

Academic Technology Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING: 03/03/06 APPROVED BY COMMITTEE: _____
Submitted Exec. Committee: _____ Approved by Exec. Committee: _____
Submitted Academic Senate: _____ Approved by Academic Senate: _____

Members Present: Kimberly Embleton, Xiyi Hang, Mingfang Li, Gloria Melara, Robert Moulton, John Noga, Jacek Polewczak and Ashley Skylar.

Minutes: Stacey Schaaf

Excused: John Adams, Larry Chu, John (Jay) Holden, and Daniel Hosken.

Guests: Al Arboleda, Steven Fitzgerald, Bill Hardy, Chris Olsen, Rick Shaw, Diane Stephens.

1. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the meeting of 2/03/06 were approved.
2. Help Desk – Bill Hardy and Chris Olsen from User Support Services reported on advances in service made by the University Help Desk. Olsen distributed copies of the weekly Help Desk and Walk-In Center metrics which track service performance using Remedy software. The Walk-In Center was opened at the beginning of the semester. Already, they have served 1100 customers, 90% being students. The largest volume of customer assistance at the Walk-In Center is assisting students with wireless access for laptops. Student assistance is the first priority, but faculty and staff are also assisted. The Walk-In Center is open from 7:00AM to 7:00PM Monday through Friday. User Support Services provides training to faculty and staff, who seem to be most in need of training at the intermediate and advanced levels. The Help Desk has implemented a new phone service distribution system. It has cut down on the volume of calls requiring assistance from personnel. It appears that about 30-40% of calls received have been handled with automated responses from the system and did not require further assistance. Hardy encouraged committee members to contact the Help Desk with any suggestions of services needed to provide support for the campus community.
3. Chair's Report – Noga reported back with an ADA Compliance Update. He followed up with Joseph O'Connor, Manager, University Web Communications, University Advancement who visited the committee at the last meeting on February 3, 2006. Noga reiterated that O'Connor has requested that faculty work with him this summer to develop a template for faculty web pages. O'Connor is currently working on a template for college webpages to meet ADA 508 standards. He will provide Studio 8, ACC tools, and ACC monitors as soon as the licenses become available and a Server dedicated. The software has been purchased.

4. Smart Classrooms – Diane Stephens, Director, Academic Budget Management, Academic Resources reported to the committee regarding construction of Smart Classrooms. When the President allotted an increased budget for hiring new faculty, there was not enough time in fiscal year 2005/06 to search for and hire faculty. It was determined that the funds would be used to build Smart Classrooms and upgrade laboratory facilities to support the academic mission of the university. Stephens distributed a “Summary of Smart Classrooms” and “Computer Laboratory Refresh Approvals” to show how funding was utilized. There are currently 119 Smart Classrooms, the allocation of funds is providing for 29 more, for a total of 148 classrooms. In response to questions regarding what equipment exists in which classroom, she provided members with the following link to inventory of classroom equipment, maintained by ITR: <http://www.csun.edu/itr/cts/mes/bldgmenu.html>.

5. Security Update – Al Arboleda reported to the committee on recent security threats and activity. The beginning of the semester saw an increase in attacks and denial of service. The campus was mentioned in the public press once, along with UCLA and Michigan State as having been hacked. The F.B.I. was involved in the incident, investigating a spy bot net that had disabled a hospital in another city. IP addresses linked to the attacks were traced back to computers in CSUN Student housing. There are ongoing incidences of Recording Industry Association (RA) violations which involve students downloading music illegally. Arboleda clarified that downloading of information, software, or anything else for academic purposes does not alert the RA. They only track the music of certain artists. CSUN websites are not to be used for commercial purposes.

Polewczak voiced his concern regarding the ability of users to view their own social security numbers (SSN) via the campus’s CMS (Peoplesoft) system accessible by a web browser. Arboleda outlined the efforts being made to protect information and assured members that only the user has access to the social security number posted on their personal information page.

6. Chair’s Report, continued – Noga reported on the Open Source conference he attended in Monterey. He said that those in attendance seemed to be supportive of open source software and encouraged the committee to be more involved in the process of reviewing software for selection and official use by the university. It would behoove members to investigate the options, benefits and cost ramifications of software contracts vs. open source standards adoption. Fitzgerald listed some of the current open source software being used on campus: Apache Campus Web Server, DNS Server, OSX and Linux Servers, Tomcat, Open LDAP, Firefox and Thunderbird.

Noga requested Moulton and Fitzgerald to research the availability of reports from “The Alliance for Higher Education Competitiveness” because the CSU is listed as a member and perhaps that would entitle members of the campus community to copies of their reports. It was also announced that books can be accessed from the campus computers or via the VPN network from Safari.oreilly.com.

Noga discussed the ITR Governance memo and an email he sent to members earlier regarding the Senate Exec’s search for “tech savvy faculty” to serve on the newly forming “Technology Infrastructure and Services Planning Committee on Academic Technology” and “Advisory Committee on Academic Technology.” The positions are open and the selections will probably not be made until the formation of the committees, which is anticipated to be Fall, 2006.

7. CIO/CTO's Report – Fitzgerald reported that there is a planned outage for phones and voicemail on April 7, 2006 which should last only about an hour. He reported that the Email Integrated Communications committee is trying to make email more effective and improving business processes. He said that improvements include allocating a 3mb email accounts for new student applicants and efforts to create accounts for students that will provide more storage space, more power, new webmail services and an easier to use interface. An off-site email storage capacity is being considered to benefit the campus' disaster recovery efforts, with careful consideration of the necessity to protect information, and the integration of collaborative software.

Fitzgerald distributed graphics to illustrate the difficult situation involving the portal. The portal does have sufficient computing power. The beginning of the semester saw an intolerable ineffectiveness of the portal to provide users with access to CSUN services. To address the emergency a whole new system, "Portal Bypass" was built to allow access to CMS while bypassing the "old portal." The Server was upgraded and many improvements have been made. However, there is still a problem with the portal function. The effort to resolve portal difficulty is ITR's top priority until the problems are identified and fixed. The Directors of Application Development, Computer Technology Systems, Network Systems and ITR's Management are meeting daily to analyze the infrastructure and determine how it can be repaired. Consultants have been retained to aid them. At the same time, work is being conducted to build a new portal under the direction of Rick Shaw, Director, New Portal Project and Web Development. The new portal will provide a single point of contact to CSUN with advantages for students such as ease-of-use.

Fitzgerald went on to discuss the restructuring of IT committees outlined in the IT Governance Memorandum distributed by Noga. Committees are better defined in structure, function, scope and responsibilities.

8. CIO Candidate Interviews – Li asked if members wanted to consider forming a joint opinion upon their review and evaluation of the candidates to submit formally to the Search and Screen Committee. It was decided that at the next meeting, Moulton and Fitzgerald would not attend the earlier portion of the meeting to allow members freedom in discussing the CIO candidates.