Liaison Committee on Academic Computing and Technology  
Meeting Minutes  
September 22, 2014

Meeting was called to order at 12:55 p.m.

In attendance:
  • T. Buma, E. Borkowski, F. Maloy, D. Mosquera, G. Reich, S. Sargent, D. Snyder
Absent:
  • Student representatives

1. Introductions
   a. New faculty members Daniel Mosquera - Modern Languages (Division 1 Faculty Rep) and Gary Reich, Physics and Astronomy (Division 3 Faculty Rep) were welcomed to the committee.

2. Review and approval of Minutes from 6/2/2014
   a. Minutes from the meeting on June 2, 2014 were reviewed and approved.

3. Selection of Faculty Co-Chair
   a. Tak Buma volunteered to serve as the 2014-15 LCACT Co-Chair.

4. Update on Summer Activities
   a. Domain Merge: The consolidation of Union faculty, staff, and students into one computer domain occurred over the summer. Administrative users were migrated over into the academic domain, so the only real impact on faculty was migrating to a single password change policy that is the same for everyone on campus. With the domain merge project complete, ITS now has the foundation in place for future projects.

   b. Dell KACE Software Management Tool: ITS will begin implementing a tool this fall that will provide the ability to remotely manage software updates on both Windows and Mac OS operating systems under one platform. This tool allows ITS to become more efficient, especially in terms of updating our classrooms and labs. In most instances, ITS will no longer have to schedule a time for someone to physically come to an office to install software – the needed application install or update can simply be pushed out over the network.

   c. An LCACT member inquired about the transition to new hardware. When it is time to upgrade computer equipment, why aren’t older cables/ adaptors replaced with newer versions? For example, a new iMac comes with a Thunderbolt adapter, but the faculty
member needs a Firewire adapter. Ellen confirms that the ITS budget only has funding for machines, not additional peripherals. Ellen will follow up to find out what is discussed with faculty when they are updating their machines. At our next LCACT meeting, the Committee will review the ITS Equipment Replacement Policy.

d. Nexus Upgrade: Nexus was upgraded to version 2.7 in August. Denise Snyder asked for any feedback from faculty about the upgrade to be directed to her.

e. Investments in Large Capacity Storage: An alum from EMC provided a generous donation of 100+ TB of storage to Union College, as a result of his participation on a President’s Council ad hoc committee examining “Virtual Union”. This ad hoc committee’s findings directly informed the decision to create the new Digital Studio spaces in the Library. It also anticipated the need for storage of large raw video files and potentially future digital collections.

i. How ITS plans to manage the service was discussed. ITS aims to have the storage ready for usage by spring 2015. Processes for requesting space are still being determined.

ii. It was inquired if a faculty member generating a large volume of data could use the storage unit to share the data with the public? Ellen thinks it potentially could be another use and is happy to discuss the idea further, if that is something faculty are interested in exploring.

f. Wireless Security Infrastructure Updated: ITS upgraded the Bradford Network Sentry for Network Access Control (NAC) in August which provides a more secure computing environment for our campus community. ITS now fully enforces the policy that all student machines need to be “clean” and free of viruses before connecting to the network. Campus constituents were prompted to reregister devices when they accessed the wireless network for the first time after the upgrade.

5. ITS Budget situation

a. Ellen explained the current budget situation that ITS is facing. With the combination of maintenance contracts increasing approximately 9% a year and operating budgets not increasing in alignment, we have reached the point where ITS cannot bear the cost of all the hardware replacements needed and pay all the maintenance contracts. Over the years, the number of computers in classrooms and labs due to new or renovated buildings and grants has grown significantly. At the same time, we are moving to a regular replacement cycle for computers of administrators and staff, which has not been in place in the past (faculty computers have been on a regular replacement schedule for some time.) Budgeting for all of these replacement needs has not been fully determined. As a result, we are currently experiencing some budget pressures that will not allow ITS to
provide funding to support computer upgrades on a regular schedule right now. Other factors have affected the budget including the change in the IBM Matching Grant Program, which used to help fund purchases of equipment in computer labs. That program has changed and desktop computers cannot be purchased via that program and therefore impacts the ITS budget.

b. ITS has been exploring cost savings measures including the idea of removing the PC from the instructor’s podium in all fully electronic classrooms to a dual boot Mac, which would realize about 50K in savings. Virtualization may be another possibility, but would need further investigation.

c. The group discussed if ITS could move away from putting computers in the podiums and have faculty bring laptops to classrooms. There were differing opinions in regards to this possibility. It was noted that glitches occur more often when using a laptop and can result in a waste of valuable class time if a professor runs into issues. Faculty need to simply come into the classroom and have the equipment there and working.

6. Topics for Future Meetings

a. If there are topics faculty reps are hearing from Division colleagues that you’d like to discuss, please let Ellen know.

b. Student printing needs to be revisited this year. Last academic year, LCACF talked about wireless printing in Library (we aren’t doing it right now). As a part of that discussion, there is inequity for students across campus (some pay, some get it for free via certain labs), which needs to be addressed.

c. A question was asked about rosters.union.edu–was the site reprogramed due to the domain merge? No, the server that hosts rosters.union.edu will reach it’s end-of-life in March 2015. Therefore, ITS is recoding it for “today’s web” so it will be more responsive and handle load better, as students are using the same engine to select classes.

7. New Business

a. No new business was raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Reminder: LCACF website:
https://its.union.edu/about-cio/committee-academic-computing-and-technology

Handouts:
• Draft of minutes from 6/2/2014 meeting