Academic Technology Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING: 10/02/09  
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE: 12/04/09
Submitted Exec. Committee:_________  
Approved by Exec. Committee:_________  
Submitted Academic Senate:_________  
Approved by Academic Senate:_________

Members Present: Hilary Baker, Shan Barkataki, Wei Cao, Kimberly Embleton, Jacek Polewczak, Magdy Rizk, Ashley Skylar (chair), Wayne Smith, Holli Tonyan.

Excused: Robert Lopez, Mary Schaffer

Absent: Jeff Wiegley

Guests: David Levin, Chris Olsen, Paul Schantz, Steven Stepanek, Diane Stephens, Chris Xanthos

Minutes: Jennifer De Iuliis

Meeting commenced at 1:15pm, waited for a quorum.

1) Announcement - none

2) Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the 05/01/09 and 9/04/09 meetings were reviewed and discussed. The May 1st minutes were approved, amended with the changes provided by Polewczak and with one typo change as noted by Smith. The September 4th minutes were approved, amended with the changes noted by Cao and Tonyan.

3) Previous Meeting Action Item Review

Software downloads Handout titled – Faculty Software Purchasing (web screen shot)

Baker shared a screen shot of the web page which shows faculty software available through different sources. Baker noted that this was in response to questions about software licensing options on campus. Tonyan asked if the list included department level information. Baker noted that the page includes CSU system-wide and CSUN campus-wide software agreements and does not include department-specific licensing.

Tonyan noted that she believed that Schaffer’s inquiry from the previous meeting related to the process of software purchases across campus. Baker acknowledged that she forwarded Schaffer’s question from the previous meeting to Spero Bowman and Diane Stephens and noted that they would both be joining the ATC meeting later to discuss the Academic Affairs budget.

Barkataki asked if Dreamweaver version 8 is available. Levin stated the version currently available from the software download page resulted from an agreement worked out with Macromedia by the Chancellor’s Office. Barkataki suggested the site license is probably outdated by now. Baker stated there has been a push on campus to use Contribute and other
software. She offered to ask the procurement staff at the Chancellor’s Office about the status of more recent Dreamweaver negotiations.

Cao shared that she recently purchased a personal computer and purchased the Microsoft suite of software through the bookstore and a colleague did the same. Cao’s colleague said that the Microsoft software crashed the computer and so Cao wanted to know whether she should advise that her colleague contact Microsoft or the bookstore. Xanthos noted that the $12 discounted rate is a “one-time load purchase” after which users must purchase a new license at the regular price. Several committee members recommended that Cao talk to the campus bookstore not Microsoft regarding this issue.

Class Lists
Handout titled – Two Ways for Faculty to Email Students in a Class (web screen shot)

Baker shared the instructions for using Majordomo class lists and the email feature of the class roster.

Several committee members proposed enhancements to the instructions. Smith suggested that section II. Emailing Students from the Class Roster, item #3, may be inaccurate noting also that the addresses are not comma delineated. Tonyan noted that the instructions say that the addresses open in the BCC section of the email, but she has found that this feature does not work in webmail. Smith recommended that IT test using different clients.

Smith suggested that updating the class lists more than once per week would be preferred. Xanthos asked if the suggestion would be through the entire semester or only until census. Smith stated it would make sense to update more frequently and only until census.

Tonyan noted that when students reply to the class lists, the reply goes to all on the list so she informs her students of this at the top of each email. Tonyan suggested including instructions on how to download the lists and then copy and paste them, which she has found to be the easiest way to use the lists.

Smith suggested that instructions for using class lists in Moodle would also be helpful.

Polewczak asked if it is possible to obtain a list of students with their email addresses. Smith stated this is available; however, the wait time for the download is often slow. Smith noted that there is probably an option to do a query without all of the class information downloading, but that this would be an enhancement to SOLAR. He also shared that he believes the data in SOLAR is outdated; an example of data which could be more useful on this campus would be to change class rank status to number of units completed.

4) Chair’s Report
a. ACAT Report

Thin Client - Skylar shared that the thin client pilot was discussed beginning with a few lecture rooms in Sierra Hall to be piloted in the spring semester. Provost Hellenbrand asked that the group provide him with a document of the cost savings which would be achieved over time with the thin client implemented.

ATI - provided a brief update, which can be found on the ATI web page.
Uniform desktop solutions - Spero Bowman discussed possibilities. Tonyan asked if these solutions were for PC’s only. Baker suggested she inquire when Spero arrives later at this meeting.

b. Joint ERC/ATC meeting – Skylar met with Sandra Chong, chair of ERC. The next scheduled ERC meeting on Tuesday, November 10th from 2-4pm will be a joint meeting. Skylar will send out an agenda in advance of the meeting. The ATC and ERC committees will hold a joint meeting during ATC’s regular scheduled meeting time on March 5th from 1-3pm.

