Academic Technology Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING: 05/05/06  APPROVED BY COMMITTEE: ________
Submitted Exec. Committee: ________  Approved by Exec. Committee: ________
Submitted Academic Senate: ________  Approved by Academic Senate: ________


Minutes: Marla Joseph

Excused: Robert Moulton, Ashley Skylar, Dan Hosken and Gloria Melara

Guests: Spero Bowman, Brian Foley, Steven Fitzgerald, Chuck Moore, Al Arboleda and Rick Shaw

1. Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the 04/07/06 meeting were approved

2. Announcements – John Noga announced that the 3 open seats in the Academic Technology Committee were filled. Ardavan Asef-Vaziri, from the College of Business Administration & Economics, Ellis Godard, from the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences and John Noga, from the College of Engineering & Computer Science join the committee next year.

3. Chair’s Report – Nominations were taken for Chair of the Academic Technology Committee for the next year and John Noga was elected to remain chair for one more year.

4. Department / College Issues

5. CIO / CTO Report

a) Email -- Steve Fitzgerald explained that CSUN’s current email system has 360 gigabytes of storage. Email was intended as a fast communication system not a long term storage system. Email is backed-up on a regular basis and it now takes 2 full days to back up the system due to the storage quantity. This back-up is accomplished while email is live, thus increasing the complexity of the back-up system.

Email distributed to a large number of people is called Broadcast email. This is a very efficient way to inform a large population. The problem that the campus just experienced was due to an abuse of the broadcast email which was being sent during peak hours. This slowed the system to a crawl. We request that all large email blasts be performed only during off times.
b) **Phone Directory** – Steve Fitzgerald informed that the updated information for the printed phone directory has a deadline at the printers of June 18th. Because this date is prior to the start of the new semester, the new faculty will not appear in the directory, and retiring faculty will still appear. A question that will be posed in the future is, should the printed version be continued, or should the directory be on line, or both.

We will be testing a voice activated phone directory with a select few. The extension for this voice phone directory will be 1200, once it has been tested.

c) **Download Page** – Steve Fitzgerald and Rick Shaw explained that the download license page was modified to send faculty to the faculty licenses and students to their own. You will also see new software that can be downloaded, such as Dreamweaver and the Macromedia set of software. The plan is to migrate the downloads to one place on one server.

d) **Where to find help** – Steve Fitzgerald has become aware that faculty do not know where to go for help. The help desk and their local tech are a couple of avenues to pursue. Could we advise the faculty members to talk to the ATC member for their college as another resource? The issue could be brought before the committee for discussion. We will revisit this at a future meeting.

6. **Discussion Topics**

**Academic Technology Focus Groups – Guest Spero Bowman**

Spero Bowman related that he, Harry Hellenbrand, Bob Moulton, Steve Fitzgerald, and Randall Cummins, held open forums with all the colleges to acquire insight into how technology can contribute to the campus’ learning environment. Discussion focused on how technology can contribute to student success and support faculty. A primary goal is to establish priorities that guide the acquisition and use of technology to maximize the cost-benefit to the campus. Spero Bowman will distribute a summary of meeting discussions. It was determined that this communication link with the faculty was beneficial to all involved and should be continued on a yearly basis.

These discussions are in search of evidence that using the technological resources available benefit the faculty and students. A common theme was that faculty need increased support with the resources.

**Moodle – Guest Brian Foley**

Brian Foley from the College of Education informed the committee that last summer he installed, on CSUN’s server, Moodle to be used with a master’s program in education technology. Moodle is an open source flexible software package that has a lot of the same functionality as WebCT. Foley feels that Moodle is superior to WebCT in the types of activities and tools that are available, but that it would not be able to support hundreds of simultaneous classes on the same setup. Moodle allows you to create your lesson plans, links to activities,
workshops, etc. Brian Foley feels Moodle works best with a small group of students, 50 or so. Moodle would not replace WebCT. WebCT is designed for a larger user base.

One major difference from WebCT is that the first page is viewable to the public where articles, a discussion board, etc. can be posted. With WebCT you must log in first to view anything.

Installation of Moodle on the campus servers was difficult and Brian Foley recommended not using it this way. He thought installing it on a dedicated server was an easier way. The security issue needs to be explored to establish safety steps.

Steve Fitzgerald related that at a conference in Monterey Bay Open Sources, such as WebCT, Moodle, and Saki, were discussed. Fitzgerald would be interested in knowing how many faculty members would be interested in using a tool like Moodle and which version. This way he could proactively arrange the support needed if there was enough interest to justify the effort.

Brian Foley explained that he was using Wiki technology, which allows everybody to edit a web page. The web page is open to the world so you can go in and add information pertaining to the topic discussed. Foley favored Media Wiki. This is another open source software package that has interesting features.

**HR, Financial, SOLAR Update & Direction – Guest Chuck Moore**

Chuck Moore, CMS Project Director was introduced to the committee and informed them of the projects he was working on. He envisions his role as a liaison with the CMS central group at the Chancellor’s office and the rest of the campus. He started with the data center move and is now developing a project plan for the student administration functions which will go into production midyear, 2007. This new upgrade to PeopleSoft will have a tutorial portion that will give the heavy users easy instruction on how to use the product. Chuck Moore is consulting with HR, Student Administration and ITR to develop non-technical directions for successful use of the software.

**Portal Update-Grading Page – Guest Rick Shaw**

The grading page revisions are ready to be activated. Rick Shaw explained that the search field was replaced with a static drop down menu or you can manually type in the grade. The yellow save button from the bottom of the page was moved to the top, next to the “approve/submit” button. To submit the grades 100% must be filled in. This means every student in the class must have a grade to submit. There was no change to the existing security system. Rick Shaw further explained that once the submit button is clicked, you will get a confirmation screen. This screen allows you to click OK and submit the grades or Cancel and return to edit the grades. Once the grades have been approved, the Pending/Save and Approved/Submit buttons will be gray and disabled. The final revision is a confirmation email stating that your approved grade roster referenced above has been received by SOLAR. Rick Shaw discussed the steps to communicate the changes to SOLAR. Patrice is updating the website. Email messages will be distributed regarding the changes. Concern was raised that 2
weeks was not enough time for training. Steve Fitzgerald said this issue was discussed at great length and the improvements far outweighed the training issue.

7. **Policy**

a) *Email Retention Policy* – Steve Fitzgerald requested feed back to assist in writing this policy. The first draft should be ready in September.

b) *Downtime Policy* – As discussed in the previous meeting, maintenance on servers is performed late and Steve Fitzgerald would like to move the maintenance to Wednesday from 7:00-10:00 PM for CMS related servers and Friday, from 6:00-12:00 AM for all other maintenance. There will still be a 2 weeks notice when the maintenance will be done. A draft of the policy was handed out at the last meeting and again at this meeting. The change in maintenance time for servers was put to a vote and unanimously endorsed.

c) *Patch Management Policy* – Guest Al Arboleda

Al Arboleda, ISO for CSUN, is working on a policy for patch management. All CSU campuses are developing a uniform security procedure for desktop management and Al Arboleda is part of this committee. The policy will place the responsibility with the campus to insure that computers are safe before they are connected to the campus network. The CSU committee has determined that the biggest problem is to have up-to-date software on the computers so patches can be installed. A part of the policy will state that operating system patches should be installed within a 24 hour period. This can only be accomplished using a Patch Management Tool. Discussions are ongoing on how to fund this tool, or the policy will be adjusted accordingly.

Al Arboleda informed the committee that he is accessing the campus as a whole to identify vulnerability. He has started passively scanning the ITR department to determine the vulnerabilities. Printers were found to be the biggest risks. He will then expand the scanning to the entire campus and document his findings to assess the level of security needed and present it to the campus.

The policy will have exceptions for specialized, dedicated computers that need to run older software, such as microscopes and telescopes.

It was stated that certain individuals were receiving stock spam. Steve Fitzgerald explained that this is called a fishing attack and it is hard to stop. ITR is, however, taking steps to mitigate this type of spam. Delete the file, do not respond to the email and you will be safe.

Meeting adjourned at 4:00 PM. Next meeting is on September 8, 2006