Academic Computing Steering Committee (AcCSC)

Minutes of Meetings:
January 21, 2005

Present:

Review of last meeting's minutes

1. Laptop Policy. ITS distributed the new laptop computer policy. ITS has agreed to create a fund to self-insure college-owned laptops. [Click here for the policy (word doc). [The laptop policy was distributed by email to all faculty on February 1, 2005.]

2. Replacing IDOL and moving to Exchange server.

Dave Cossey and Diane Keller made a brief presentation on ITS plans to replace IDOL and gradually migrate mail services to Outlook / Exchange. [Click here for the pdf version of their presentation](available on campus or by VPN connection only).

Several faculty members of the Steering Committee submitted the following list of questions related to moving to Exchange. Part of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of these questions.

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The planned change-over to Outlook and Microsoft Exchange has begun to raise some concerns, some of them are very specific questions but the more general issues are in the end more important as they touch upon wide areas of interaction between ITS and the people it serves. Still the Outlook/Exchange transition serves to illustrate the general concerns.

The general concerns are:
[1] Changes in policy can significantly affect the work of faculty and staff, leading to productivity costs and losses. How does ITS acquire its knowledge of these losses and costs? Does it speak with key individuals, take surveys or use some other methodology? What role can the ACSC play here?

[2] What methods does ITS use to weigh the costs and benefits of changes for faculty and staff? How are they entered into ITS’s final calculations? Would more faculty and staff input be helpful through this process? What can ACSC do to facilitate the exchange of information?

[3] Transitioning from one system to another can involve some degree of retraining and conversion of data – most faculty and staff, for instance, use their present email clients as archives of important correspondence, usually years old and in non-Outlook formats; what provisions is ITS making for helping faculty and staff adjust their work and get their important files and data converted and, where appropriate, their confidentiality protected?

[4] How does ITS handle publicity about large changes? Specifically how does ITS provide people with the advance notice and information they need in order to position themselves for changes? It may be helpful to provide a kind of FAQ sheet to help ease doubts and the transitions.

Here are some Frequently Asked Questions we have encountered:

- “I use Eudora (or something), what happens to my Eudora email archives?”
- “Can I still use my favorite email client?”
- “What happens if I don't use Windows or the MAC?”
- “Where will my email correspondence be stored – can I access it if the server goes down?”
• “Can I work offline (compose email) and then access the account to send it?”

• “How is its privacy and confidentiality protected?”

• “One has heard a lot about worms and viruses that affect Outlook; are we protected?”

• “Can I easily forward my mail?”

• “Where do my attachments get stored? With the email or separately?”

Discussion ensued. Eudora mail can be imported into Outlook; mail in Outlook can be stored on users' computers, and messages read and composed off-line; ITS has instituted polices to ensure that all college-owned computers have the latest anti-virus and virus definition files, and receive all necessary security patches. As part of the further discussion of Outlook, these questions and others will be addressed.

Next meeting: TBD