Academic Technology Committee

MINUTES OF MEETING:   12/04/09
APPROVED BY COMMITTEE:  2/05/10
Submitted Exec. Committee:_________  Approved by Exec. Committee:_________  
Submitted Academic Senate: _________  Approved by Academic Senate: _________

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

Excused: n/a

Absent: Jeff Wiegley

Guests:  David Levin, Chris Olsen, Carol Shubin, Steven Stepanek, Chris Xanthos

Minutes: Jennifer De Iuliis

1)  Announcements – None.

2)  Approval of Minutes – The minutes of the 10/02/09 meeting were approved.

3)  Approval of minutes of ATC/ERC meeting – Will be sent later in December for review.

4)  Previous Meeting Action Item Review

Dreamweaver – Levin stated the latest version of Dreamweaver can be purchased from ASAP, where a CSU discount is available for purchase of a suite of products or individual product purchases. The current version, Dreamweaver 8, that is available for download has unlimited licenses in perpetuity for the campus.

Barkataki expressed concerns with the expense involved to purchase the new version for use in a lab; he prefers some of the added features in the new version.

Software downloads – Embleton inquired about Windows 7 accessible from the download page. Baker noted that this isn’t currently available from the download page because Windows 7 is not yet recommended. It is currently being tested to ensure that it will work with our campus applications before planning the upgrade for all existing computers across campus - probably during next academic year. Embleton expressed concerns because her new computer has the program loaded already. Olsen has done some testing and recommended that she download software to review compatibility.
5) Chair’s Report
   a. ACAT Report
      Skylar noted the ACAT meeting was a few days after the joint ATC/ERC meeting held in November and the agenda items were the same information presented in the joint meeting. A brief ATI update was given and there will be more emphasis forthcoming on compliance across the campus.
   b. Faculty email list – Jennifer Matos, Faculty President, asked Skylar to bring this item up for discussion with the committee. Faculty members were using an email list that was set up and owned by the Faculty Senate office as a discussion board. Several weeks ago, the list was shut down because of emails that were sent not from the Senate office. Many faculty members were concerns about the email distribution. Tonyan shared that many of the emails were being sent to all members on the list. Stepanek questioned whether the Senate is the appropriate place to sponsor a faculty discussion board. Lopez suggested a blog format and Embelton suggested using a wiki. Smith expressed concerns that wikis are a more public forum. Tonyan shared excerpts from an email sent by Ellis Godard, titled Who Shut Down the Faculty Email List, which suggested the use of two separate lists to be named facultyannounce and facultydiscuss. Godard also noted the campus is using a freeware list tool and a change to a commercial product could possibly provide an enhanced feature set. Some members noted that two lists would perhaps be a good idea and that they have seen senders use the “reply to all” in error on other lists. Olsen explained that the Majordomo tool can be set up to allow for a moderated list that provides the option of “reply to sender” or “reply to group”, however, this type of setting does not allow any attachments or rich text. Tonyan suggested keeping the regular list for the faculty office to send out their communications and then set up another option for faculty to communicate among themselves. Lopez suggested instead of an all faculty list, this could be set up for faculty to subscribe to, if they choose. Skylar will speak with Levin offline to discuss using Moodle as an option for a group forum.

6) CIO’s Report
   a. Baker
      *Handout titled - Technology Changes with Possible Faculty Impact, December 4, 2009*

      Baker shared a document that outlined some of the upcoming changes during the 2010 spring and summer semesters. She noted that not all changes will be in place by the start of semester. Spring 2010 is the last semester of the LMS migration from WebCT to Moodle. Changes planned for Spring 2010 include a single phone number for smart classroom support, thin client pilot, virtual computer lab pilot, Majordomo software upgrade (may require information on new look and feel), and new forgot password reset question setup. Changes planned for Summer 2010 include an Exchange 2010 email upgrade and possible “n” wireless enhancement.

      Polewczak shared that while teaching in a smart classroom in Jacaranda Hall, he noticed the phone did not have an emergency contact information sticker, which he finds helpful.
Polewczak also noted having encryption as a proposed security policy for mobile devices, that encryption is very complicated on them. Baker stated that we need to see what the Chancellor’s Office provides regarding the policy and then review the options that will be available.

Tonyan shared that once the awareness training came out; she began to further think about information security and asked if student ID numbers are confidential. Baker stated that there are levels of data classifications (confidential, internal, and public) and certain combinations of data are also considered confidential or sensitive.

Lopez asked if any other institutions were reviewed regarding their use of encryption because although he understands the need for security he has noticed in his military work that sometimes it can make work more difficult if there’s too much security in place. Baker shared that discussions at the system-wide level have been around how tight these proposed security and other policies will be.

Rizk asked about any potential policy regarding file encryption for documents as well. Olsen shared that Windows 7 has the option of having the entire hard disk encrypted.

b. Faculty email update (Chris Xanthos)

Xanthos shared the migration process went as expected. There was a higher than usual volume of calls into the Help Center; the two main categories were webmail users asking how to use the new environment and client configuration questions. Xanthos shared that the Help Center was monitoring dropped calls and hang ups to ensure they would not miss anyone and they called back all of these missed calls. Xanthos noted that a few known issues exist, some Polewczak had documented and the information on the web is being updated as needed. The final phase of the migration has occurred over the past several weekends to allow us to switch off the Mirapoint mail routing by December 15th.

Embleton stated she seems to be receiving more SPAM since the migration was complete. Xanthos explained that no changes to the SPAM configurations have been made and encouraged reporting the specific types or frequency of issues to the Help Center to review. Lopez noted he is seeing a lot of his student email messages from their Yahoo or other accounts going into SPAM. Schaffer explained she is trying to educate her students by reminding them to use their assigned my.csun.edu accounts, since the university policy states the use of email is the primary means of communication., Xanthos shared that approximately 70% of students had auto forward set to other external email accounts, and that perhaps with the move to Gmail, there will be fewer. Tonyan suggested updating the FAQ’s to note the potential of external email accounts being perceived as SPAM.

Polewczak shared that a few of his colleagues are MAC users and some are unhappy with the light version of Outlook (full version requires the use of Windows). Xanthos explained that the planned email upgrade in 2010 will have the full version available. Tonyan shared she is a MAC user and called the Help Center a few times after the migration. She received very helpful assistance from Chris Sales on using contacts and switched to Entourage version 08 which she felt is better and suggested putting this on the FAQ’s (if information is not already there).
Xanthos asked members if it would be helpful to provide any help sessions to share knowledge or advanced user training. Lopez said that often any issues or questions are very individualized. Tonyan liked the idea of having a variety of resource options available. Schaffer commented the Help Center has very helpful and suggested that perhaps at the end of each call, they could ask if clients would like additional assistance and collect the data to help determine if there is a need. Tonyan noted the ATI web page has a table of contents on the side, which she feels is a good format when listing information. Rizk mentioned the Lynda.com online Moodle training is useful and inquired whether there is training available for Outlook. Xanthos shared that Microsoft has some online training options. Baker stated it would be good to check with Lynda.com to see if they could put up some information that would be helpful for all CSU campuses to utilize.

c. Virtual Computer lab pilot using NCSU open source software (Chris Olsen)

Handout titled – Virtual Computer Labs - CSUN Pilot Project, December 2009

Olsen shared that North Carolina State University began their virtual lab several years ago and Northridge, along with a few other CSU campuses are utilizing some of their licenses for a pilot project. Olsen explained the virtual lab has various applications available and behind the scenes you provision software to use from any computer. This environment provides many conveniences and ease of use as well as cost savings. The test pilot infrastructure will be set up in February to early March. There will be a limited number of participants in the pilot to help minimize expense. Olsen explained that a variety of software will be included in the pilot and the requirements are to have a computer and access to a DSL or better internet connection.

Rizk noted he and Schaffer are in the same college and use many of the same software programs and questioned how the software would be determined and how much access would be available. Baker explained for the pilot the software has already been determined, however beyond the pilot, the Dean’s would be asked to provide a list of software.

Schaffer asked what happens if a user is logged in and then a user forgets to logout. Olsen pointed to the back page of the handout, which has a screen shot that shows the process for checking out programs and a reservation timeframe option is available. He further explained the system would automatically log out users after a period of inactivity.

Schaffer expressed concerns about students having adequate access to a computer system and suggested possibly reserving computers in the library for the students. Olsen stated this would be a good idea and noted that the benefit of the virtual lab is that once you have an account created, it can be accessed from any computer in any location (on or off campus), since the access is via the web. Barkataki noted it is an image that is being pulled down and he has some classes where students would need to be given administrator rights to access some programs, which is time consuming and with the virtual environment he could run an image for a class and then switch to a different one for the next class. Olsen stated fresh copies of images would be available; however, data is not stored.
Polewczak noted while participating in some testing from home with a DSL connection, that the performance of graphics are not that good, but on campus they are much better. He is interested in any server/server cluster data performance information that NC State may be able to provide. Baker agreed it would be good to get this information and then be able to share any suggestions about certain software and what to expect from any know performance issues.

