
University Council for Academic Technologies (UCAT)

May 15, 2008, 1:00-2:30 pm

Pasquerilla Center, Rm 105

Meeting MINUTES

Members Present:

Pascal Calarco – Library, Rob Easley – MCoB, Ed Edmonds – Law, Patrick Flynn – Engineering, Bill McDonald – MCoB, Mark Schurr – A&L, John Sherman – A&L, Mark Stadtherr – Engineering, Olaf Wiest -- CoS

Members Absent:

Imdat As, School of Architecture, Patrick Finnigan – Undergrad Student, Dan Gezelter - CoS, Mike Hildreth – CoS, Tam Chantam – Grad Student, Michael Kirsch – Law

Ex-Officio Members Present:

Craig Brummell – OIT, Dan Marmion – Library, Harold Pace – Registrar, Paul Turner – OIT, Gordon Wishon (Chair) – OIT, Dewitt Latimer – OIT, Alex Hahn-Kaneb

Ex-Officio Members Absent:

Peggy Rowland – OIT

Others present:

Will Bruckert, Brian Burchett, Craig Fitch, Dewitt Latimer – OIT

Welcome remarks and agenda review

Council Chair Gordon Wishon called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. He welcomed council members and guests to the final meeting of 2008 and gave a brief overview of the agenda. With a full agenda scheduled Mr. Wishon quickly moved to the Subcommittee Chair Reports.

1. Approval of minutes

The minutes for the April 2008 meeting were not available. When finished they will be sent to the Council by email at a later date for review and approval.

2. Subcommittee Reports

Course Management Systems — Rob Easley, Chair

Professor Rob Easley reported that the CMS subcommittee has not met since the last full committee meeting and therefore had no report or updates. Mr. Wishon reported a change in leadership at Blackboard, Inc. the current vendor for Notre Dame's CMS. Peter Segall, President of North American Higher Ed, has taken a new position with a different software company. Although Segall had been a principal connection for Notre Dame at Blackboard, Mr. Segall's move does not indicate any drastic change underway at Blackboard according to Mr. Wishon, and therefore should not have any impact on ongoing negotiations between Notre Dame and Blackboard to establish a new CMS contract. Robert Carlson, who has been with Blackboard for a number of years, has been appointed to succeed Mr. Segall. However Mr. Wishon assured the Council the OIT will carefully observe any impact the leadership change may have on the Notre Dame-Blackboard relationship as the CMS contract renewal and other lines of potential business with Blackboard are discussed.

Learning Spaces — Mark Schurr, Chair

Mark Schurr reported on the May 14, 2008 meeting of the Learning Spaces subcommittee. Topics discussed included the redesign of the LaFortune Student Center computer lab, an update on iTunes University, future redesign of the Hesburgh Library into a modern information commons style learning space, issues surrounding migration from Windows XP to Vista on the classroom and computer lab computers, and the need to nominate a new Chair for the subcommittee for 2008-2009.

Subcommittee member Brian Burchett, Manager of Classrooms and Clusters for the OIT, asked UCAT members for any feedback on the final drawings submitted by Professor Imdat As architecture studio students as one of their class projects. The students' design drawings were posted on the walls of the meeting room. Students working in groups created five alternatives for modernizing the LaFortune Student Center basement computer lab into a dynamic and functional learning space. The student design alternatives will be posted in the LaFortune computer lab area early in the Fall semester for feedback from students. The subcommittee group will review student comments and move forward to review and approve a final design so the renovation can begin in December 2008 for completion on schedule in January 2009.

Burchett noted the impressive job and professional effort by the students working on this innovative project.

Subcommittee member Paul Turner, Manager of Academic Technologies in the OIT, briefly updated the Council on the progress to date working with Apple to develop iTunes University for Notre Dame. iTunes U provides the potential to deliver audio and video captured in the classroom but will take a concentrated effort by the OIT and other academic and administrative units on campus to realize the promise.

The redesign of the first and second floor of Hesburgh Library may potentially include another redesign of the first floor public computer learning space and is of major interest to the Learning Space subcommittee. This large scale re-design effort is currently part of the University's capital campaign and contingent on securing full funding before design and renovation work can start. Indications are that funding for phase I of the project has been secured and an architecture firm may be chosen in Fall 2008 to start preliminary design work. The subcommittee will seek opportunities to be included in preliminary visioning meetings with Library faculty and staff, the Office of the University Architect, and OIT representatives as the redesign process gets underway.

