Introduction

In Spring and Fall 2010 the LCACT produced an Analysis of Student Printing prompted by two large concerns: [1] The problem of equity of access for students to printing and [2] the importance of responsible use of printing resources. You are welcome to read the full 10-page analysis available at < > but we thought it useful to provide a summary of its main conclusions and arguments.

Equity of Access

Students in Division III and Division IV have relatively easy access to printing since they get use of printers in departmental labs and classrooms. Students in Division I and Division II do not have access to classrooms or labs with printing capabilities. They typically use the “pay-for-print” printers (Library, Stats Lab, and ITS labs) or the free printers located in the Olin electronic classrooms and there are significant limitations to these options.

The fact that almost 60% of Union College students graduate in either Division I or Division II implies that more than half of Union students are confined to using non-free, limited access or illicit printing in public areas. Should equivalent resources be made available to students in Division I and Division II?

Responsible Use

The Student Printing study1 cites a figure of $918,000 in 2008-2009 for paper alone but this includes all kinds of use of paper — printed invitations, posters, etc. - , not only academic printing. We do not have a reliable measure of academic document printing. There is reason to believe that up to 40% of what is printed in academic settings is wasted.2 Accordingly we must address the issue of equity in printing resources in a smart way that includes eliminating waste.

But waste elimination is not the only objective if we want to husband resources responsibly and reduce our carbon imprint and our dependency on expensive or toxic materials -- keyword: Sustainability. The document Green Printing – Print Green and Save3 points to such striking facts as: The paper and pulp industry is one of the world's worst polluters of air, water, and soil; Europe and America have less than 1/2 of their original forest cover; The U.S threw out 20% of all the paper made in the world; Producing 2,000 lbs of virgin uncoated paper generates 2,278 lbs of solid waste; The energy it takes to make a ton of paper can power a US home for 2 months; printing uses trillions of gallons of water daily that's treated for toxic chemical content & released back into our waterways.

Proposals:

2 A white paper by the print management system vendor GoPrint claims that 40% of what is printed in academic settings is wasted <goprint.com/controlling-printing-costs.html> and a cursory search of university websites shows varying estimates, e.g. 25% waste in student printing at the University of Delaware <http://www.udel.edu/topics/printless/facts.html>) prompted changes in their printing regime.
3 From Green Printing – Print Green and Save <http://www.squidoo.com/green-printing-pro#module101295371>; fetched 08.23.2010.
Among the key proposals of the *Analysis of Student Printing* document are:

A) Introduction of a card-based 'pay for printing' system: students pay for printing at a reasonable cost using their Union College ID card through the *Dutchman Dollars* program or something similar.

B) Over the longer term introduction of a system for global management of printing under a single agency responsible for basic maintenance and cost accounting. The proliferation of many individual printers should be discouraged when not otherwise advisable (e.g. for reasons of confidentiality).

C) There should be at least one on-campus site for 24/7 printing with other public-area printing locations available on a more limited basis. Information about all printing locations should be published in such a way that students easily know what is available where and when.

D) Students, and everyone else for that matter, should be instructed in the responsible use of printing resources so as to discourage waste. By default everyone should print *duplex* or double-sided (this assume, of course, the availability of duplex-capable machines) in order to avoid wasting paper, toner and energy. ITS would include *responsible use* advisories at printing stations and in the introductory materials given to first-year students.

E) In the interest of limiting waste and enhancing *sustainability* a system for monitoring energy and printing resources should be set up at some carefully selected locations for a period of time which gather data to allow reasonable projections of use.

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