February 2007 Minutes

Technology Council Minutes
February 14, 2007

The second meeting of the year for the Technology Council was held on Wednesday, February 14, 2007 in Room L167-169 at 1:15 p.m. with Carol Briggs-Erickson as chairperson.

Attendance:

I. Welcome/Approval of Agenda and Minutes of Prior Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 1:15 pm. Agenda was accepted as written with no additions and no changes.

With no changes or additions, Kam motioned that minutes be approved as submitted- seconded by Sue.

II. Old Business

By-Laws

There were no changes to the submitted By-Laws, therefore, are accepted and approved as written this date February 14, 2007.

III. New Business

New AV equipment in classrooms

We have $61,000 left from last year budgeted requirements because Scott was able to get some very good negotiated prices. These monies cannot be used for other equipment so Kam talked to Diana Osborn and we are able to use these dollars to equip 6 more rooms plus the one room that was left from the 15 requested before.

Sue requested Room 234 for the Business Dept. Teresa was concerned about what was requested from last year’s budget. Becky said her department would like to request equipment in 152 but will be meeting and this may change. Becky thought a procedure be created so that the Committee can look at those who have already requested.

Kathy Pollack asked if the projector that is in their area and is broken would be replaced. Scott said we have gotten 3 new projectors in and believe one of these projectors will be the replacement. In that respect, Kathy is requesting Room 255.

Teresa noted that there is a request from Dan Rypma to have one classroom done in the gym.
Carol stated that the procedure would be to solicit requests from department chairs and then bring it back. Kam is just concerned that if we don’t move on this we will allow this budget year to move by.

Becky suggested that a compiled list be given out at department chairs’ meeting. Carol thought each department would list their priority of usage.

The consensus is that each department chair take to his area and have the departments decide what the needs are. Everyone agreed that Kam would send out an email with the form attached. Kam asked to be placed on department chairs agenda to discuss. Jeff noted that this would be the fair way for everyone.

**Outlook/WebAdvisor training**

There are 49 sessions offered. We will do train the trainers sessions. We will take a pilot group, i.e., faculty/staff and students. We take this group and train them, they will help create the documents. Kam would like to see the Technology Council come an help IT with training. If interested in this, please email Scott.

Sue: Is MS Outlook MAC compatible? If not, what are the options? Kam said this is one of the good things about going to Exchange. With Exchange we can use a client called Entourage. GroupWise does not offer MAC support. Scott and John are getting trained on MACS. Most of the things that PCs can do, the MACs are able to do as well. MACS are good for the heavy graphics user. It is noted that when training does begin, MAC users are able to come and benefit because a laptop will be set up in the training for them.

**LMS Platforms**

Mark Porcaro is the chair of the sub-committee. We’ve had a visit from Angel and Blackboard will be coming this week. After our demonstration from Angel, the sub-committee questioned whether we wanted to move or just stay with what we had. The main concern is the cost and bringing this server in house because as it stands now, if it goes down, we have no way of restoring the info. We have never been able to talk with the company rep who does. Server $22,000 and BB license which would bring this to $38,000. Put out a vote to committee to see if we should stay where we are. There are no added features if we stay and Mark knows a couple of people are having problems. It’s not a problem to stay with Basic but it would be nice to have the added features. So far, there are 4 votes for and 4 against.

Becky wondered if the thinking was that there are other good things out there and we may not have to stay with Blackboard so why jump to it. Kam noted that it is the thinking that do we want to spend this $48,000 plus $22,000 now and re-invest next year. We are limping now.

Teresa stated that it was stated from the beginning that it was not an option to stay with current system. We were told to move to BB Enterprise or pick something else as it does not talk to Colleague. Kam said staying with Basic is not an option in the long run.
Mark explained that Basic does not integrate well with Colleague. BB Basic does not offer a single sign on. As you get different things, you get separate passwords. Colleague, Active Directory, GroupWise, and Blackboard all have different passwords. You can make your password the same but they are all separate. When you change one, you have to change all the others. If you use something that has single sign on, it is just changing one. Other tools like TurnItIn will integrate with BB Enterprise, it works with some of these other 3rd party tools as well.