The subcommittee debated the pros and cons for migrating to Windows Vista over the summer as the default operating system for all classroom and lab computers supported by the OIT. Professor Mark Schurr reported that the Business School is understandably concerned that business students will be using Windows Vista in the corporate world, while Arts and Letters faculty and students may be inclined to continue to use Windows XP because it is familiar to them. While council members appreciated the OIT's intent to seek input on faculty preferences, there were concerns expressed about UCAT endorsing the migration to Vista while also requesting Windows XP somehow remain available as an OS option in parallel with Windows Vista on the classroom podium computers supported by the OIT. The subcommittee felt that a special effort should be made to encourage Arts and Letters faculty to support the migration to Vista OS and that OIT should make a special effort to inform faculty early and often of the impending change during the summer, including creating special training materials and a hands-on orientation option for faculty prior to start of Fall classes.

Professor Schurr reported that he is on sabbatical leave during the Fall semester therefore the subcommittee is seeking a new chair. Traditionally UCAT subcommittees are chaired by faculty. Wishon noted that OIT staff is always available to provide strong support, with which Schurr concurred heartily. Wishon thanked Schurr for his leadership in the past several years, noting that several significant issues have been superbly handled by the committee during Schurr's tenure, notably faculty input on improvements made in DeBartolo Hall classroom technologies and the redesign of the computer cluster in the Hesburgh Library.

Software Acquisition and Distribution – Olaf Wiest, Chair

Professor Olaf Wiest reported the subcommittee recently discussed two pressing topics.

There was a non-unanimous vote on proposal to the subcommittee to discontinue institutional support of EndNote. Many faculty and students now prefer to use RefWorks for creating bibliographies and citations. After several rounds of e-mail exchanges to discuss the issue the subcommittee voted 3-2 in favor of discontinuing support for and upgrades to EndNote.

Still in discussion is the logical handoff point or line between the jurisdiction by the Software Acquisition and Distribution subcommittee and Center for Research Computing advisory committee who entertains requests for supporting purchases of software required for faculty and student research. This issue remains as unfinished subcommittee business for next academic year.

Committee on Research Computing (CRC) – Mark Stadtherr

Professor Mark Stadtherr agreed with Professor Wiest, Chair of the UCAT Software Acquisition and Distribution subcommittee on the need to discuss the jurisdiction issues for reviewing faculty software requests. He also noted that the search to hire a CRC Director is active again. One Director candidate is visiting campus today (May 15, 2008) and several more are scheduled for next month. Stadtherr noted with approval this indicates the CRC job search appears to be moving forward.

3. Student Update – Tam Chantem and Devin Fee

There were no student updates or concerns as the semester has ended for students.

4. Microsoft Vista versus Windows XP for Registrar Classrooms – Brian Burchett

Mr. Wishon introduced the discussion, noting there was a considerable amount of OIT staff work involved in developing the recommendations presented. Mr. Wishon encouraged UCAT to consider the software choice which best meets the needs for everyone on campus who depend on centrally supported OIT computers even if that choice cannot do exactly what everyone wants. The stated goal for this presentation was to solicit UCAT sanctioning of OIT's strong recommendation to migrate classroom and student computer labs to Vista during the summer to be ready in plenty of time for the start of Fall classes. Mr. Wishon turned to Brian Burchett, Manager of Classrooms and Cluster Services for the OIT, to lead the presentation and discussion.

Burchett stated that OIT Director of Customer Support Services Peggy Rowland convened a study group of six technical software specialists who carefully examined

the two operating systems and determined that there are no technical barriers to prevent adoption of Vista on the existing hardware, or based on shortcomings or instability of the software. Since the Vista interface has a radically different look and feel, there was a brief discussion of two possible options: change the Vista interface to look more like Windows XP or keep the new interface. Burchett preferred the later option although he realized it means educating users embrace the change. In order to better familiarize committee members with differences in the two systems, Burchett and Will Bruckert, a member of the Classroom and Cluster Services team, presented a side by side demonstration of the two systems pointing out key differences and soliciting concerns of Council members.

