-31-07 meeting were reviewed with no questions about the minutes.

2) The Vista/Office 2007 Roll-out Plan was reviewed. Questions about reported possible buggyness of Vista were raised and discussed. It appeared that most of the reports had been from the early days after Vista’s release. A discussion of the compatibility issues with Office 2007’s .docx files (primarily with Macintoshes) was held. Office 2008 for the Macintosh is expected to be released in January 2008 which should reduce these incompatibilities. The faculty members of the committee suggested that ITS provide communication to the faculty community that covered the big picture and salient points of the roll-out. A suggestion of simplifying (and making clearer) the 4 basic points listed under the Expected Rollout Plan section of the plan document and then using that as the communication was made. It was recommended that this information be sent out in targeted emails to faculty.

   a. Mary agreed to put this together with the expectation that the information would be sent out in December and again in January.

3) Discussion continued on the Replacement Policy. Again, discussion centered on issues related to software upgrades.

   a. Of major concern was the fact that upgrades to the Macintosh operating system are not normally provided. Mary noted that there are approximately 130 faculty members with Macintosh computers. Since Apple’s volume licensing quantities are 1-9, 10-99, 100-999, or 1000+, Union does not receive a substantial discount for volume purchasing. It would cost approximately $6400 to bring all faculty members using a Macintosh as their supported office computer to the current version of the operating system. It was felt by the committee members that not all faculty members would want the operating system upgrade. A decision was made that ITS would fund 100 upgrades for faculty office computers (not for lab or research computers) out of the current year ITS budget. This will allow more time for the discussion on the replacement policy without impacting faculty who require an upgrade at this point in time.

   b. Upgrades to discipline-specific or special needs software (software that is not expressly provided by ITS) were also discussed. The following were suggested as ways that faculty members might fund this type of upgrade:
      - Applying to the Dean’s office for an FRF grant covering the software costs
      - A process similar to the FRF grant proposal could be set up for faculty to make a formal request for funding special needs/discipline-specific software.

Dave reminded the committee that ITS does not have a “pool” of funds designated for software and that if a mechanism for requesting funding were to be implemented, it would also need to be funded.
c. It was suggested that the subject of funding for specialty software be brought up at the Chairs Meeting for their perspective.

Discussion on the replacement policy is expected to continue at the meetings in Winter term.

4) Items 4, 5 and 6 on the agenda (Review of Future Agenda Items, Status of Surveys, and Administrative Computing Projects Status) were not discussed due to a lack of time.

The meeting ended at 1:55pm with a request for committee members to send Mary Parlett-Sweeney their availability for an initial member Winter term during the week of 1/14/08.