

QCC COMMITTEE on COMPUTER RESOURCES

An Academic Senate Standing Committee

Minutes

Meeting of April 4, 2011 at 8 am

Members in attendance: John Buoncora; G. Michael Guy; Jo Pantaleo; Amy Traver; George Sherman, Vazgen Shekoyan (also in attendance, Bruce Naples, as Director of the ACC)

The meeting began at 8:10am with approval of the previous meeting's minutes and Amy Traver's announcement that Joel Kuszai had resigned from the position of Chair of the Computer Resources Committee. She presented two different options for the committee, post-resignation: conclude the semester without a Chair or elect a new Chair. Michael Guy asserted that the committee should proceed by electing Amy Traver Chair. John Buoncora agreed, as did Jo Pantaleo. John also mentioned that Nidhi Gadura, a committee member who was not present at the meeting, also supported Amy's election to Chair. Amy agreed to assume the position through the end of the semester.

As Chair, Amy turned the meeting over to George Sherman, the President's representative to the Committee and the Director of Information Technology, for discussion of the QCC five-year Tech plan. (Prior to the meeting, George had been presented with the committee's emailed, informal comments on the plan. The meeting had been called to facilitate discussion of the plan).

George mentioned that this was a five-year plan for the college. As a result, it sets the direction for the college's technology efforts over the next five years. He then proceeded to respond to the committee's informal comments.

- In reference to comments on the technology needs of the Basic Skills department/lab, George mentioned that the plan outlined an effort to move forward with the technology offered in the department.
- In reference to comments on the wireless strength across campus, George directed faculty to send him emails re. when/where they have problems logging on to the Internet wirelessly. Michael asked about the purpose of the wireless log-in verification page. George mentioned that the Aruba system served to protect the college's wireless network.
- In reference to comments on clickers, George stated that the college is working to expand the number of clicker sets and boxes available; currently 8 rooms have 30 clickers each. Amy asked about less formal opportunities to engage students, like polleverywhere.com. Bruce stated that this was something to explore in the future, but that there were concerns about students' messaging plans and cell-phone capabilities as they are opportunities that rely on student cell use.
- In reference to comments on the library classrooms, George mentioned that the library can't fit an additional library classroom.
- In reference to comments on ADA compliance re. teaching technology, Bruce stated that the college has software, which must be trained to a professor's voice, to facilitate close-captioning of classroom and online media. For online videos created for P/F-Net classes, Bruce stated that Dragon Naturally Speaking will take a transcript of speech, which can then be fed into youtube.com. Amy asked about Magpie. Bruce mentioned that Dragon Naturally Speaking was the best resource.
- In response to comments about the availability of LB24, George stated that the classroom is no longer utilized primarily by ST100.
- In response to comments on the upkeep of podia, George stated that podia users must tell ACC when there is a problem with a podium. Bruce mentioned that there is a help button on each podium; faculty need only push the button for live-person help. Amy mentioned that she had never seen the button, and Michael asked if there were plans to make the button more accessible.
- In response to comments on faculty webpages, Bruce mentioned that the college has offered a number of workshops to encourage faculty development of webpages but that no one ever registers. Amy stated that, as a new faculty member, she had never seen such workshops