The demonstration pointed to obvious similarities and differences in starting the systems, locating the start button and menu changes. It was apparent from the demonstration that Vista appeared faster than XP to perform many routine navigation tasks. Bruckert also stated Vista has most robust search capabilities compared to XP.

One concern expressed by Council members was how files created using older versions of Microsoft PowerPoint work in Vista. Professor Mark Stadherr noted that he has successfully opened MS Office 2003 PowerPoint slide shows using MS Office 2007 throughout this semester.

Burchett reported that the ND installation of Windows XP used a six category schema for organizing software into logical groups on the Start menu. In Vista, there will be a simplified 'top ten' most commonly used applications list on the Start menu. Menu short cuts will also be provided for moving directly to older folder organization schema and this should help faculty who have memorized the older way of organizing software.

When asked about issues with incompatible software between Microsoft XP and Vista, Burchett noted OIT analyzed typical software requests made by faculty via the Room Request Form to ascertain what software applications faculty most often request to be available on classroom lectern computers. Every software title requested in past semesters currently has a Vista compatible version. While there may be slight differences in newer software designed to run on Vista, most older software programs designed to run on XP appear compatible with Vista and run fine without any changes in software preferences or hardware settings.

Burchett emphasized that there will be shortcuts available to allow users to easily access their institutional file space(s). Vista supports using shortcuts to facilitate mounting drives but they will not be automatically mounted. However, there will be technical support to minimize unnecessary connections to AFS space by those who never use it.

The goal is to make the new Vista operating system user friendly, to capitalize on the familiar, and to facilitate user access to the programs faculty most frequently use while teaching. Burchett noted that OIT purchased required Vista upgrades last year in

anticipation of migrating to Vista, including installing enhanced video cards to take full advantage of Vista's high-end graphics capabilities. The current classroom workstations, should be adequate to support Vista. Mr. Wishon stressed that the OIT is not recommending that faculty upgrade their daily working computers or laptops to Vista without carefully considering the hardware requirements necessary.

Professor Stadtherr noted a recent article in *Business Week* discussing why corporate America dislikes Vista. Stadtherr mentioned the article also claims General Motors is going to skip Vista and wait for the next Microsoft OS. Professor Rob Easley noted that every new major upgrade to the operating system produces this kind of response from a subset of users. Professor Wiest agreed that this decision could easily be one of corporate investment—a decision to save money at a particular moment. Wishon stated that the majority of new Notre Dame students come to campus with Vista on their newly purchased machines.

Professor Mark Schurr pointed out that many faculty workstations now lag behind the students' and classroom computer capabilities to run Vista. Wiest also noted the problem for the College of Science is that there is both a lag in adopting new operating system while waiting for the CWP renewal cycle for purchasing new computers and a secondary lag because much work depends on communicating via computer with certain scientific instruments and lab machines which run on old software. Thus many faculty in the sciences run older versions of the Windows OS not because of personal preference but because of their requirement to sync with lab equipment. For many specialized scientific software applications there are no Vista compatible versions. However Wiest notes this is a recurrent problem in the sciences with which they used to dealing.

Easley noted that the differences between Vista and XP are not all that dramatic; concern lies mainly with the differences in the MS Office applications. For instance some Microsoft Office 2007 applications are dramatically different than their Microsoft Office 2003 versions. Burchett replied that the OIT intends to continue to offer faculty both Microsoft Office 2003 and 2007 simultaneously. Office 2007 will be the default, requiring a simple double click, while accessing Office 2003 applications will require a few more steps. Burchett assured UCAT members that OIT intends to provide a great deal of support to faculty during the transition to the Vista, not merely email reminders. A short demonstration video will be available on the web as a quick tutorial. OIT is very sensitive to user concerns about the transition to new software, especially a switch to a new operating system.

Schurr complimented OIT on the careful attention paid to faculty concerns raised in the April UCAT meeting. He noted the attention being paid to the small but disconcerting effects a new system may have on first time users. Schurr suggested identifying current summer session instructors who might be using PowerPoint to function as early adopters to spot any glitches in the migration process.

