

Library, Media, Academic Computing Committee Minutes October 7, 1997

Present: Shelby Clayson, Raney Ellis, Mark Fiegener, Mike Gardiner, Mary Rose Lamb, Marilyn Mitchell, Hans Ostrom, David Sousa, Bob Steiner

Minutes of the September 22 meeting were approved.

Gardiner reported that Senate charges to the committee had been received. Of the four charges, two were suggested in spring 1997 final report of the LMAC to the Senate and the other two were established by the Senate. The charges are:

1. continue to serve as an advocate for adequate funding of the library and academic computing
2. consider if students should be required to own computers at some future date
3. monitor the issue of supporting multiple desktop operating systems

Marilyn Mitchell distributed and discussed the 1997-98 Learning Materials budget. She was asked how the different amounts allocated for various departments was determined. Mitchell reported that various formula-based models had been tried such as historical enrollment, faculty size, and class hours; however prior history of allocations continues to be a major determinant. The library will continue to explore allocation models. The 1997-98 budget is \$940,000 up 4.3% from \$899,500 the previous year.

Computer Hardware Standardization: Raney Ellis provided background and rationale for the move to standardize computer hardware. Currently on campus there is a wide range of PC machines (brands, models & performance capabilities) and even though all Macintosh machines are from Apple, there again is a wide range in models and performance capabilities.

The policy has been to replace machines on a five-year replacement cycle. Typically the machines purchased have been at the lower end of computing capability. The argument was made to the Budget Task Force that newly purchased computers should be a level above the lowest base models so that the machines are more likely to offer acceptable performance throughout the 5-year use cycle. The proposal was made to buy machines which would become equivalent to lower base level after 1.5 - 2 years, rather than starting with machines at the lower end. The recommendation to replace faculty machines on a four-year cycle and computer lab machines on a three-year cycle was also made. Computer services asked for \$447,000 up from \$214,000 the previous year. They were allocated \$301,000.

An inventory of desktop computers on campus indicated that there are approximately 850 machines roughly distributed equally between Macintosh and PC platforms. Computer services is trying to have all machines under a service and replacement program and as in new machines are added, such as new labs, these new computers would be included in the replacement policy and the base of campus machines would be increased.

One of the current problems for OIS is the range of desktop computers (brands and performance capabilities) on campus. The decision was made to recommend the following computer standards for faculty/staff replacement computers.

PC - Purchase machines which use open architecture for hardware such as disk drives and not proprietary hardware. Machines should be a national brand, from a company which 1) will discount machines lower than the listed price, 2) offer a range choices/configurations, and 3) prices machines at the lower end for comparable machines. The decision was made to buy from MICRON. These machines are in use at SPU and PLU and reports on their durability are favorable. The standard replacement computer will be configured as follows: 200Mhz, 32M RAM, 2 Gig HD, 17" monitor,

10/100 Ethernet card, CD-ROM, loaded with Windows 95 and Office 95. The current cost of this machine is \$1919+tax.

Macintosh - Purchase Macintosh computers from Apple rather than Macintosh clones from one of the several clone makers. This has been a good decision since Apple's decision to discontinue the license to one or more manufactures of Macintosh clones. A power Macintosh with comparable features to the PC costs about \$200 dollars more.

The average cost budgeted for machines is \$2200, which is close to what the mix of Macintosh and PC machines works out to be.

Sousa questioned whether these machines might not be overkill for some faculty who use the machine for basic word processing and do not need the added power and features. Ellis acknowledged that this indeed may be true, but indicated that having a standard makes servicing and sharing of files, etc., a much more manageable task. He did acknowledge that individual departments may accomplish the same outcome, by upgrading the machines needed by power users and moving their machines to individuals scheduled for replacement, but not demanding as much from their computers. Some departments already are doing this.

Ellis also discussed the network-based printing and establishing department LANS is being explored, but even if this is done, there will still be the need for some personal desktop printers.

Ellis reported that the new Server Systems Administrator has joined his staff and is currently working with the new Microsoft NT server servicing the Comptrollers Office. Network servers can be a most convenient way to allow the sharing of common files. It is anticipated that several NT servers may be added which would service different departments/schools on campus in the future.

Other Business

Ostrom inquired whether there are comparative data regarding computer use/ computer base for UPS aspire-to colleges. Ellis reported that he has studied such data and for the most part UPS compares favorably, often at the leading edge of our cohort schools.

Ostrom suggested that the Development Office be involved in seeking funds to establish a technology endowment which could be used to help defray the cost of replacing and maintaining computers as the computer base continues to grow and funding from the BTF does not keep up with demands of a larger computer base.

The impact of the new Humanities building on the computer base was raised by Mitchell. Ellis agreed that the computer base undoubtedly will be raised with the technology, such as the new foreign languages lab, to be installed in the new facility.

The issue of whether laptops had been considered in the replacement policy rather than desktops was raised by Steiner. Ellis reported that they had not been, primarily because of their lower durability, and increased cost for the same computing power.

The next meeting is schedule for Tuesday, October 21 at 4:00 in Library 134.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert L. Steiner