5) CIO’s Report
a. Technology cost saving strategies (Baker)
Baker noted that during these budget constrained times, we are seeking to identify technology cost saving strategies and efficiencies across the university. She provided the following suggestions:

- Minimize duplication - e.g. server consolidation
- Review CSUN technology services and determine if there are some that can be reduced or eliminated.
- Evaluate which CSUN services should be provided centrally by the IT division as an enterprise (university-wide) service and which are best provided locally (by colleges or departments).
- Share technology services with other campuses. She described current work already underway with other CSU campuses to share Information Security services, conduct a virtual computer lab pilot, and share LMS hosting of Moodle.
- Adopt newer technologies such as server and desktop virtualization and setup of a CSU private cloud.

Baker encouraged the ATC members to consider these suggestions and offer additional ideas for CSUN technology cost savings and efficiencies.

b. Gmail (Chris Xanthos)
Handout titled – Faculty & Student Email Update, September 29, 2009

Xanthos stated that on Monday (September 28th) Gmail went live with the new student and alumni email accounts. Currently 69,101 accounts are provisioned and 19,144 users have logged in. The majority of users are using the web interface to access their email.

Xanthos noted that after the email communications about Gmail was sent to students, there was a major increase to the number of hits on the IT Gmail FAQ’s web page. Xanthos explained that students could migrate their email using a tool located on the portal until October 30th. All mail sent to @csun.edu is being auto-forwarded through November.

Barkataki shared he has experienced a delay on mail and that some of his students did not realize they could still access the webmail account. Since it shows “faculty” on the site, it is not very clear. Xanthos has not heard of any reported delays and encourages members to contact the Help Center for any issues to be tracked and addressed
appropriately. Embelton shared that it may not be clear to students the faculty are not changing to the same format of my.csun.edu.

Xanthos shared that all class lists, Majordomo lists, Moodle and Web CT have been updated with the new email addresses. Tonyan had an issue with Moodle passwords that would not allow some of her students to login so she directed them to contact the IT Help Center. Xanthos stated he and Levin will have to check on this issue with Moodle.

Barkataki asked how to resolve the issue of external accounts which have username linked to @csun.edu mail accounts; one example is Turnitin. Tonyan noted that it can vary, since she is aware of some of her students that changed their email address to an alternate username. Xanthos offered to provide a list of the provisioned accounts if a vendor needs to use them and asked ATC members to send him an email requesting the information.

Faculty email migration
Xanthos shared that now that the Gmail implementation is completed, the IT email team is focusing on the faculty email migration to Exchange. The migration will occur over a weekend in November. He explained that much of the technical preparation work was completed over the summer. Polewczak asked about the default mailbox size. Xanthos stated there is no quota and that mailboxes will be set initially with 500mb of storage, and increased automatically as needed.

Xanthos noted that communications to faculty regarding the email migration will begin shortly. Tonyan asked about MAC compatibility. Xanthos stated the Entourage client for MAC currently features the light version of Exchange/Outlook.

Baker stated a web site describing the faculty email migration will be developed and will include FAQ’s. Communications will be sent to faculty via broadcast email and via paper copies too if members feel this would also be helpful. Tonyan suggested broadcast email messages and not paper copies. She added that it would be useful to send information to department chairs because many faculty in her college are discouraging unnecessary paper copies of documents. Smith agreed that paper copies would not be useful; however the flyers posted around campus are useful.

6) Discussion Topics

Academic Affairs Budget Planning (Spero Bowman, Diane Stephens)

Bowman and Stephens presented details of the Academic Affairs planning process as outlined in the document they distributed. Bowman stated that the information in the planning document is being shared to explain Academic Affairs’ approach to the budget reduction planning process. He referred to page 4 of the handout and noted the $41 million dollar reduced budget for the campus, of which 70% is assumed to apply to Academic Affairs. The tables on the page outline possible base and one time savings, including the required 10.8% enrollment reduction, reducing student/faculty ratio’s (SFR) and technology savings.
The document places specific emphasis on reduction planning for Academic Affairs with a goal of $700,000 in annual savings in technology expenditures for the division. Bowman noted there will be consultations with each college and several committees (ATC, ACAT, and others) to discuss ideas and opportunities to achieve the cost savings.