Baker noted that updates on the pilot project will be kept on the meeting agenda over the next six months. Smith suggested changing the wording to “value added vs. cost savings” or listing value added first; which is in-line with the message Provost Hellenbrand has been sharing regarding use of technology. He also offered to participate in testing and added that vendors may change their format for purchases and renewals because the virtual lab technology will be a loss of income for them.

Polewczak asked about the expense involved for the pilot. Baker shared that the Chancellor’s Office has provided funding for the pilot, with the exception of the cost of our campus’ faculty, staff and students time spent on the pilot.

7) Department/College Issues

Class roster – Smith stated the roster names are coming out of order and he and Tina Reed are working on the grade roster to review the names are in order.

SPSS – Smith shared that SPSS 18 is now available per the email he received from Steve Dan, however the IT web page is not updated yet.

Linking labs and lectures (SOLAR) – Tonyan shared some issues with linking labs and lectures in SOLAR, which cause some confusion for students. She also noted permission numbers do not have flexibility in SOLAR which caused some issues. Baker noted that Eric Forbes works directly with the college SOLAR coordinators and encouraged her to contact him directly. Baker also noted the names of the college SOLAR coordinators are listed on the web.

Skylar noted that she had spoken to Baker and her SOLAR coordinator earlier in the month regarding an issue she experienced and she urged members to directly reach out at anytime if they have any questions or issues in lieu of waiting for the monthly meetings.

8) Discussion Topics

a. Online and Hybrid designations – resolution (Skylar)
   Handout titled – Samples of other University Hybrid/Online Definitions
   Handout titled – Hybrid Courses, Social and Behavioral Sciences

Skylar has communicated several times with Hillary Hertzog of the Educational Policies Committee (EPC) regarding the definitions of online and hybrid courses. Skylar would like the committee members to review the documents she has provided and through the spring, to work together with EPC to jointly have a resolution. She would like ATC to come up with definitions for CSUN, which vary across the CSU
campuses. Skylar said that a clear definition is needed and she would like members to send their thoughts to her and she will compile the information for an initial draft.

Rizk questioned if the CSU has done a review of this information already. Baker said that Steven Stepanek would possibly know since this would be under the system-wide academic senate, in which he participates.

Skylar requested the members to take some time to review and send her the definitions and she noted that Hertzog has also just begun work on these definitions.

9) Policy
   a. Handout titled – *Draft Resolution on Implementation Guidelines for Technology Changes that Impact Faculty Instruction, November 10, 2009*

   This draft resolution was initially presented and discussed at the joint ATC/ERC meeting held in November. Each individual committee is reviewing further and deciding how to proceed.

   Tonyan shared the resolution makes sense for those people who were upset about the email migration weekend, having something on paper helps show this was a hardship.

   Smith asked whether there were any other details on the reason for the resolution, and noted that if it was only due to the email migration, then it is more of a management communication issue.

   Skylar noted she spoke with Sandra Chong after the joint meeting and they felt from that discussion, the resolution could go either way and could improve communications, if it is moved forward.

   Schaffer spoke with a colleague who was upset about the timing and felt it should have been done in the summer (the colleague travels over summer), but she noted that still does not work for everyone because many people are teaching and working during the summer as well. Schaffer also shared she didn’t understand why people were so upset and felt sufficient notice was given.

   Baker shared that the discussion of the migration was shared around ATC and with other groups while it was being determined if there would be a one or two weekend outage. Once IT confirmed that the outage would only take one weekend, the details about the weekend date was shared with faculty via a broadcast email. At the Faculty Senate meeting, a Senator asked why the outage was not planned over the Thanksgiving holiday. Baker shared that there were several reasons the Thanksgiving holiday was not used including IT staff availability over a holiday weekend and the need to have enough time between the email migration and the Mirapoint contract expiration in December to complete all the post-go live changes.

   Lopez stated the writing of the document is not good and very vague. Barkataki stated he would not be in support of the resolution. Polewczak questioned what kind of timing the document is referring to.
Barkataki noted that it is easy through alternate ways for faculty to still get access to their email and questioned why the faculty members that were concerned didn’t make these changes.

Tonyan expressed that advance notice would need to be very early, such as the beginning of the semester. Barkataki noted that advance notice was given.

Rizk questioned how the resolution would change anything.

Lopez suggested that having the information in the minutes of the Executive Senate meeting would be sufficient and that a resolution was not needed.

Schaffer shared that the students frequently do not get advance notification about any type of changes (i.e. fee increases).

Smith motioned not to approve the resolution, Barkataki seconded. Seven (7) members voted in favor of not approving the resolution and two (2) members abstained.

10) New Business - none

Schaffer inquired about the Master of Library Science that is currently being offered on campus from another university. Embleton stated the University of North Texas is conducting the course and has been here several times already and she has had an opportunity to meet many of the instructors.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM.