

University Council for Academic Technologies (UCAT)
January 21, 2011, 1:30-2:30 pm
ITC, Room 226
Meeting MINUTES

Members:

Ed Bensman – Engineering, Casey Cockerham – UG Student, Steve Corcelli—Science, Alan DeFrees—Architecture, Mark Dehmlow – Library, Rob Easley – MCoB, Ed Edmonds – Law School, Mike Hildreth – Science, Bill McDonald – MCoB,

Members Absent:

Lance Askildson - A&L, Patrick Flynn – Engineering, Michael Kirsch – Law School, Ted Mandell – A&L, Kevin Mueller – Grad Student

Ex-Officio Members:

Kevin Barry – Kaneb Ctr., Paul Brenner—CRC, Ron Kraemer—Chair & CIO, Harold Pace—Registrar, Jarek Nabrzyski—CRC, Harold Pace—Registrar, Carole Pilkinton—Library, Peggy Rowland—OIT, Paul Turner—OIT

1. Welcome

Mr. Kraemer welcomed members to UCAT in the new calendar year. As there are still some new members joining the committee, brief introductions were made by members.

2. Approval of November 18, 2010 minutes

Prof. Easley offered two corrections and one additional paragraph to the draft of the minutes which had been circulated for member approval; Peggy Rowland read those changes to members.

A motion was made by Prof. McDonald to approve the minutes of November 18, 2010 as amended; it was seconded by Prof. Hildreth. The minutes were unanimously approved.

3. Committee Reports

Course Management Systems, Rob Easley, Chair

Prof. Easley reported that the Course Management System (CMS) selection process is moving forward successfully. The negotiation with Blackboard has been completed, resulting in an extension of two academic years to the existing contract which ends June 30, 2011. This was a significant decision for Blackboard because it pushes the ‘end of life’ back for the current product in use at Notre Dame (Blackboard Vista 8). In addition, the committee continues to do due diligence on other CMS options. A proposed contract is expected today from Sungard for establishing a hosted offering of Sakai by Sungard partner rSmart, which will be used to evaluate issues related to integration of Sakai with the Banner Student Information System and in a wider pilot open to faculty and students in Fall 2011. CMS committee members and OIT staff will testing Sakai and performing a gap analysis through the summer. This effort will identify any necessary needs for

customization. Using this staged approach to evaluation the committee will build a detailed cost estimate of the transition costs of migrating from Notre Dame's existing CMS to Sakai over the next two years. Assuming the pilot goes well the new CMS will be available for general faculty and student use in academic year 2012-13 and become the main OIT supported CMS in academic year 2013-2014.

Members discussed the CMS selection process. Mr. Kraemer noted that CNBC is working on a story which criticizes Blackboard; he had been called for to provide a quote. Kraemer merely reported the due diligence process which the university is properly engaged in, as it moves forward on selection of a CMS. He also related that Duke announced last week its move to Sakai, after the completion of a lengthy due evaluation process. Duke has offered to share its analysis of systems they evaluated with ND. The University of Colorado also has recently announced a move to Desire2Learn, having recently completed the same sort of analysis. Prof. Easley mentioned that the subcommittee analyzed D2L as an option to replace Blackboard but decided to continue to do an in depth evaluation of Sakai and its ability to fully integrate with Banner. Turner noted that some other universities who currently use D2L had also been consulted. Kraemer thanked Prof. Easley for his report.

Learning Environments , Kevin Barry, Chair

Mr. Barry reported on the name change of the subcommittee, briefly relating members' discussion of what are the foci of their work. The committee is concerned with how and when and where access to technology devices happens on the ND campus. The group hopes to shift to a more holistic attention about what students do to be able to learn. Barry said the group is moving forward on identifying potential projects.

Barry also reported on the proposed renovation of the DeBartolo student lounge. Because of the short time frame, there was not enough time to begin the structural work which had been planned during Winter Break 2010. Spring Break will also prove too short, so the work has been delayed until Summer, 2011.

Barry reported that the technology classroom, in DeBartolo B011, has reached completion; the space has taken shape as was envisioned, permitting collaboration between students at the in-room workstations connected to the central technology system. Consultations are undergoing with the faculty who are teaching in this space to address any issues which might arise. 50% of the time slots have been left open deliberately in order to be able to offer the space to faculty across the Arts and Letters college to try the space on a one-time basis. This should be an effective way to increase awareness of and expertise with the space and its tools. There are plans to convene the faculty who are using the space to share their experiences with one another and with staff, for the future improvement of the tools.

Paul Turner noted that the room is unscheduled on Wednesday and Friday afternoons, for any interested faculty to take a tour. The yearly Horizon report will be conducted in the space, as a way to bring faculty into the room.

Software Acquisition and Distribution, Paul Brenner, Chair

Paul Brenner was welcomed as the new chair of the committee. Kraemer noted that Brenner's CRC experience will be valuable here; he is eager to commence software acquisitions quickly. Kraemer noted that Brenner is seeking input from members as he reviews the open source solutions, the issues of licensing, and campus-wide collaboration on software. There should be a way to achieve efficiency on aggregating licenses, for instance. The overall goal Brenner aims for is making sure people have access to the tools they need. Brenner proposed holding conversations with faculty to determine that appropriate training is being offered on the kinds of tools they want to use. Paul Turner suggested that one possible area to open up is Google, and not just limited to Google apps.

Brenner stated that, as a member new to UCAT and to the subcommittee, he is open to all ideas that will make the subcommittee as successful as possible. The committee will focus on getting software available efficiently, establishing effective policies, and getting good software into the hands of faculty as fast as possible. Certainly, the open source tools need to be addressed with improved policy. Better explanations and better methods will be the watchword, with appropriate security.

Kraemer noted that at CRC an evaluation of the software being used has just been completed. Brenner said the next step is to communicate to the faculty that CRC is ready to make changes and get things working again.

Paul Turner asked about the funding for the subcommittee. Peggy Rowland said there is a separate, dedicated software budget which is continually exceeded. Kraemer, noting that we are in an era of more restrained spending, said that if there are needs, they should be articulated and conveyed to the administration.

CRC Faculty Advisory Committee, Mark Stadtherr, chair

As Prof. Stadtherr was absent, Jarek Nabrzyski reported on the subcommittee. It is conducting a 'swot analysis,' looking at weaknesses and potential threats to the CRC. The overarching goal is to draft a strategic plan for the upcoming 5 years. It is clear that CRC would like to strengthen its partnership with the faculty. In addition, space is a pressing issue for the CRC. There has recently been new space accessed and renovated, but the need is still pressing. CRC HPC operations group has been moved to the Union Station site, in downtown South Bend; this is not an ideal long term solution to the space issue.

Nabrzyski reported on a new CRC REU Site program to bring 13 undergraduate students (3 will be international students) to campus for internships. The program will be for 10 weeks, at a cost of \$5000.00 per student. CRC will also host a pre-college program for high school students.

The CRC has around 10 proposals pendings. It will be conducting some upcoming workshops. The Scientific Computing workshop will be held on February 23, 2011. And CRC will cosponsor a workshop in April, 2011 and another in October, 2011. Nabrzyski also reported that the partnership program, which currently has \$1 million in acquisitions and is growing, is going very well. The faculty have made a 'big buy in' to this program.

A portion of CRC services are conducted on a recharge basis. This program is also growing successfully. Kraemer asked if there is adequate bandwidth to campus. Nabrzyski noted that as research needs increased dramatically, and there are times when the network is saturated. At a recent meeting, the network people discussed what steps can be taken to ramp up quickly to the next level when needed. The issue is whether there is sufficient gear to consume the capacity. Design and cost estimates are being gathered to address this point. Nabrzyski noted that the annual survey might include questions which address capacity, which Kraemer agreed to and this has been added to the survey question list.

4. Student Updates

Kevin Mueller, graduate student representative

There was no report.

Casey Cockerham, undergraduate student representative

Mr. Cockerham reviewed the outcome of the printer update project, which was executed over the Winter Break, 2010. All the printers in the residence halls were replaced. The project went very smoothly; Mr. Kraemer thanked all OIT staff who worked very hard to coordinate this project during the lull between semesters. Student feedback has been very positive, Mr. Cockerham reported. The communication from OIT was very good, resulting in sufficient information, assistance and guidance on the changes. Signage posted by printers was clear and helpful, informing students about how to link into the printer from personal computers. Students received several informative emails to help with the adjustment. Student government offers its appreciation and thanks to all involved in this project.

Peggy Rowland provided an update from Brian Burchett: Xerox installed 35 new printers in 2 days, in residence halls, hallways, DBRT classroom printers, Jordan Hall and Stinson-Remick Hall. All 3600 printers were removed and replaced with 4510 printers. The old printers had a monthly duty cycle of 8,000 clicks. Residence halls were averaging 12,000-15,000 clicks/month. The new printers have a monthly duty cycle of 25,000 clicks. It is hoped that this increase will sufficiently meet the need. Students have been informed through a wide range of venues that they need to run an updated printer installer in order to get the new drivers and the updated Print@ND printer queues. Rowland reported overall satisfaction with the service offered by Xerox in this project. It is too early to make useful comparisons to use in the previous semester; no significant problems have been reported.

In discussion, Mr. Kraemer thanked those OIT staff who worked on this project over the Winter Break and through the holiday weekend. Members discussed what the long term trend is likely to be in printing—the move to digital was supposed to decrease the quantity of material printed, but the opposite appears to be true. Kraemer predicted national studies of this phenomenon, with particular concern for the amount of nonrenewable resources being used.

Prof. McDonald asked if it is possible to incentivize the use of dorm printers over the private, portable printers students bring with them. Members discussed plans to have knowledgeable staff present to provide information to students about the best ways of printing on campus. Paul

Turner noted that for several years, OIT has provided OIT ambassadors in all the dorms during the move-in period; this provides a nice human touch. Mr. Kraemer agreed that the public relations value of such a plan is significant; in addition, students learn early that OIT exists and can and will help. It was suggested that a team of trained students could also be dispatched to assist during this period.

Cockerham finished his report by noting that his committee is working on the learning management system, the ongoing project of improving course registration, and the long term project of developing a mobile system for the campus.

5. Class email account creation

Mr. Kraemer invited Prof. Michael Hildreth to address a concern he has raised in connection to the management of large numbers of student emails to faculty. As students become increasingly willing to 'fire off email messages' to faculty, the faculty, particularly those with large enrollments, are finding their single email account overwhelmed by messages. Managing email accounts into which all professional and work related emails come as well as this influx of student emails is becoming almost impossible. Prof. Hildreth reported that colleagues have received as many as 1000 emails from students per semester. In the interests of efficiency as well as well being, he asked if an email account could be coordinated with each course.

Prof. Hildreth noted that he has scheduled a meeting with Ms. Rowland and her group to discuss the technical issues surrounding this idea. Kraemer said this sounds like a brilliant idea; he asked what will be the best way to implement it? The primary concern, Prof. Hildreth said, is direct professor/student contact. Prof. DeFrees, Architecture, agreed that this tool would be very helpful. He has instituted a policy whereby he does not answer emails of students who are in residence on campus. He does read them all, but he cannot answer them and maintain efficiency.

Paul Turner reported that in the Sakai system, each course has its own identity, and folded into the CMS system is an email account connected with each course. The email can be directed to the private email system or contained within the system. The CMS keeps each course separate, so if a faculty member has 2 or more courses, each has its own CMS identity. They can be manipulated to come to one point for access by the instructor if desired. Turner noted that investigation of this kind of tool might be added to the cms analysis. Prof. Easley suggested that in such a system, it might be possible to configure it so that the TA answers the email. He noted that in the bigger picture, there are many potential tools that can be used by a cms; drilling down into the capabilities will be part of the cms analysis.

Turner suggested that for the time being, a discussion board might be used to answer general routine questions directed to the entire class. Prof. Hildreth agreed, and noted that the listserv concept aids in class wide communication. He also agreed that the cms is underutilized; Turner said there are many automatic tools built into cms that could be helpful to faculty. Also, the listserv is probably underutilized. Prof. Easley said these ideas might be part of the piloting program of the new cms when that program is commenced in Fall, 2011.

6. Top 5 issues for UCAT to address—Ron Kraemer

Mr. Kraemer reminded members that he has circulated a link to a survey, using Google's survey tool, which 5 members have already taken. The survey draws together and categorizes the issues which were submitted by members about the topics on which UCAT should focus. The results of the survey will contribute to forward-thinking about the long term functions of UCAT. The results of the survey will be discussed at the next meeting. Kraemer noted that other topics will rise to be added to this list; it represents the topics which are pressing currently. Members noted that the specificity of each item on the list is various—some topics are quite broad while others are either narrow or detailed with multiple subtopics. In addition, the perspective of each member when taking the survey influences what appears to be most pressing. Kraemer agreed that the results of the survey will provide some broad data—will the final vote focus on 10 key topics, sending a particular message? Will an item receive no votes, sending a message? One outcome for UCAT is that the survey will indicate to which of the important topics UCAT members want to devote its energies. All the topics are clearly important; those which UCAT does not take on will most likely still be addressed by OIT.

Members provided a few important topics for consideration of UCAT. Mr. Nabrzyski informed members that CRC is in the midst of building a mobile laboratory, to support a full time program. The plan is to redesign the lab in response to the demand rising from the research projects. He noted that the choice of a mobile platform has not yet been made.

Mr. Barry expressed some concerns about the questions of software, noting that the survey question elicited two different kinds of responses from him, suggesting that the results will need to be filtered very carefully to catch these nuances. Kraemer agreed that a professional survey mechanism may be called for to build the most beneficial information base. He suggested that as a first step, the results of this in-house survey can be gathered and used to determine the next step. He is open to input on the way to proceed. Ed Edmonds asked if the potential redesign of the committee structure within UCAT might address some of the multiple needs expressed by the variety and range of the list of topics. This might be a strategic approach to this problem; Kraemer agreed, noting that after the completion of the survey, the next step can be decided.

7. OIT Re-organization update

Mr. Kraemer distributed a chart of the new organization in OIT, which has been posted on the website for a couple of weeks. Some changes have been made to the top layer of management, which reports directly to the OIT director; this layer was flattened. The last vacancies have very recently been filled. There are also some shifts in reporting: Peggy Rowland's group will now report directly to the CIO, acknowledging that this group is on the front line of support, directly working with faculty, staff and students. Academic Technology, under Paul Turner, has also shifted and moved up for visibility under the Academic and Administrative Application Services team. It is a small organization and the funding level is still low, so the shift should raise its profile, provide increased visibility and, it is hoped, access to increased funding. Academic Technologies is a vital part of what OIT does, Kraemer noted, which the move indicates.

In addition, Enterprise Support Services has been created, although it is not a new position to the organization, but rather a shift from another slot. In this section, Kraemer has drawn together

under one director those organizations that serve the campus or other OIT organizations. Kraemer called the new director, Mike Chapple, the ‘director of connectedness,’ and he noted that Mr. Chapple will be a great addition to the staff. At IT Administrative Services, Doug Kroll is newly named director, hired from Mendoza College of Business. Kraemer thanked the interim director Trent Grocock, who has returned to his previous position in the central Budget Office after providing OIT with tremendous assistance during this interim.

Kraemer said he does not plan other changes in the foreseeable future; he noted, though, that a good organization needs to be responsive to change and development. He said the full list of staff will be available soon, as the new directors are finalizing their hiring.

Kevin Barry asked about the future direction of Academic Technologies, which Kraemer indicated might one day become a separate section. He noted that he has seen the strong connection between Academic Technologies team and Technology Enhanced Learning Spaces (directed by Brian Burchett). Kraemer said it was one of his hardest decisions to keep those two separate at this time. He spoke briefly about the horizontal working environment at OIT, even though the organizational structure is currently vertical. In his discussions with managers at all levels, he has emphasized the necessity of working horizontally; he will grade hard on collaborative efforts among the services. He also noted that Paul Turner and Brian Burchett have already established a strong and productive working relationship, so he is confident that this decision will not adversely impact the long term growth of each group.

Carole Pilkinton observed that the upward and more visible move of Academic Technologies putting it in direct connection with Administrative and Academic Services, should encourage the already vital creativity of that group. This move opens up the potential for growth and development. Kraemer agreed, noting that the campus is primed for this creativity; he reported that administration—John Affleck-Graves and the Provost—have indicated that this is one area in which investment will be made. Kraemer said ‘I look for great things here; it is the most important thing we do; none of us need be here if we do not have productive and creative development in academic technologies.’

As time had expired, Kraemer thanked members for their time, and the meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be held on March 9, 2011 in Room 226, ITC.