- advertised and that she was concerned by the advice that she had received from ACC to create a Google page in lieu of an institutional page. Michael, who, as a website coordinator, is responsible for the Math Department's faculty pages, stated that he encourages faculty to create Google pages to augment their basic faculty pages. Michael also wondered if the new CMS would allow faculty to update their basic faculty pages from anywhere.
- In response to comments on classroom technology, George mentioned that there were 14 mobile tech carts, but that this was a solution that was not maintainable because of laptop battery issues, etc. He mentioned that there were 80-90 smart classrooms on campus, of which 56 were general classrooms. Amy asked about creating less expensive technology delivery systems, like tech cabinets (rather than podia). George mentioned that this had been attempted in some departments, but that the technology was stolen. According to Bruce, the podia are sturdy and centrally maintained and the college is moving towards a parts closet to facilitate quick repairs. Bruce also mentioned that VP Newcomb and President Call were contemplating a new protocol to encourage department chairs to allocate tech-friendly classrooms to the appropriate tech-using faculty. In addition, Bruce mentioned that converting traditional classrooms to tech classrooms was a process: they have to be of an appropriate size, and that, in contemplating less formal solutions (like mounting projectors in rooms and installing a box for laptop hook up), there is often concern with things like asbestos abatement.
 - Bruce mentioned that it seems like the ACC and IT departments were struggling to communicate the tech resources available for faculty to faculty. Amy stated that this was an opportunity for the Computer Resources Committee to help both departments and the needy faculty.
 - Amy mentioned that laptops and projects were not the only problems in the classroom. The projector screens in classrooms are often broken. Bruce and George wondered if the installation of projectors and new screens could be a tech-fee project. They also wondered if the screens were the purview of Buildings & Grounds.
 - Bruce mentioned that it is important to pay attention to how Professors use their rooms/technology – smart boards, podia, screen-drawing, circuits and tablet computers, iPads. He referenced a faculty member who bought an iPad to use in his classroom. Amy wondered if there was a way that CETL could sponsor technology grants to support similar pedagogical needs and desires among faculty. Bruce mentioned that this would be a good way to feed creativity and grow campus technology and faculty usage. The faculty who receive these grants could then go on to teach other faculty how to access and use these resources.
 - In response to comments on the resources available to faculty via CETL, George mentioned that this was an issue that needed to be addressed to/by CETL.
 - In response to comments about Blackboard, Bruce stated that CUNY central was going to be moving to version 9 but that there was no timetable for that move.
 - In response to comments about student use of Blackboard, various committee members wondered about offering students workshops on Blackboard (maybe in ST100). Bruce mentioned that ACC often hosted these workshops in the context of individual classes.
 - A question was raised about producing material for youtube and the need to know what resources exist on campus to do so.
 - Jo mentioned that a small group of young/new faculty is beginning to get frustrated about the relative lack of technology on campus. She stressed the need to communicate what is available – perhaps with a newsletter or an organizational chart on the website. Bruce referenced that the ACC was in the process of developing a “technology corner” for the faculty/staff website. According to Bruce, the goal of this development was to help make things clearer to faculty/staff.
 - In response to comments about marketing QCC via technology and beyond, George stated that the college has contracted for spots on CBS News Radio 88AM, and that TV is expensive and the college's marketing budget is limited. He also mentioned that the college has had record enrollment over the last few semesters.
 - In response to comments about making software available to students, Bruce mentioned that the engineering program provides access to every Microsoft product for their students. He also mentioned that students receive software discounts via CUNY mall. Questions about licenses for Maplesoft and Adobe C5, as well as SPSS, were also raised. Bruce stated that QCC has little leverage in these situations, except through CUNY.

- In response to comments on tech support, George stated that the IT department couldn't support online chat but that they offer phone support and remote control
- In response to comments about the speed of CUNY First, George stated that CUNY First's servers are hosted by an Oracle partner in Atlanta. Michael stated that the servers are slow and that the overall design of CUNY first is difficult to navigate and not intuitive. George mentioned that all faculty should submit specific complaints about failed or difficult transactions on CUNY first to the QCC Help Desk. Members of the committee expressed surprise that the campus did not have more direct control and voice, through the IT Department, of the system. George referenced that there was a process in place and that the only way to enact change in that process was for users to file specific, formal complaints about the system through the system.
- In response to comments about scantron grading machines, George explained that these machines were a departmental concern.
- In response to comments about printing posters, Bruce mentioned that there was a plotter in the Chemistry department. Amy mentioned that this was another example of the communication problem that exists on campus.
- In response to comments about the number of emails students receive, George explained that students now receive a newsletter/digest with information compiled by VP Hartigan's office. Michael wondered why students can't get information on how to configure their mobile devices to receive college email. George explained that his office can't field the number of requests received by students on this topic. Michael suggested that the IT department create one document that explains how students can configure their phones on their own. George stated that his office would move forward in creating this document. Amy also wondered about a student help desk, staffed by student tech fee interns, to assist students with such matters. George referenced the lack of space for such a desk, as well as the manpower required to train and supervise the new student staff.
- In response to additional comments about the college's website, particularly the lack of uniformity of the site, Bruce stated that the ACC does not write the content for the site but rather maintains the infrastructure. He referenced that it is the department coordinators who are expected to keep up each department site.
- In response to comments about Degree Works, George stated that it works with CUNY First.
- In response to comments about online library resources, George mentioned that Professor Galvin will be adding content to the Library website in an effort to explain the recent partnering with NYU and NYPL. Bruce also mentioned the use of technology in the library particularly how two library faculty are using iPads and serving as "roving reference librarians."
- In response to comments about the website banners, Bruce stated that the content comes from the marketing department.
- In response to comments about the availability of Endnote, Bruce explained that the college offers access to Refworks.

Bruce encouraged the committee to revisit the "future" section of the five-year plan and to think more boldly about the direction we would like the college to move in.

The meeting concluded at 10am.

Respectfully submitted,
 Amy Traver
 Secretary & Chair
 Committee on Computer Resources