

QUEENSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

COMMITTEE on COMPUTER RESOURCES

COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd, 2006, at 3 PM

Committee members in attendance: Chair Thorsen, Professors Altimari, Burleson, Ellerton, Ford, Grant, Mangra, Moh, IT Director Sherman, ACC Director Naples

- I. The minutes for the CCR meeting of 11/30/05 were approved.
- II. An ad hoc meeting, addressing the formulation and assignment of articles to be published in the upcoming CCR Newsletter, was scheduled for March 2nd at 3 PM.
- III. A motion was made to change the start time of all upcoming scheduled meetings of the CCR, from 3 PM to 2 PM. The motion was passed.
- IV. The creation of a password for the student e-mail system began on the first day of the Spring 2006 semester without faculty notification. Faculty members who routinely communicate to students' Tigermail accounts were caught unaware by the change. This issue strictly deals with informing the Faculty of a substantive change in a utility provided by the school. IT Director Sherman agreed to provide more consistent and complete communication regarding such matters.
- V. Forwarding e-mail to non-QCC e-mail accounts.
 - A. IT Director Sherman noted that one's QCC account being the only choice constitutes policy. Ralph Romanelli could probably engineer such adjustments, but would probably be unable to do so, due to lack of time.
 - B. It was noted that enforced, multiple email accounts can be a burden for adjunct faculty teaching at multiple institutions.
 - C. A number of pros and cons regarding forwarding email were discussed. IT Sherman doesn't feel he has the manpower to troubleshoot glitches. Should this, including pros and cons, be incorporated into newsletter?
 - D. There was discussion about whether this issue would make an appropriate newsletter article. As such an article could generate dissent, however, it was decided that a simple article addressing how to check email off-campus would be more desirable, containing a reminder that each faculty account has a storage capacity of 30 megs.
- VI. Tigermail's compliance with ADA standards: this item made the agenda due to a single anonymous, nonspecific complaint. Prof. Altimari noted that it's actually official policy in ADA law that complaints need to be specific to be viable. Due to the lack of details in the complaint itself, it could not be addressed.
- VII. IT Director Sherman stated that he would send out a reminder that anyone could opt out of Community Dialogue. Prof. Ford asked if this could be a newsletter "tip."
- VIII. Frequency of creating passwords in QCC's Outlook.
 - A. IT Director Sherman feels that if passwords are allowed to remain for longer than 120 days, security might be comprised. (The expiration date was recently changed from 90 days to 120 days.) The issue is not principally email access; it is the network logon.

- B. Prof. Altimari asked if the password could simply be changed once a semester, rather than, say, every 6 weeks.
 - C. Chair Thorsen noted that changing a password can be a bit difficult when done remotely. For example, the domain is “qcctwo”, but there is no prompt for this on the screen. The “Account” must be “qcctwo\username” if your password has expired. If one changes the password before it expires, at least there is a block for Domain name, but no reminder that this is “qcctwo.”
 - D. IT Director Sherman said, in the course of the next month, he would revise these password change screens, and add more specific instructions.
- IX. Policy on installation of personal or downloaded apps on school work stations
- A. IT Director Sherman said that he would bring draft to next meeting regarding specific policy.
 - B. Prof. Ellerton tried to download a small app from the N.I.H.; would this be a problem?
 - C. ACC Director Naples is constantly testing new apps in the A.A.C.; thus, they would constantly be violating such a procedure. He also noted that disallowing certain downloads could be a potential academic freedom issue.
 - D. It was noted that there are so many discipline-specific programs that a list of allowable programs and updates would be untenable.
- X. Online reporting of grading and attendance
- A. IT is just starting to test a program of an online grading system.
 - B. The question arose of whether online grading would eventually be required, or whether there would be a choice between paper and online reporting of grades. The unwieldiness of the current paper forms was discussed. Prof. Grant suggested remedying this by taping Excel file sheets of grades onto the forms themselves
 - C. Chair Thorsen asked how exploration of online grading could be a front burner issue. Could there be a faculty survey, to see how many would be interested in this option? IT Director Sherman replied that a survey was unnecessary, as there should be a pilot program of online grading ready by the Fall 2006. It was suggested that the newsletter could just simply inform the faculty that this was on the horizon, without citing specific dates.
- XI. Notification from IT when new programs or updates are downloaded to Office Computers.
- A. Chair Thorsen noted that Surveyor shuts off computers automatically at or about 11 PM. This is an issue because some faculty schedule updates or downloads over the weekend or at odd times.
 - B. IT Director Sherman will make sure to provide notification to all faculty regarding any automatically downloaded software.
- XII. Issues involving Mac computers