Teresa noted that there is a concern because decisions have been made and wheels are in motion. Training has been set up. Tim stated that this is the only way to go now because it takes time for training.

Other discussion ensued concerning moving to BB enterprise or staying with BB Basic. Becky added that if others had been told that limping along for another year, limping along would have been chosen. Joe noted that we will have to utilize the new server anyway and spend the $38,000 that has already been approved.

Kam stated that it is not IT that is making the decisions on this. IT is serving as the facilitator for the process as the decisions are being made.

Sue went on record as stating her vote is to move ahead with the present decision. Limping along is not an option. We don’t want to go through what we went through previously. Carol asked if the sub-committee wanted a recommendation from the Council. If so, it is recommended by the Tech Council that they move forward with the original plan to go to BB Enterprise.

Jeff asked, “What is the window a faculty member needs to make the transition?” Tim answered, “One semester”. Kam stated that we plan to move to a new element system fall, 2008. If we can make decision by end of year, we can have parallel system running.

Jeff noted that if an instructor can transition in one semester, what is the difference? With Enterprise we have a 1 year commitment with ½ price, does this make a difference. In terms of dollars there is a difference.

Teresa: The issue may not be faculty members but it is with training. There are things behind the scenes that need to be done. We have to allow students time to get used to it, let them know what is going to happen. There may be a semester to convert but what about the training. There is a lot more to this than just sitting down and transferring over.

Tim: I don’t think we need any extra time frame for training students. Students are trained the beginning of the semester with orientation. I agree that with faculty it may be a huge issue.

Sue noted that training will have to take place spring and summer because most of the faculty have more time. Tim agreed. Tim explained his reasoning for saying one semester for transition. Kam noted that we will have to run the two systems parallel with time to play with the new system and still continue their work.
Sue: Maria Anderson has been using Web-assign in the Math department along with others. They want to continue to use this and have been told they would not be able to. There are others who have been using ‘ALSI’ and they as well have been told they could not. There is an unwritten policy. The other concern is I.T. support. Sue noted that she is not taking sides but it is an issue. Question to consider is, ‘Do we say to everyone who wants to use a different platform for their subject matter, we say it is okay and support it?’

Jeff’s concern is, what if one is using a publisher’s LMS and puts grades out there, who can see it. Can the publisher see the grades? If everything has to be on our server here, we have some control over who sees it and this protects the student’s privacy. We don’t have to turn something over to someone else who might not protect the privacy.

Teresa: Some faculty are integrating course cartridges and course cards for their courses. Grades are not put out there. The main part is through Blackboard. The math department can put the equations out there through WebAssign. It does work well. We do have faculty members who are doing this now. Teresa’s main concern is using the whole element as opposed to Blackboard.

Becky noted that it sounds like we are trying to accommodate the faculty member so she can do what she wants to do with her class and addressing her freedom to make choices for her class, but there needs to be a written rule.

Kam questions: Does this Webassign integrate with Colleague? It is very important to have any application integrate with Colleague. How much does it cost?

Carol said the students buy a ticket to WebAssign. The ticket cost about $10.00. It’s an online book. There is no contract with WebAssign; we do not have to pay them.

Tim said this is a valid issue. One thing that falls under this Committee’s By-Laws is platform control and platform decisions. It comes face to face with the way one wants to teach their class. There must be a concern as to what will be supported and what will not. The system designed by publishers is independent and we must have a policy in place.

Kam: Is it I.T. Council place to say yes or no?

Carol: Dr. Rule told her to bring here. She wants to know if she can come and petition this committee.

Carol noted that we can make a recommendation to Coordinating Council and some valid points have been made.

Tim had to leave but noted that this is fundamentally an I.T. governance issue. Platform control is certainly a number one issue.

Sue said on Thursday they would find out from 2:30-4 exactly how Enterprise can use a building block and incorporate WebAssign.
Scott noted that WebAssign integrates with BB Enterprise. All they currently work on in BB is the login and the roster. There are plans to do the grade book.

Question: Who puts the student in WebAssign? Scott said the instructor has to make that correlation and build their own WebAssign course.

Kam said this brings up an I.T. support issue. Teresa says student training is an issue. There are times when students are in her office asking for a refund because some instructor’s class is not set up. WebAssign does have their own HelpDesk but they have limited hours. Kam noted the student’s expectation is not to call WebAssign but to call the college for an answer.

