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ACADEMIC POLICIES COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Meeting Time: 8:00 am Nov. 2, 2001
Meeting Place: KU 253
Presiding: James Dunne
Senators Present: Bartlett, Dunne, Erdei, Jukanovic, Johnson, Pedrotti, Saliba, Sargent
Guest: Tom Skill

Handouts: Tom Skill provided three handouts. These were entitled "University of Dayton System Specifications for August 2002," University of Dayton First Year Student Computer Survey, October 2000," and "Student Computer Requirement Discussion."

1.   The minutes of the Sept. 21, 2001 meeting of the APC were approved.

2.   Summary of action taken and action needed with regards to the new +/- grading system.

James Dunne noted that the committee need take no more action regarding the impact of the new +/- grading system on undergraduate policy and that the possible need for policy changes related to graduate education, brought on by the new graduate +/- grading system, would be discussed at the next meeting of the APC.

3.   Discussion with Tom Skill regarding the student computer requirement and related issues.

(A)   Possible move to a "notebook" only requirement.

Tom Skill noted that strong consideration was being given to require that students entering the University in the fall 0f 2003 purchase notebook computers. (That is, students would no longer be permitted to satisfy the computer requirement by purchasing a desktop computer.) He cited several reasons for the possible move to a notebook-only requirement.

• The Business school is going to a notebook-only option and some business classes are partially populated by non-business students. If notebooks were required in these classes there would be a conflict.

• Student surveys show that notebook users are somewhat more satisfied with their computers than are desktop users.

• Notebooks are mobile and so could be used in classes.

• Notebooks are mobile and so allow students to avail themselves of a wider variety of places to do homework, study, or do research.

• Notebooks are much easier to maintain since they can be dropped off for service. This eliminated the headache associated with scheduling

maintenance of fixed location desktops.

In 2002 students will be permitted to choose from among 2 notebook configurations and one desktop option. The current plan is to offer only notebook options in 2003. Tom Skill noted that there would be an open bid for a new provider in 2003.

Joe Saliba asked if the lease option was still being considered. Tom Skill said that it was not completely ruled out, but it appears not to be a good option because it is not much less costly (to the student) than buying. University payment plans provide a better option for the student and leave them with an asset after payment is finished.

It was noted that before notebooks could be used in classrooms, power and web access would need to be added to classrooms. Tom Skill noted that this was a current budget request priority and he hoped to be able to upgrade 10 to 15 classrooms a year over the next several years. The current plan is to use some form of wireless Internet access in the classrooms.

(B) Other computer related issues.

Maria Jukanovic noted that some faculty members are in need of technology training. Tom Skill said that the current plan is to implement "just in time" training by having technology support people available to help faculty members operate equipment in the classrooms when needed and to instruct the faculty members as needed.

Joe Saliba asked about plans for the current centrally funded University computer labs. Tom Skill noted that there was no immediate plan to abandon these labs, but, where appropriate, funds for these labs could be redirected to serve the users of these labs in other ways. It was noted that departments often provide the funds for support of the labs at least in terms of the purchase of specialized software. Tom Skill agreed that some of this financial burden should be shared at a central level and that the university should aggressively seek favorable licensing contracts.

Leno Pedrotti noted that occasional downed servers and lack of email access placed restrictions on how much faculty could rely on email and Internet resources being constantly available to students. Tom Skill said that this was an area of active concern and that the university needed to provide nearly continuous reliable email, Internet, and crucial server access.

The issue of the unreliability of dial-in access to the university servers was raised. Tom Skill agreed that this was a problem and that steps were being taken to improve the reliability of the existing service but that no major overhaul of the existing system would likely be undertaken because of the likelihood that cable modems and the like would soon become the dominant mode of access to the University servers from off campus.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 am.

Wearily submitted by Leno Pedrotti.