- A. An anonymous, generic and vague complaint was issued by a faculty member, involving alleged troubles of Mac users regarding use of all online resources at QCC.
 - B. "The Knack of using a Mac" might be a useful headline for a newsletter article, addressing easy techniques for successfully using all online features at QCC.
 - C. IT Director Sherman noted that any Macs on desktops are not officially supported; they were rotated out of labs, and not supplied. Some departments necessarily have to use Macs, due to discipline-specific needs, wherein they will need to buy software/hardware not required by other depts. There is no funding outside of dept. budgets, already miniscule, for faculty software/hardware upgrades. Tech fee money is inappropriate for such allocations, as all tech fee money must somehow directly aid and assist students.
- XIII. Updated class lists of officially enrolled students: when multiple instructors are teaching a course, only one instructor receives the list.
- A. The primary instructor can simply just forward the list to the secondary instructor.
 - B. The lists are also automatically updated on Blackboard.
- XIV. Funding for new software
- A. IT Director Sherman has a CUNY-wide list of programs for which we have licenses.
 - B. The first step is always to consult the department chair. This will also be newsletter "tip."
- XV. Mechanisms for receiving upgraded workstations:
- A. All office workstations are hand-me-downs. There isn't a consistent timetable for availability of decommissioned machines. Machines currently go through a 4-year cycle.
 - B. An article for the newsletter was suggested, clarifying procedures for attempting to secure upgraded office workstations. One's department chair must always be consulted first.
- XVI. Discussion of extended warranties:
- A. Prof. Naples opined that the warranties were advantageous because no support staff is necessary, and we don't have to deal with any bookkeeping. Furthermore, \$53.10 per unit extends the warranty to 4 years.
 - B. The entire committee felt that this issue had been satisfactorily resolved.
- XVII. Newsletter: Karen Grant will be the design editor for the CCR newsletter. All article drafts should first be sent to Prof. Ellerton for editing.
- XVIII. New business
- A. Blackboard: Prof. Naples noted that the biggest issue is students remembering usernames and passwords. Greater dissemination of instructions, sent as email or prominently linked, has helped quite a bit. Blackboard has had very few problems crashing, although when it does, the most prevalent culprit is the CUNY Portal. There has been a way of

circumventing this that has been implemented; this has helped quite a bit. Update to Blackboard has made it more user-friendly as well.

1. Adjunct faculty are still having problems getting into BB, because for all intents and purposes, they are fired and rehired each semester.
 2. Various idiosyncrasies of using PowerPoint with BB were discussed; often, complicated graphics aren't even used by students on screen, who simply print out the info.
- B. New projects.
1. ACC Director Naples announced that interest in podcasting has been flourishing on campus. There was a podcasting demo on February 22nd, sponsored by the Music Department. Integration of podcasting with Blackboard is being worked on. Prof. Bernacke (ECET Dept.) has already implemented podcasts with his classes, and is up to 4 episodes.
 2. The Foreign Languages Department is looking into WIMBA, an interactive voice program. The system includes clickers, which students can use in class to respond periodically to the instructor, and to register their comprehension of elements in class.
- C. IT is testing some new spyware programs, a new spamblocking appliance, and a new commencement system for tracking students, making the whole process more automated. They are also fine-tuning the advisement system so that compliance with TAP is immediately apparent. A new Exchange program will be implemented. Evaluation of new, different single-source providers, via the Enterprise Resource Planning initiative, will integrate a replacement of SIMS with all other relevant programs. Servers with larger bandwidths will also be implemented, although the timescale is not clear.
- D. QCC is currently the largest user of BB-hosted classes among CUNY CCs. It was agreed that Queensborough's abundant use of Blackboard would be in CCR's upcoming newsletter.
- E. E-Portfolio is up and running with Music Dept. ME and Business Dept.

Respectfully submitted,

Geoffrey Burleson
Secretary, CCR