Academic Computing Steering Committee
(AcCSC)

Minutes of Meetings:
March 1, 2005

Present:

______________________________

Review of last meeting's minutes

1. Computer Privacy. The Committee welcomed a guest faculty member to discuss concerns about computer privacy. Questions were raised about the role of the EPO (ePolicy Orchestrator), software now installed on college-owned computers to ensure that virus protection is current. ([Click here for more info](#)) ITS explained that this software was exclusively for the protection not only of the user's own security and privacy, but also to prevent hackers from using that computer to compromise other computers on campus, and the campus network.

It became clear that issues of privacy needed to be clarified and codified. The Committee asked that Dave, Diane, and Doug explore computer privacy policies at other schools and report back as soon as possible so that we could begin to draft a privacy statement for Union.

At the crux of the debate is the need to balance issues of privacy and academic freedom on the one hand, with the inherent transparency of electronic media, and also the need to detect and deter threats to the security and integrity of the campus network.

Discussion of the privacy issue dominated the meeting, and the issues raised in the second agenda item will hold over to a future meeting.
2. Faculty suggestions for information gathering.

Faculty members of the Committee suggest the following as a role for the Committee in dealing with IT changes on campus, and in the world.

Changes in information technology – exciting new software, procedures and equipment but also the less exciting routines of maintenance or upgrading – offer important benefits to the users of this technology; they can also lead to disruptions of work and losses of productivity, sometimes perhaps short-term but often severe.

It is important that everyone has the information about resources, needs and constraints so that changes can be implemented in the most agreeable and effective manner possible.

The Academic Computing Committee provides an excellent venue for discussing communication about computer technology change at Union.

Effective implementation of changes in policy and technology require information-gathering about

- Productivity gains, costs and losses for faculty and staff: how can we get good information about these costs and gains?

- Benefits of changes for faculty and staff: how can we get faculty and staff input through these processes?

- Retraining of people and conversion of their data: How can we anticipate potential disruptions prior to the process, publicize changes, prepare those who have to adopt them and get feedback in the transition and afterwards?

- Impact on student productivity: What are the best ways to solicit feedback from students about effects on their use of and interest in our services and technology.
We make a modest proposal to be discussed at the next meeting: Implementing a systematic feedback system perhaps in the form of a once-a-year questionnaire filled out by faculty and written and/or oral feedback from department and program chairs.

- - - - - - -

Next meeting: TBD

© 2005 Union College, Schenectady, New York