Mark noted that Maria does not know what the tools are on BB 7.1 and he does not either. This may be a mute point with the updated version.

Jeff said it’s not a Maria issue but rather a platform issue. Are we going to allow any faculty member to use their own platform?

Becky: Where does it say that one can only use BB platform. She noted that during faculty seminar days, Maria made sure she stated in her presentation that it does not say anywhere that one cannot use another platform.

Carol noted that she has looked at WebAssign and can see how she would want to keep it. It is a good application.

Other discussion ensued giving support to why a standard for platform policy. Sue shared information she had received from fellow VLC online participants.

Kam said we should have a sub-committee created to come up with a platform policy. Carol asked for volunteers to be on sub-committee. Becky, Sue, Kam, and Teresa (chair) are part of sub-committee. They will meet and bring their recommended policy to Technology Council before it is submitted to Coordinating Council.

IV. Sub-committee and Informational Reports

Dataatel

Registration live date moved back to July 9, 2007. We made the decision because we had 3 semesters of work to convert and there was no way to get this done in a timely manner without killing the staff.

*Note: It is not that we are behind, it’s just that we will not be registering early this year. Original date has not changed.

Payroll is now live and we’ve had our celebration. Anyone wishing an Octopus can see Teresa.

Rollout
John Mihelich was able to give brief overview on the process for the upcoming computer roll-out.

There is a minimum system specification of 1.8 Ghz

There are 106 systems on campus that are below this

24 in labs and 82 faculty and staff

Takes about 10 weeks to roll out

Those receiving systems will be notified by support tech and scheduled

Tech will consult with individual beforehand to determine their needs

This is a big change for some to have a new computer on their desk. Communication is very important. It takes 2-3 hours to replace 1 system

Question: How do you decide who gets the okay system? (Power User)

John: It is based on the software used on the computer. A lot of people do a lot of multi-tasking. It is also based on their position and the types of things the person is doing.

Jeff noted that he may have some computers in his area that may be above the 1.8 Ghz and just may need a graphics card. Will these computers be overlooked? Scott noted that we can only purchase so many machines in a year and there are so many old ones on campus. We are playing catch up right now. Some of these other concerns will be taken care of as we do the Life Cycle Plan.

Kam stated some of these other computers will fall under the trickle down plan as well. John noted that all the computers that are being replaced now are way under the minimum. Right now there will be no re-assign.

**CIO Update**

Kam did not go through the entire monthly report. He had sent out an email to Council that highlighted the email filtering. A point to share concerning email:

1.3 million Emails were sent
1.1 were stopped
113 thousand came through
This is only 8.5%- and 40% of this came through with Tag.

In January we used 8.1 mg of bandwidth and we have been using close to 9 mg of bandwidth. We are running out of bandwidth. We just upgraded our bandwidth in Fall from 3 mg to 9 mg. We are already topping this out. We are purchasing a new device called Packateer that will allow us to use up to 100 mg. We will still only be using 9 mg but we do have the option to buy more if needed. Right now the option is not there.

Interesting note is that we’ve got over 412 wireless connections on campus. The top 2 usage places are Gerber Lounge and the LIT Center.

**Tactical Plan Update**
Scott noted that a lot of progress has been made on the plan and he has received some input from other departments on campus who had put together their own plan. Kam is working at finalizing the document but all in all it has gone well.

Carol went to Coordinating Council last week and the Computer Acceptable Use Policy was to be a part of the discussion but she forgot to forward it to secretary Chris Nowak prior to the meeting. She has asked it be added to the next Coordinating Council meeting agenda. With no problems, it should be approved.

V. Announcements

Kam went to a HP conference last week entitled, Impact of Pen Based Computers. Sue has one book and Mark has the other. After they are done, others can see.

Mark announced that he, Diana Casey, and Chris Marble put in a grant for HP tablets proposals. If approved they will get 21 tablet PCs and $91,000 to help support. This will be a lot of exposure.

Carol: The MS Outlook books are in the library and ready for check out. She also announced that there are some online books that are available.

With no other announcements, meeting adjourned at 2:30 pm.