Academic Computing Steering Committee
(AcCSC)

Minutes of Meetings:
April 25, 2001. OCS conference room; 4:00 pm

Present: Batson, Boyer, Keller, Klein, McFadden, Sener

Review of last meeting's minutes

1. Announcements

The NYU Center for Teaching Excellence maintains an impressive list of links to sites about teaching and learning with technology. Eshi Motahar recently attended a workshop there.

Tom McFadden distributed an article describing the difficulty of using standard web search engines to locate reliable and useful information on the web. We discussed the continuing need to educate students and faculty on accessing the so-called "deep web" of materials in proprietary collections or databases. Schaffer Library maintains a very useful collection of sites on doing www research, at its online Reference Room.

Tom McFadden attended "Teaching and Technology: Higher Education in in Electronic Age: Some Legal Guidelines" at SUNY Morrisville, April 20. Tom and Doug have copies of the proceedings.

Hardware in the Curricular Design Office will be upgraded with Mellon monies.

AAC has recently approved a new Religious Studies minor. The Philosophy and English Departments have expressed an interest in exploring collaborative courses in Religious Studies between Union and one or more
other colleges. Doug will be meeting with them to evaluate the possibilities.

The current (April 2001) issue of T.H.E. Journal is dedicated to issues of Distance Learning.

2. Acceptable Use Policy. Dave Cossey has incorporated the College lawyer's latest comments into the Acceptable Use Policy. The changes are for the most part minor. The Committee offered only one additional change, from:
"Union College will notify or cooperate with applicable law enforcement authorities..."

to
"Union College will cooperate with applicable law enforcement authorities..."

The Committee noted that the guideline: "Do not attempt to defeat computer and network security measures..." was intended to give the College the right to discipline those who make these attempts out of malice, and is not aimed at preventing legitimate research done by or under the knowledge and approval of faculty or OCS staff.

Click here for the text of the new policy. This policy will be sent to the Dean of Students’ office for inclusion in next year's Student Handbook.

3. Digital Reserves. Tom McFadden reported that Schaffer Library now supports digital reserves. He will be sending a memo to all faculty soon. Faculty can request that materials be digitally retrieved or scanned and entered into the reserve catalog. Digital reserve entries in the catalog will have a link to the material. This feature will be important as we begin to offer GMI courses online.

4. Blackboard Rollout. Diane Keller reported that after a 2-term shakedown period during which about a dozen faculty have worked with the system, the Blackboard course management software will be available for all faculty to use in the Fall. To raise awareness, OCS will sponsor several sessions later in the term, and will provide full day training sessions over the summer. The
Office of Curricular Design has prepared an automated course registration system and online documentation for faculty wishing to use Blackboard in their classes.

In the meantime, the Blackboard Users Group continues to meet on alternate Thursday afternoons at 4pm on Olin 102. Next scheduled meeting is Thursday, April 26.

If you would like to look at a sample Blackboard course, here's what to do:
Open an internet browser (Internet Explorer is preferred over Netscape) , and enter the web address: http://online.union.edu
(If you get a "Page not available" message, click "Refresh".)
Click Login
Click Preview
Click the Courses tab
Leave the Course Search dialog box blank, and click the GO button for Course Search
You can Preview any of the courses which have the Preview button. I suggest the E-Commerce course. You will find that some of the features (the communication tools -- which are really the exciting part of Blackboard) cannot be viewed by guests, but the course documents are all available.

5. Online German. Sigrid Kellenter, Wilfried Wilms, Mark Knowles, and Diane Keller will visit the Center for Educational Technology at Middlebury May 2 and 3 for a conference on technology and the teaching of German. Click here for the conference description (MS Word document).

6. Electronic Classrooms. Fuat Sener expressed the desire for more electronic classrooms, especially on the first floor of classroom buildings. At the very least he suggested investing in additional projectors and notebook computers so that faculty can make electronic presentations. Diane Keller pointed out that many faculty want more than just a projector, but we would look into this request. There is money in next year's budget to create one more electronic classroom,
probably in Bailey Hall.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 2, 4 pm, OCS conference room.