Committee on Information Technology

Total Meetings: 4  
Meeting frequency: As needed  
Average hours of committee work each week: varies

Total Requests for Consultation responses: None  
Total of reviewed proposals deferred from the previous year: None  
Total proposals deferred to the coming academic year: None

Listing of bylaw changes proposed: None

Listing of committee policies established or revised: None

Issues considered by the committee:
- Open Access Policy
- Course Evaluations
- Privacy of Communication and Data
- Effective Use of IT at UCD
- Online Education
- New Learning Management System (LMS)
- The Kuali System

COMMITTEE’S NARRATIVE

The committee met a total of 4 times during the 2013-2014 academic year. Meetings were scheduled on an as needed basis. The Academic Senate Information System (ASIS) was used to notify members and distribute relevant information about the committee’s upcoming meetings.

Given below is a brief description of major tasks with potential issues that the committee addressed during the 2013-2014 academic year.

New Learning Management System (LMS)
UC Davis IET is working on replacing the current SmartSite with a new LMS system. The schedule for this replacement calls for the evaluation of the most popular systems during the 2014-2015 academic year. Upon completion of the evaluation period, one of the systems will be adopted. The current SmartSite system will be slowly phased out (over the academic year 2015-2016), while class data that is currently housed within SmartSite will be migrated to the new system with the assistance of IET staff.

Potential Issue: We hope that the transition will be as painless and transparent as possible, for those that use SmartSite and for those that choose to use the new LMS. However, it is not presently clear how many faculty actually use SmartSite for managing their classes. This information was repeatedly requested from the IET, but was never presented. An informal poll at the last meeting of this committee showed that of 4 committee members present, only one is actually using SmartSite, while others use alternative tools to manage their class IT requirements.

Privacy of Communication and Data
Planned migration of the email system to an outside provider (completed for student users, and partially completed for faculty and staff) and the start of a new LMS, that is much more data intensive and networked, raises concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of communications (emails, class communications/posting, etc.). University of California Office of the President issued an Electronic Communications Policy (ECP) (November 17, 2000, Revised August 18, 2005, available online at: http://policy.ucop.edu/doc/7000470/ElectronicCommunications), which should guide all university wide communications, and resolve/guide privacy and communication confidentiality issues.
Potential Issue: It is not clear if current/planned migration to an outside email provider and currently planned replacement of LMS with a new system is following mentioned UCOP Electronic Communications Policy. It would be advisable to establish that the University of California is not violating its own policy (ECP) and privacy and confidentiality of communications.

Assessment of effectiveness of IT for Faculty

Information Technologies (IT) have become part of everyday life at UC Davis. Faculty rely on IT services for teaching, research and service. From the Faculty point of view, IT services are encompassing a wide range of software and hardware services, for example: communications (email), WWW presence (web servers), networking (wired and wireless), access to student data (class rosters, prerequisites, etc), research project management (project funding information), and other information used in everyday teaching, research and service activities. In view of importance of IT services to Faculty, it is essential that they are reliable and of certain quality.

UCD IT services have been, for the most part, reliable and of high quality. In addition, UCD administration is continuously improving the quality and reliability of IT services. There are, however, aspects of IT at UCD that can be improved and serve faculty needs even better.

Potential Issue: There are some categories of IT services that might need further attention in order to better serve faculty needs.

- Transition to service centers (started few years ago) is not complete yet. Present compartmentalization of IT services presents certain problems for faculty. Various IT services, that are, from faculty point of view, similar, connected and related, are handled by different UCD departments (IET, Registrars Office, Research Funding Administration, etc.). Communication between these departments is sometimes lacking. This lack of communication between different IT departments sometimes causes problems resulting in reduced service quality and reliability for the UCD faculty.
- Certain services, even within single service center/ IT department are not as reliable or of the quality that they need to be, and that sometimes presents problems to the Faculty. While this oscillation in quality and reliability of IT services can be expected during transition periods, it is essential that these services are established again at the level necessary to serve all the needs of UCD Faculty.

Open Access Policy

Open Access Policy was briefly discussed. UCOP is driving this and we will have papers/reports/etc. online soon.

Online Course Evaluations (OCE)

Online Course Evaluations (OCE) was briefly discussed. Departments did implement OCE, data is still sketchy if participation has improved (or not).

Online Education

MOOCS were discussed briefly, mostly in terms of intellectual property and conflict of commitment. There is nothing organized at the UCD level, but faculty are welcome to post their educational material online as they see fit.

Kuali System

The Kuali System was discussed as one of the examples of lack of proper support for faculty.

The committee’s principal work during the next academic year (2014-2015) will be on addressing and following the above three major issues; New Learning Management System, Privacy of Communication and Data, and Assessment of effectiveness of IT for Faculty. We also welcome comments and suggestions that will help guide us in addressing these and other IT issues of direct interest to the Faculty of the University of California at Davis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Boris Jeremic (Chair), Giacomo Bonanno (Member), James Fadel (Member), Neils Jensen (Member), Vladimir Yarov-Yarovoy (Member), Kun Di (AF Rep), Prasant Mohapatra (Ex-Officio), Allen Tu, ASUCD (Representative), Sona Hosseini (GSA Representative), Judi Garcia (Analyst).