

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING
OCTOBER 2, 2007

[In these minutes: Brainstorm Agenda Items for 2007 – 2008 Academic Year, Student Technology Fees, IT Faculty Guidelines Subcommittee and the Campus-Wide Activities/Research/Expert Database Subcommittee Updates]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT:

Mark Sanders, chair, John Crow, Dale Swanson, Deanette Schmidt, John Butler, Danielle Tisinger, Billie Wahlstrom, Michael Korth, Brent Larson, Jim Waddell, Bonnie Westra, Briana Clark, Mahmoud Sadrai, Parker Schultz

REGRETS: Sue Van Voorhis, Stuart Speedie, Simin Hickman, Christina Meyer

ABSENT: Stephen Cawley, Alan Ek, Greg Laden

OTHERS: Bernard Gulachek, Ann Hill Duin, John H. Miller

GUEST: Peter Zetterberg, senior analyst,
Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

I). Mark Sanders called the meeting to order and welcomed all those present. He noted that the committee's website contains valuable information including but not limited to the committee's charge, membership and previous meeting minutes (<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/committees/scit.html>). Before moving on, he asked all those present to introduce themselves.

II). Mr. Sanders reviewed 2007 – 2008 agenda items that were identified by the committee last May (<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/scit/07-05-01.html>). Aside from these issues, the Faculty Consultative Committee (FCC) has requested the committee look into providing each faculty member with a couple terabytes of space on the central server. This space, according to the FCC, should be provided as a service because State and Federal laws require the protection of research data. Additionally, the FCC has requested the committee look at the issue of retention of emails.

Based on input from those who responded to an email message asking members to prioritize the agenda ideas that were generated last spring, the following items were of particular interest:

- Use of technology in the University's emergency operations plan.
- Receive a wireless update.
- Learn what is being done to help faculty teach in technology rich environments.
- Discuss how to support faculty and students using Vista WebCT.
- Receive a report from the Technology Enhanced Learning Council (TEL Council).
- Receive updates on GopherMail, GopherTV, etc.
- Learn about the Library's digital conservancy efforts.
- Receive a two-factor authentication update.
- Obtain a compact update from the Office of Information Technology.

Members were encouraged to forward any additional items they would like put on a future agenda to Renee Dempsey, Senate staff at demps005@umn.edu.

III). Mr. Sanders welcomed Peter Zetterberg, senior analyst, from the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.

He noted that Mr. Zetterberg was invited to provide the committee with a student technology fee update, a topic the committee has been dealing with on and off since 2004.

Mr. Zetterberg reported that the last time he met with the committee to discuss student technology fees that consideration was being given to simplifying the technology fee structure. While the technology fee structure was not revamped, one significant change that was made. This change was that the Institute of Technology (IT) agreed that it would no longer charge other college students a technology fee for taking engineering and computer science courses. With this change, students that had previously had to pay two technology fees would now only have to pay one fee.

IT still, however, will continue to charge a student technology fee to CLA students majoring in an IT discipline, e.g. math, physics, chemistry.

These students will only pay the IT technology fee, and not the CLA technology fee.

Previously this committee discussed whether other colleges should be able to charge their respective technology fee to students majoring in their discipline. Or, in other words, should the IT technology fee approach be extended to other colleges.

While no changes are currently being proposed to the University's technology fee structure, there remains the possibility that the administration will decide to look at whether the student technology fee should be included in tuition.

Mr. Zetterberg acknowledged the committee's preference from last spring that it liked the idea of a technology fee that was separate from tuition because it dedicates money specifically for technology.

As SCIT continues to look at the student technology fee issue this year, Mr. Zetterberg asked that it debate the logic of having a separate technology fee.

If any governance body will be asked to defend the logic of a technology fee, it will likely be SCIT. Having said this, it will be important that the committee be able to articulate the rationale for having a separate technology fee.

Another consideration to take into account during the committee's discussions of this issue noted Mr. Zetterberg, is the complex nature of the University's technology fee structure.

Before closing, Mr. Zetterberg noted that there are only a couple of technology fees that are significantly higher than the vast majority of technology fees, the laptop fee in the Law School and the CSOM technology fee, which is more than a technology fee.

Comments/questions following Mr. Zetterberg's update included:

- Can technology fee revenue only be spent on technology? Mr. Zetterberg stated that there is no evidence to indicate that colleges are spending this money on anything other than technology, but no one monitors how colleges spend this fee.

It is presumed that colleges will act in good faith and use the technology revenue they generate for technology.

