COMPUTER POLICY COMMITTEE
Annual Report
1994-95 Academic Year

The Computer Policy Committee met eight times during the academic year. Carla Garnham, Interim Director of the newly-formed Information and Media Technologies Division provided progress reports about the reorganization of computing services. The Committee also consulted with University Attorney Boylan on matters of computer privacy. Issues considered and actions taken included the following.

Committee consolidation. The Committee considered its relation to the Educational Media Policy Committee in light of the inclusion of both computing and media services within the new division. Both the CPC and the EMPC decided against consolidation of the two faculty committees because the issues considered by each usually are diverse. The Committees agreed to share agendas and minutes and to communicate about matters of common interest.

Cautionary message. The Committee recommended to the Vice Chancellor that a cautionary message be displayed when users enter the UWM system. The message states that the confidentiality of files (including e-mail) cannot be guaranteed. This action was necessitated by current legal interpretations of the University and other State agencies that the State's public records and freedom of information acts allow searches of accounts.

Student consulting. The Committee addressed complaints about the level of consulting services available within general access computer labs. Steps are being taken to improve services by hiring and training more capable people and by increasing publicity about the services already available.

Termination of repair services. The Committee considered the impact of replacing the campus repair service previously provided by the College of Applied Science and Engineering with service by outside vendors. Problems have not been become apparent so far, but the Committee will continue to monitor the consequences of this change.

Uneven support for computing. Although support for computing continues to increase campus-wide, the needs of some faculty members are not being met, particularly in disciplines in which computer use does not have a long tradition. Concerns in this area led the Committee to direct the following resolution to the Vice Chancellor:

That faculty members be guaranteed a functioning computer and up-to-date software as part of their working environments; and that if such needs are not met on the department or unit level, the faculty member should be eligible to apply to a campus-wide program of computer support, administered by the UWM administration and funded by contributions from all units on campus.

The Vice Chancellor indicated that he would welcome further discussions with the Committee about this matter; he did not, however, endorse the establishment of a separate funding mechanism through his office.

Future of mainframe computing. Increased use of the main university computers, particularly by students accessing the Internet and WWW, has the potential for overloading the system and interfering with faculty research. As a guide for future planning, the Committee began to consider procedures for collecting systematic information about how the computers are being used. Specific procedures will be developed during the coming academic year.
Committee Members

Alan Baron, Psychology (Chair)
*Leslie Blide, Health Science
Elizabeth Devine, Foundations of Nursing
Anoop Dhingra, Mechanical Engineering
Benjamin Feinberg, Chemistry
James Fisher, Administrative Leadership
Carla Garham, Information and Media Technologies (ex officio)
Timothy Haas, Business Administration
Robert Jones, Graduate School (ex officio)
Magda Kandil, Economics
Stephen Pevnick, Art
Andrea Stone, Art History
Leroy Stoner, Theater/Dance
Gilbert Walter, Mathematical Sciences

*Deceased

Submitted August 7, 1995