MINUTES

Academic Information Technology Committee Meeting

Date: April 4, 2008
Place: Library Conference Room

Present Greg Anderson; Janet Wilke; Nanette Hogg; Deb Schroeder; Scott Fredrickson; Ross Taylor

Absent: Ken Messersmith; Joseph Benz; Michael Andrews; Daryl Kelley,

Other: Brandon Hammond, Mark Nuss

Meeting called to order by Chair Ross Taylor at 2:07

Web-based course evaluations: Issues related to web-based course evaluations were discussed. On the positive side online evaluation would allow for faculty members to receive the results quicker once a semester is completed. Another positive is that online evaluation could be implemented in such a way that confidentiality is enhanced by having all the results stored in a central secured server.

Areas of concern were also discussed. One area of concern expressed is the possibility of online technical problems being blamed on the instructor. Another area of concern is that the data collected should be kept confidential and should only be report in aggregate form and even then only when the unit sample size is sufficient to assure confidentiality is maintained. The lack of an audit trail and where the data would be stored were also areas of concern.

Scott informed the committee that the web-based course evaluations are only going to be used for online courses for now. The committee members asked Scott to serve as an intermediary between e-campus, faculty senate, and AITC. He agreed.

Three goals were agreed upon that should be kept in mind for web-based course evaluations going forward.

1. Any pooled data should be anonymous.
2. The level of confidentiality should remain the same as, or greater than, current data collected unless approved by faculty senate.
3. All data should go to one central secure location and should be handled only by professional staff.

Vista
Brandon Hammond and Deborah Schroeder provided an overview of current plans for the campus-wide transition to Microsoft Vista. This was followed by a discussion and some modifications in the process to ease problems associated with implementation of the new
operating system. A summary of the discussion is below in a question and answer format that will be posted on the UNK intranet for easy reference.

Q: Why should UNK start adopting MS Vista as the standard operating system now instead of waiting until after another service pack is released?

A: There are 4 main reasons, in no particular order, are:

1. Many of the general purpose labs are being upgraded this summer. If we install machines with Windows XP in all of those labs they will have XP on the machines until the next time the labs are updated. It would be possible for ITS to migrate those machines to Vista at a later date but there would be a significant labor cost associated with uninstalling XP and installing Vista on hundreds of machines.

2. Most computers that are purchased by consumers come with Vista installed. This means that many of the incoming freshmen will have Vista on their machine. According to ITS, most students who have purchased a computer recently have Vista on their computer.

3. When students visit UNK it will be harder to recruit if we project an image of being backward technologically.

4. New computers are being sold with Vista as the default operating system. Microsoft recently announced that starting on June 30, 2008 all PC makers will have to install Vista. (There are a few exceptions; low powered devices such as the ASUS EEE can continue to run XP.) This means that faculty, staff, and student computers purchased after that time will have Vista on them. We will still be able to install XP on those machines when there is a reason but we will not be able to buy machines with XP already on them (unless MS changes their policy). This means businesses will be forced to start moving to Vista so our graduates will increasingly use Vista when they graduate.

Q: When will the transition occur?
A: New computers are being installed with Vista on them unless the user has a compelling reason to use XP instead. As a general rule, existing machines will not be upgraded until they reach the end of their service life and are replaced.

Q: My departmental lab is running some older software that is not Vista compatible. Do we have to upgrade?
A: No, labs will be updated as computers are replaced. If your existing lab serves your purpose well using older software that might have problems with Vista then you should consider a delay in upgrading that lab.

Q: When will faculty machines be upgraded?
A: As new machines are purchased. Old machines will only be updated on request and with a reason.
Q: How different is XP from Vista? Is this going to interfere with my ability to use the classrooms?
A: Short training sessions and a presentation will be made during each college’s opening year meetings subject to approval by the deans. Vista is very similar to XP but the location of a few buttons has moved. These changes can be pointed out quickly and easily. For the average user the transition from XP to Vista is a simple one. For power users the change in some of the more uncommon functions has been more significant so the learning curve for advanced functions will be a little steeper.

Q: Which version of Vista will we use?
A: Vista Enterprise.

Q: Is Vista Blackboard compatible?
A: Blackboard runs at least as well under Vista as it does any other operating system. While those of you who primarily work in a Mac environment probably just let out a groan because of your problems with Blackboard in that environment Blackboard is fully supported in Vista and works well.

Q: Will I have problems reading files that were saved in XP?
A: No, Vista is an operating system and will not affect how applications such as MS Office save their files.

Q: Where can I find out more information?
A: An FAQ page will be developed to answer the most common questions. Users are also welcome to call the normal ITS help desk with Vista questions. We are actually trailing behind many of our students in the adoption of Vista. The ITS help desk is already seeing a large percentage of our students are using Vista.

This was the last planned meeting of the AITC for this academic year.

Meeting adjourned at 3:37

Submitted by: Ross Taylor