Bowman noted that the majority of the work to complete the plan is being done within each college. The revised draft plan will be presented to Provost Hellenbrand in November and the final plan presented to the President by December 1st. Bowman encouraged members to discuss further with their college and provide ideas to assist in the planning process. Smith asked if the draft budget document could be shared. Bowman said this was acceptable and that it will be discussed at the Faculty Senate Meeting in a few weeks.

a. Moodle (David Levin)
   
   Handout titled – Moodle: Preparing for Spring, October 2, 2009

   Levin provided a document which outlined plans for Moodle in the spring semester. He is sharing this information with faculty in all the colleges. The information in the document is also available on the web. Levin shared that a form will be available soon for faculty to submit requests for new courses. He explained that there are tools available to assist with migration from WebCT to Moodle. There are open lab sessions scheduled offering assistance with content migration. Levin shared information about integration with other systems, such as Elluminate and Turnitin. He stated these systems will be integrated into a more seamless environment in Moodle next year.

   Skylar noted that she had seen few workshops in October on the web site. Levin explained that the workshops were reduced due to low enrollment; however, he has been scheduling Moodle training sessions in several colleges and encourages members to inform department chairs that such training is available. Barkataki asked whether there is any feedback regarding the online training available from Lynda.com. Levin shared the training has only been available for one month and feedback has been positive. The training shows users how to prepare content as well as use of the system and Levin encourages members to view some of the sessions.

   Baker explained that an email communication will be sent to all faculty with WebCT courses and that there will need to be a push to migrate the remaining WebCT content before the end of spring semester. This is a firm date because the campus does not plan to incur the costs associated with renewing the WebCT contract. Levin noted that there are approximately 700-900 faculty with WebCT content and we need to ensure that their courses are migrated to Moodle if needed. Smith noted that this faculty number probably doesn’t reflect the heavy use made of the LMS by the College of Business for required core exams. Levin agreed to follow up with the College of Business; Smith suggested working directly with Richard Tontz.

   Barkataki asked if there were any issues with the chat feature, noting that he was recently in a chat session and kept getting logged out and had to keep signing back in, although his students did not have any problem. Levin encouraged members to report issues to the IT Help Center so they can address them with Moodlerooms.
Tonyan requested an electronic version of Levin’s handout to share with her college. After discussion, the committee agreed that a web link would be best because FAQ’s are continually updated.

Tonyan noted a sense of urgency to inform faculty that WebCT will no longer be available after May. Skylar shared concerns about courses changing in fall, but are still being taught in summer in her college. This makes the timing more difficult to complete the transition to Moodle, although her main concern is around assessment. Levin stated the migration of quizzes and questions migrate from WebCT to Moodle well and the assessment piece works pretty well, but the organization piece is the issue when migrating content. Cao asked who to contact with questions. Levin stated inquiries can be sent to him directly or to ftc@csun.edu.

Barkataki inquired about the legal requirement to retain educational materials for a year and how this will impact content in WebCT. Levin explained that the WebCT content will be archived for compliance purposes only.

b. ATC Sub-groups (Ashley Skylar)
Skylar mentioned that she had discussed the idea of sub-groups with Steven Stepanek and Polewczak. She suggested the groups would be around short term and long term, “wish list” topics. An example is communicating with a Moodle community and this could be a shared report for others to view. Another example is a group on budget which could provide feedback to Bowman and Baker. Skylar would like members to provide her with their interest and any other ideas for sub-group options.

c. Scheduling Hybrid Courses (Ashley Skylar)
Hillary Hertzog, chair of EPC, contacted Skylar and shared that they are making recommendations in the next few months on how hybrid and online courses are designated in the schedule of classes. Skylar shared that she looked into this over the past week to see how other universities are handling this issue and asked her department secretary to pull up the information for our campus. She found our campus information required a lot of scrolling to view all of the information. Skylar encouraged members to reach out to their colleagues at other universities or campuses to assist with gathering some information for ATC to share with EPC.

d. ATC November Meeting & Joint November Meeting
Members approved a motion to cancel the regular scheduled ATC meeting on Friday, November 5th due to the joint ATC/ERC scheduled on Tuesday, November 10th.

7) Department/College Issues - none

8) Policy - none

9) New Business
Smith shared that at CSU, Channel Islands, they have announced a reduction in campus committees and he asked if members had heard of anything similar at Northridge. Baker stated she could not comment on faculty committees and noted we are reviewing some of our administrative committees.
Smith shared that upon his review of ATC’s meeting minutes and agenda topics, a more accurate representation for the committee would be to change the title (no other changes) to “Academic Technology and Systems Committee” and asked about discussing this further and presenting to faculty senate. Skylar noted due to some members that departed a little early there was no longer a quorum and she suggested revisiting the topic in December at the regular meeting since November will be a joint meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 3:05 PM.