Wishon stressed again that the purpose of the presentation, in addition to providing a hands-on live demo of Vista side-by-side with XP, is to respond to faculty concerns about deploying new software which potentially impacts the teaching and learning process. Mr. Wishon requested approval from the UCAT for the OIT to move forward in order to get Vista installed in the classrooms and labs in time for Fall classes. He noted there is still some final testing remaining but installation needs to start in June.

When several committee members expressed remaining concerns about software incompatibilities, Stadherr remarked that the operating system differences do not appear to affect applications and the different applications are designed to work together. Craig Brummell agreed stating both MS Office application suites will remain available for faculty. Schurr stated that he felt very comfortable bringing this decision back to the College of Arts and Letters because OIT is clearly willing to work closely with the Colleges to respond to user concerns.

Harold Pace inquired about the communication approaches planned to alert faculty users to the software change before the beginning of Fall classes. Wishon said that as a matter of course OIT has planned a number of ways to contact faculty so that no one should be surprised.

Burchett noted that faculty are always encouraged to test lectern systems before the first day of classes. This year there will be additional Email notices directing users to informational Web pages as well as invitations to ‘come in and kick the tires.’ While the option exists to have additional help on the first two days of classes—OIT volunteers and hired students—it is not feasible to have a support person at each lectern all day for a week in case faculty encounter problems. There will be simple instructions at each lectern providing quick tips to major changes and online tutorials will be also be available. Burchett assured committee members that the OIT is eager to allay fears of unexpected first day glitches. Professor McDonald concurred that faculty also have a responsibility to know what is happening and to learn about the new tools. Wishon also encouraged committee members to communicate back to their colleges what they have learned and observed in the discussion and demonstration to alert their colleagues of the pending change.

Mark Schurr made a motion that UCAT endorse the OIT plans presented today by Brian Burchett. The motion was seconded by Ed Edmonds. Unanimous approval.

5. Campus Workstation Program (CWP) — Gordon Wishon

Wishon introduced the discussion by noting that in several prior meetings through this past year, UCAT has resolved the major concerns about the proposed changes to the CWP except the pending proposal to move the replacement cycle of new computers from three to four years for all faculty and staff who are eligible. He noted that the Colleges of Science and of Engineering still have concerns.

Wishon briefly reviewed the proposed changes and perceived benefits to Notre Dame community of the recommended changes to the CWP.

- broaden the scope and application of CWP funding to all eligible approved positions;
- provide funding for annual positions;
- provide flexibility to local departments for purchase of ancillary technological items;
- enhance local decision-making and delegates authority to local units on whatever schedule the unit deems best.

The major unresolved issue is establishing a price point that would appropriately provide room for growth, so that the computer platform(s) to be purchased at the established price point would effectively serve faculty and staff computing needs for the full four years. Traditionally the price point is re-evaluated semiannually, establishing a baseline. Wishon stated that the CWP's premise has always been to provide a 'basic productivity appliance for every faculty and staff member on a regularly recurring basis.' He noted that the program is not designed to provide for specialized computing needs; funding by local business units should be provided for those needs.

Wishon stated he has presented the concerns of Science and Engineering on changes to the CWP to the Provost Office—Burish, Maziar and Affleck-Graves. At the present time the Provost Office is not in concurrence with a recommendation to provide a price differential, or a different replacement cycle to accommodate differing technological needs, noting that there are funding mechanisms already in place to meet such needs.

The focus of this meeting's discussion concerns the proposal to move the entire faculty and staff to a standardized four year replacement cycle for a basic computing appliance, providing increased flexibility, and broader use of CWP funds for purchasing related computer peripherals beyond a basic desktop computer/monitor or laptop.

Discussion:

The discussion moderated by Gordon Wishon focused on three interrelated concerns:

1. Who will establish the price point and what is the mechanism/process for doing so?
2. Does the prototypical baseline appliance meet the functionality needs of most users, thus establishing a realistic price point?
3. What are the options at the local level to augment an established price point, to enable users to purchase a computing system which best suits individual needs?

Wishon stated that he envisions an interdisciplinary committee, working with information provided through OIT to do the leg work of establishing baseline needs, and arriving at an appropriate price point. It would be the job of the committee to determine what constitutes a basic machine, how to accommodate the differing costs of Windows/Intel laptops and Macintosh OS laptops, and how frequently to reevaluate the price point. Wishon said that changing market conditions turn price point determinations into an art rather than a science.

Several members expressed concerns about approving this process without some pre-established parameters for the price point. Professor Bill MacDonald noted that past history suggests an open-ended process does not always work. Wiest agreed that it was acceptable that specialized technological needs be outside the price point, but wondered how the basic appliance needs would be determined. Members discussed the differences in costs of Mac versus Lenovo laptops, noting that Arts and Letters faculty tend to purchase Macs more often than perhaps faculty in other Colleges.

Professor Easley asked if each College would have flexibility to update its machines by using the pool of money available to the local unit. Wishon affirmed this, noting that within the proposed parameters of the program, faculty would see a replacement machine every four years but could use local funds to, for instance, update memory after two years. Dewitt Latimer, OIT Chief Technology Officer, agreed that the local business unit can make local decisions which 'stay within the pool,' but which can be augmented by other sources of funding. Wishon stated that faculty should be anticipating the kind of computing appliance which can sustain functionality for four full years under this new program. Professor John Sherman, noting that having two computers to accommodate personal and professional tasks is very awkward, recalled that he had had to kick in an additional \$1500 for the Macintosh he chose and wondered if that would occur again under this new program. Wishon said that would depend on the local decision-making, but that indeed the local unit would have the flexibility and control to make the decisions which best meets local needs. For instance, he said, there are departments which do not fund endowed chair technology needs. Such local rules are possible under the new program.

In response to a question about transitioning from current balances under the current CWP program, Wishon noted that would be done on a unit by unit basis so that each unit would have sufficient funding from the current pool to complete the replacement cycle it is currently in. For instance, the College of Business has just finished a college wide replacement cycle so it would be reset at zero; OIT will be sensitive to the various computer replacement cycles of individual units. Craig Fitch noted that there is no intention to wipe out unit funds which have built up in the existing CWP account.

To address concerns of members about the hypothetical price point, Craig Fitch, drawing on data presented at an earlier meeting, summarized the current price point data. He noted that it is difficult to determine a price point because approximately eighty percent (80%) of the faculty prefer Windows/Intel machines and twenty

percent (20%) prefer Macintosh. The range for a WinTel computer is \$975-1500. The range for Macintosh is on average \$200-\$300 higher in the \$1175-1800 range. So the current price point across the board is somewhere between \$1300 to \$1400.

Fitch also described how the current Lenovo contract works: users choose from among seven kinds of machines with choices of desktops and laptops. Ninety six percent (96%) of Lenovo machines ordered under the current contract are custom configured to add features or capabilities, including more ram or enhanced video cards. Professor Flynn asked if this fact suggests the baseline machine is not meeting functionality needs within the current price point. Wishon said that the intention of the price point is 'to allow at least 80% of machine needs to be met at that price point.' Wishon also stressed that faculty reconfiguration and upgrade costs are included in the \$1300-\$1400 figure stated above. "We are trying to establish a funding mechanism that allows flexibility within that regime but not moving into discipline-specific needs."

Wiest wondered if the price point could remain 'something of a moving target,' flexible over time. Wishon said that the price point is reevaluated annually, which provides flexibility, but that the aggregate sum is a fixed number and not part of OIT's budget, so there is no flexibility in that sense. Hahn asked about planned increases for appliances; Wishon noted that the program does not plan in increases as the cost of appliances has been steadily decreasing. However savings in expenditures accrued to Program over time could function to raise the price point.

When asked if it is possible to institute a price point mechanism which UCAT then can approve after observing its success, Wishon said that the price point needs to be established before next fiscal year and that UCAT needs to formulate a 'consensus process' that is clear to all. When Craig Brummell suggested naming a price point range as an initial guide to the price point committee, Wishon noted that Craig Fitch has already done the analytical work to provide this range: \$1300-\$1400. Wiest suggested that UCAT name this figure as the price point and also the conditions for changing it. Wishon suggested that UCAT could 'name a price point and refer the process of reassessment to UCAT' as the price point process. Wiest suggested that rather than a separate committee to establish the price point, this be the accepted process: OIT—led by Craig Fitch—does the research to establish the data on current price point needs, and UCAT members reassess the established figure annually. This process would include flexibility for Colleges, and other business units, to reduce the price point locally because of current available funds. This would potentially benefit the College of Arts and Letters which has been harmed by lack of CWP support for the open float positions.

