

MINUTES
Computing Committee
Information Systems Building
February 2, 1994
3:30PM

PRESENT: K.B. Rojiani, Sean Arthur, Erv Blythe, John Burton,
David Goodyear, Katherine Johnston, Gerry McLaughlin,
Harlan Miller, Bhaba Misra, Sandra Muse (for Earnest
Stout), Barbara Robinson (for Michael Williams),
Peter Shires, Dan Taylor, John Tombarge

ABSENT: Gregory Brown, Scott Johnson, George Libey, Tom McAnge,
Terry Rakes, Frank Schima, Lawrence Skelly,
Jay Stoeckel

VISITOR(S): Bill Sanders (Computing Center)
Joe Tront (College of Engineering)

AGENDA ITEM 1: MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER AND JANUARY MEETINGS (Rojiani)

Motion made, seconded and passed to approve the minutes of the December and January meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 2: COMMITTEE ISSUES (Rojiani)

SITE LICENSE SUBCOMMITTEE (Robinson)

The subcommittee met in December and funded cost-sharing proposals for MathWorks and Atlas GIS. The Microsoft proposal still faces legal hurdles. The Acrobat proposal has been modified and will be revisited during the next evaluation period. Proposals for MacroMedia and Lotus have been forwarded to the bookstore, which is investigating the feasibility of offering the products.

The subcommittee also met in January to reexamine its mission. Discussion centered around the possibility of becoming more proactive in order to assure that the committee's money is wisely spent and its activities focused on productive ideas. To further this goal, the subcommittee will experiment with assigning a member to each proposal to communicate with both the author and vendor, as necessary, to assure all proposals get a thorough evaluation.

Communication was also discussed. Increased interest has been shown since flyers asking for proposals were distributed to all faculty. Information on INFO and Gopher will also be enhanced to include proposals under consideration and those which have been rejected.

New proposals will be examined shortly after the next deadline, February 7.

TEMPORARY COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION ISSUES (Goodyear)

A temporary subcommittee charged with identifying transition issues developed the following list:

- o Communication of what is going on is important - what is the best way to accomplish effective communication and what needs to be communicated?
- o What services will or should be provided centrally vs. locally?
- o Where does one go to get technical help as the computing environment changes rapidly?

- o Who needs to be trained and at what level - who will do training?
- o Should there be a transition committee for the conversion and who should be on it? What would their role be?
- o Are students getting what they need to function effectively in today's workplaces with respect to computer training?
- o What is the perception of technology on the part of the instructional staff and is that the proper or desired perception?
- o Where does one go to obtain the official University data for the various areas that need it? Also, what help is available in retrieving such data?
- o There are different variations of mail, calendars and other packages currently being used around the University. Will there or should there be some sort of standards developed that can be used to help select compatible packages?

Many of these items grew out of the January discussion of the new administrative systems proposal, indicating an interest in pursuing details not included in the presentation. Since the Computing Committee is the only place where all the constituencies are represented, it is appropriate to consider what role it might play in the transition. Students' needs are an undergraduate curriculum issue, however, although the committee might assure processes are in place to allow the training to take place.

Planning for a transition is underway within Information Systems. If no serious impediments are disclosed during the planning phase, the project is expected to go forward, with over 100 people outside of IS fully involved within 90 days. The infrastructure development and training at the desktop will continue regardless. The need to meet state and federal mandates does not appear to be a significant problem.

Information Systems will be meeting with President Torgersen in mid-February to apprise of him of the proposal. The aggressive plan entails significant risk which needs to be evaluated at all levels with care. At this point, however, there is substantial momentum.

Committee members emphasized the importance of continued communication to the University regarding the project, suggesting that quarterly forums be held, similar to the budget forums held for Deans, Directors and Department Heads. Effective communication can reduce frustration born of anxiety. Information Systems has begun producing Spectrum articles on a regular basis.

There was also considerable enthusiasm for increasing the training and support available at the University, with a significant investment focused on continuing development. Existing expertise within departments could be better utilized if incentives to participate were provided. The committee can assist in identifying areas of expertise and effective incentives. Adequate support will require resources far beyond that available in Computing Center User Services today.

Information Systems will offer comments on the subcommittee's issue list for discussion at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 3: ADMINISTRATIVE CLIENT PROJECT (Robinson)

The presentation was postponed until next month.

AGENDA ITEM 4: ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

none.

The next meeting will be held on March 2 at 3:30 p.m. in conference room D in the Information Systems Building.

Meeting adjourned at 5:06 p.m.