Davis Division Academic Senate

Request for Consultation Responses

Polling/Secure Voting System Concept: PPM 200-45 Review

April 7, 2011

Policy and Procedure Manual 200-45 sets forth a process for review of proposals for new computing systems. The School of Law is circulating a concept paper regarding creation of a polling/secure voting system. Initially, the system is being created for use by the School of Law exclusively. However, there is a possibility that such a system would have broader use implication and thus the concept review has been initiated and Davis Division response requested.

CAP Oversight Committee

April 11, 2011 10:56 AM

To me there wasn't enough information to make an intelligent evaluation pro or con as to whether this was a good way to go (other than my view that recent creations of campus IT services have been a mixed bag; e.g. smartsite which I think is pretty awful, and MIV which is now pretty good).

I would hope that when doing such a polling system they manage to design it so one can log on to it from myucd (or less attractively, smartsite), rather than emailing links that asking users to click on them, type in their password, and then vote. This invites malicious users to harvest uc davis passwords, and has been common practice on campus (for example, the recent poll on campus email).

Chip

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES)

April 18, 2011 3:36 PM

No response at this time.

Elections, Rules & Jurisdiction

April 7, 2011 1:16 PM

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 a system is 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." No conceptual approval of the project whatsoever should be given before the costs are specified, and not merely "some" of the costs.

Finally, there is at present a severe budgetary crisis confronting the campus--one which can reasonably be expected to continue for a number of years. This is an inappropriate time to be bringing forward a project of this kind unless a cost-benefit analysis demonstrates that shows dramatic, substantive improvement and that the project is at least revenue-neutral.

Information Technology

April 1, 2011 1:59 PM

Re: Response to RFCPolling/Secure Voting System Concept 200-45

The information Technology Committee agrees that it seems reasonable for the School of Law to proceed with a secure system that guarantees that only qualified persons vote and ensures anonymity for the voter. It was noted that this type of system is currently being used in other departments and has reduced staff workload considerably. The committee suggests the School of Law investigate and consider these other systems before developing a new system.

Planning & Budget

March 2, 2011 10:18 AM

No response at this time.