- Are students generally aware what technologies their fee goes to pay for? No, stated Mr. Zetterberg. Most colleges have a technology fee committee, which students serve on. Students on these committees naturally know how the money is being spent, but it is unlikely the average student has that same level of awareness.

He added that the technology fee in no way pays for all of a student's technology use on campus.

- Does the University charge a central technology fee? No, there is no University-wide technology fee. The colleges assess technology fees and this money goes directly to each college, and not central administration.
- How much money is collected annually by colleges in terms of technology fees? Mr. Zetterberg agreed to look into this and report back to the committee.
- Increasingly institutions are assessing student fees as a way of getting students to pay for goods and services that may not be otherwise made available to them. Additionally, there is the issue that students cannot take out loans to pay for fees. The committee may want to take a formal position on this issue.
- Is it expensive to administer the current technology fee structure? Mr. Zetterberg stated it is not significant, but rather the current structure adds yet another layer of complexity to an already complex system. In Mr. Zetterberg's opinion, the technology fee structure is clumsy and does not look good. The system could be revamped to make it more transparent and simple for parents and students to understand.

The philosophy with regard to the University's budget model is to let colleges keep the tuition and fee revenue they generate.

If the technology fees are rolled into tuition, it will not change the amount that colleges receive.

Having a technology fee sends the signal to colleges that the University does not trust that colleges can fund technology appropriately without a separate fee.

- The technology fee structure limits how much money colleges spend on technology.
- Fee transparency is very important. Mr. Zetterberg stated he agrees wholeheartedly. Fees are another way of making the cost of individual colleges different. Philosophically, Mr. Zetterberg would like to do away with the current approach.
- From a student perspective, while a lot of students might not know exactly how the technology fee is spent, they know it is collected by the college and spent on technology needs. The technology fee should be obvious, and not incorporated in tuition. In response, Mr. Zetterberg asked whether all student charges be fee based, e.g. should students pay more for a class taught by a full professor versus assistant professor?

While making all student charges fee-based would make the system really fair, the question of how complex the system should be needs to be looked at.

- From another student's perspective, the technology fee should be included as part of tuition to make the process as efficient as possible. There are so many fees that are not visible at this point, and so why should the technology fee be any different.
- Students serving on technology fee committees gain a lot of valuable experience serving on these committees.

Mr. Sanders thanked Mr. Zetterberg for the technology fee update. He added that, when appropriate, the committee would welcome being able to comment on any proposed changes to the current technology fee structure.

Mr. Sanders reported to the committee that the statement it drafted last spring on technology fees was being brought to the October 4th Senate meeting for information. Mr. Sanders summarized the points outlined in the statement (<http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/scit/stutechfeeres.html>).

A member asked what does SCIT really know about student perceptions around the technology fees collected by the colleges.

Before any recommendation is put forward by SCIT to the Senate for action dealing with technology fees, student metrics need to be collected.

Before putting forward a technology fee policy, the committee needs to philosophize about what the policy should contain stated a member.

IV).

Mr. Sanders stated that Linda Jorn will provide the committee with a Digital Media Center (DMC) update and speak to teaching in technology rich classrooms at the committee's next meeting. Additionally, either Steve Cawley and/or Bernie Gulachek will provide the committee with an OIT compact and planning update.

A member asked the status of the two subcommittees that were formed last year, the IT Faculty Guidelines Subcommittee and the Campus-Wide Activities/Research/Expert Database Subcommittee. Mr. Sanders reported having tried to contact these subcommittees to find out meeting dates, but has heard nothing to date.

Briana Clark who serves on the Campus-Wide Activities/Research/Expert Database Subcommittee reported that this subcommittee met several times over the summer and that its next meeting is scheduled for the end of October. At the October meeting, the subcommittee will hear from a software vendor. The subcommittee continues to research system requirements and how to garner faculty support for funding this initiative. Ms. Clark added that the goal of the Campus-Wide Activities/Research/Expert Database Subcommittee is to pool the information contained in the different Expert databases across campus. Currently, there are several databases across campus in various states of usefulness. The subcommittee would like to centralize this information so it is maintained on a regular basis, and more secure.

Mr. Sanders stated that if the subcommittee would like SCIT's involvement in their work to contact Renee Dempsey, Senate staff, and let her know.

In addition, he volunteered to look into revitalizing the IT Faculty Guidelines Subcommittee.

V). Hearing no further business, Mr. Sanders adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate