COMPUTER POLICY COMMITTEE
Annual Report: 1996-97 Academic Year

The Computer Policy Committee met nine times during the academic year. Provost Kenneth Watters attended one of the meetings to discuss issues pertaining to computer policy, and liaison was maintained with his office through Asst. Vice Chancellor Sona Andrews, who regularly attended subsequent meetings. Carla Garnham, Interim Director of the Instruction and Media Technology Division, who served as an ex-officio member of the Committee, delivered several reports on developments in the computer area. Issues considered and actions taken by the Committee are summarized below.

Committee Representatives to Other Groups. These include: the Advisory Committee on Educational Technology Fees, the Technology Round Table, and the Internet-II Steering Committee. As part of an effort by the University Committee to coordinate activities of committees with common interests, the Chair attended joint meetings with the Chairs of the Educational Media Policy, Research, and the Library Committees.

Distance Education. We considered whether policy issues in this rapidly developing area fall within the purview of the CPC. We concluded that the implications involve the entire campus, in addition to matters related to computers, and recommended to the Provost and the University Committee that an all-university task force be formed to address this issue.

Web Policy. We met with Paul Haubrich, UWM Web Coordinator who described his responsibilities, distributed a draft of guidelines, and responded to questions and concerns from members of the Committee. Important issues that remain to be resolved include: clarification of the distinction between personal and official use of university computers; procedures for adjudicating disputes in this area; and procedures for improving programming support for development of department and course home pages.

Internet-II. We discussed the value of membership in this group at our meeting with the Provost and recommended that UWM seek full membership. (UWM became a charter member in February of this year).

Campus Backbone Design. Members of the IT&MT Technical Services Department reported on the status of UW's internal and external networks and responded to questions and suggestions from Committee members. The goal of the project is to ensure that future campus demands will be met. Faculty input will be needed to help make decisions about resource priorities.

UW-System Cyberspace Policy. We reviewed a draft report of this policy and noted that it included a number of items already proposed by the CPC and the UWM Web Coordinator. The Committee forwarded its endorsement of the policy to the Provost and University Committee.

Off-Campus Access. The Committee received a report from Director Garnham about increasing off-campus demand for access to university computers and the burden this is placing on computer resources. A survey of practices at other universities revealed an increasing tendency to require students and faculty desiring efficient service to subscribe to outside providers. Although currently, access in not ly access is not a problem at UWM, we decided that it is not too early to develop plans in this area. As a result of Committee discussion, a motion was forwarded to the Provost and the University Committee to the effect that the University consider contracting services to an outside provider who can provide reliable and uninterrupted service, and that such a plan be implemented, all charges would be defrayed by the university. This recommendation was subsequently considered and approved by the University Senate.
Faculty Desktop Computing Needs. The survey, previously conducted in 1995, was repeated for the present academic year. The results were not encouraging. The report of the survey concluded that "little progress has been made in alleviating problems in faculty access to desktop computing reported last year," and that "current inadequacies in computing technology access and budgetary support are having deleterious consequences" for a wide range of programs within the university. According to the survey, approximately 35% of faculty either do not have, or do not have adequate, desktop computers, and 50% lack needed instructional and research software. The report was distributed to the Chancellor's office, Deans, Department Chairs and the University Committee.

Pros and Cons of Leasing Computers. This issue was prompted by continuing difficulties in obtaining needed support for repair and replacement of computers. Director Garnham reported on efforts by other universities to lease computers in order to meet this need. Although leasing contracts force annual budgeting for the cost of the lease, a major negative is the high interest rate. The sentiment of the Committee is that the University must develop improved budgetary procedures for support of repair and replacement of computers, if not through leasing, then by other means.

UWM's Email Address. At the request of the Web Coordinator Paul Haubrich, we considered the feasibility of dropping the "csd" tag from UWM's e-mail address. Preliminary discussion indicated that the change has some complex ramifications. We plan to invite Coordinator Haubrich to an early meeting in the Fall to discuss the need for such a change and the costs that will be involved.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Alan Baron, Psychology (Chair)
Martha Carlin, History (on leave, Sem. 2)
Darlyl Craig, Business Administration
Dave Edyburn, Exceptional Education
Benjamin Feinberg, Chemistry
Carla Garham, Information and Media Technologies (ex officio)
R. David Heathcote, Biological Science
Robert Jones, Graduate School (ex officio)
Edward Mabry, Communications
Paul McFally, Student Representative
Ethan Munson, Electrical Engineering/Computer Science
Hanh Trinh, Health Science
Andrea Stone, Art History
Jon Welstead, Music
John Zipp, Sociology

-------

Submitted August 11, 1997