

May 17, 2011

JEFF BARRETTPPM 200-45 Review Coordinator
Informational and Educational Technology**Re: PPM 200-45 Review: Law School Concept: Secure Polling/Voting System Development**

The Davis Division of the Academic Senate forwarded your request for review to all of the standing committees of the Division as well as Faculty Executive Committees within each college/professional school. The Committees on Elections Rules and Jurisdiction, Information Technology and the Chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel-Oversight responded.

As stated in the Committee on Elections Rules and Jurisdiction response, this proposal would provide a service for the Law School and eventually the general campus that is already provided by some units. The Davis Division of the Academic Senate, in particular, has this functionality built into its Academic Senate Information System (ASIS). Since such systems are already in place, it would likely be less expensive to adapt it (or other similar existing system) for use at the Law School and the general campus. The proposal claims that anonymity in voting could be provided by the system. Any system developed along these lines would have to be rigorously tested to the satisfaction of potential users of the system to guarantee anonymity, which is essential in many voting situations.

The proposal is quite vague regarding cost. "It is our intent that this process helps flush [sic] out some of the ongoing costs for maintaining this system and helps develop an equitable distribution of those costs." Further, it is an "assumption" that "An ongoing funding model can be developed to reduce the support costs to the Law School." Given there is at present a severe budgetary crisis confronting the campus--one which can reasonably be expected to continue for a number of years. Some have asked if this is the best time to begin a project of this kind, particularly, given it duplicates similar systems on campus. A thorough cost-benefit analysis should be conducted. The project should not move forward unless the analysis demonstrates improvement and that the project is at least revenue-neutral.

Given the need for increased innovation and transformation on campus now, it is easy to overwhelm the community with a number of conceptual proposals that may or may not lead to a productive outcome. The Davis Division calls upon campus leadership to continue engaging the community at an early, even conceptual, stage to ensure all impacted have an opportunity to increase understanding of new initiatives as they are fleshed out. However, care needs to be exercised to demonstrate respect for the time devoted by faculty, staff and students involved with all such reviews. Davis Division leadership is always weighing its commitment to timely and thorough reviews against opportunity costs: faculty time and potential impacts of other projects. It must be recognized that time put to one task takes away from effort that might be more fruitfully spent elsewhere.

Given the above, the Davis Division is not able to support the concept at this time.

Sincerely,



Robert Powell, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Chair & Professor: Chemical Engineering & Materials Science
Professor: Food Science & Technology

c: Vice Chancellor Meyer
Vice Provost Siegel