As this is the last meeting of the academic year the members present agreed that Craig Fitch should email all committee members the data he has drawn upon to establish the \$1400 price point and committee members will follow up to approve or disapprove of this price point via email.

Wiest made a motion to approve the proposed changes to the CWP pending agreement on the price point changes. Bill McDonald seconded the motion. Unanimous approval.

6. Email plans for 2008-09 — Students and Faculty/Staff — Dewitt Latimer

Wishon stated that OIT is looking for suggestions from the committee about the Email plans for the campus. He then turned to Dewitt Latimer to solicit input and lead the discussion. Latimer said the contract with Google has been executed to provide the incoming freshman class with Google Email. Returning upperclassmen will be given a set period of time to migrate their legacy Email accounts to Gmail. Professor Easley asked how returning students will be informed. Latimer said an email message will be sent informing them of the changes. It is most likely that a December 31, 2008 deadline will be established as the final date to migrate student Email accounts. Student accounts have initially have a 6-gigabyte storage quota. Also students will not be subjected to ads while using Google Gmail for their nd.edu address. The university has made the decision to receive the student Email inside the nd.edu domain before forwarding it to Google for delivery for reasons of privacy and protecting sensitive data.

For university employees—faculty and staff— Latimer indicated the December 31 deadline is significant because the current University Email software vendor is no longer maintaining Email support or services as of December 31, 2008. Additionally, there is a general campus-wide desire to move to a more sophisticated electronic calendar capability. The question facing Notre Dame is “Where does the university need to go to meet the advanced needs of a modern university?” After extensive review and analysis of our options, Notre Dame has chosen to adopt Microsoft Exchange which is being deployed currently in anticipation of a migration this coming Fall. While at first the intention was to begin migrating early adopters this summer, the OIT decided to wait until September in order to elicit departmental requests for advanced needs. Latimer noted that users could use whatever Email client she or he wishes; nothing will change on a user’s computer without user initiation. Corporate Time calendar users are the exception, since that software will no longer be supported as of December 31, 2008. OIT will use the summer to get the new system ready for a campus wide migration of all faculty and staff users.

Professor Rob Easley asked if the transition from Oracle Corporate Time calendar system to the new Exchange calendar will be smooth. Latimer noted that OIT has licensed specialized software for one year which assists in migrating Corporate Time data from the old to the new system. OIT is considering delaying moving to the new calendar software, transitioning email first, and plans to set a ‘magic cutover date’ for the entire campus—likely the Christmas 2008 break. This approach should ensure a smoother functioning of the calendar system, as moving an entire campus is a big project.

Dan Marmion asked if group calendaring will still be available. Latimer said yes, if groups choose to open up the calendar, then group scheduling is possible. He noted, too, that organizing and synching calendars with others appears much easier with Google Gmail users, a driver for this decision. However Latimer said that the Exchange calendar system is for faculty and staff use only as Google has its own calendaring system. However, appointments can be sent to any calendar, even if the ability to query across systems has yet to be achieved. There will be no automatic migration for student organization email accounts.

Wishon noted that the decision to remain with a locally managed and hosted Email system for faculty/staff is due in large part to ‘significant concerns about protection of sensitive data and of privacy,’ which must be addressed before we can reasonably move to an outside source. Flynn asked if faculty could choose to move individually. Wishon said that while OIT is aware some faculty do move to other email systems not hosted by Notre Dame, this is not desirable. He said that he believes that if this is something which can be successfully arranged; “we’d be the first university in the country to take that step today.” Approval of that risk by General Counsel is not currently likely. Latimer noted that since Google is giving away the service, it has little motivation to take extra risk protection steps required by the University to protect sensitive data.

Wishon invited UCAT members to send any concerns on the pending change in email and calendaring systems to Dewitt Latimer. Mr. Wishon thanked members for their attention and discussion on this important issue.

7. Emerging Academic Technologies Process—Paul Turner

Due to time constraints this presentation was again postponed to a future meeting.

8. Concluding Remarks

Wishon thanked the council for its attention and assistance on a wide range of important issues through the 2007-08 year. He anticipates another full agenda for the council next year. Gordon Wishon adjourned the meeting at 2:40 pm.