COMPUTER POLICY COMMITTEE
Annual Report to the Faculty
1997-98 Academic Year

The Computer Policy Committee met seven times during the academic year. Provost Kenneth Watters attended one of our meetings to discuss issues pertaining to computer policy, and liaison was maintained with his office through Asst. Vice Chancellor Sona Andrews, who attended committee meetings. Joseph Douglas, Director of the Information and Media Technologies Division, an ex-officio member of the Committee, delivered several reports on developments in the computer area. One meeting was held jointly with the University Committee. In addition, the practice was continued of distributing committee minutes to members of the Educational Media Policy Committee, as well as the University Committee, and matters of common interest were discussed by the Chairs.

Issues considered and actions taken by the Committee over the year are summarized below. Minutes can be seen at our new Website: <http://www.uwm.edu:80/Dept/CPC/>.

Committee representatives to other groups. These included: the Advisory Committee on Educational Technology Fees, the Technology Round Table, the Internet-II Steering Committee, the Year 2000 Working group, and the Remote Access Working Group. Committee representatives kept the full committee informed about their activities.

Consulting services. Discussions were held with Director Douglas about steps being taken to improve services to users. He has conducted an extensive staff reorganization, and much of the newly remodeled space in Bolton Hall will be used for customer service functions, including: a larger and more efficient help desk; a computer lab; training facilities; and a computer purchase showroom.

Change in UWM's e-mail address. The proposal to simplify the address from 'csd.uwm.edu' to 'uwm.edu' was brought before the Committee late last year. However, some technical complications led the Committee to postpone a recommendation pending information from the new I&MT Director. His report indicated that the change is both desirable and practical. The conversion was recommended and now has been implemented.

Remote access. A continuing issue is the extent to which the present modem pool can support dial-in access to campus computers. Last year, the Committee recommended that in the event this function is transferred to an external provider: that uninterrupted and reliable service be continued; that academic freedom not be infringed by the new arrangement; and that the expense of commercial access be borne by the university rather than by the individual faculty user. The Committee expressed its continuing concern to the Provost about planning in this area. He has referred the matter to the Learning and Technology Roundtable, and he established a working group to investigate the options available to the campus. Reports from both groups are pending.

Computer acquisition program. The Committee continued to monitor steps taken to meet the desktop needs of the faculty. A positive step has been the substantial outlay of funds that now has been designated to remedy deficiencies in this area. As needed, we will conduct additional surveys to assess faculty views of the success of the program.
University Software Policy. The Provost asked the Committee to consider existing administrative policy in connection with the presence of personally-owned software on university machines. Should such use be permitted; if so, what steps are needed to to reduce the potential liability of the university in the event that the software is unlicensed? The Committee's recommendation, which now has been implemented, is that such use is quite permissible. However, users of personally-owned software are required to maintain ownership documentation and to provide it on request.

Costs of network connections. The question was raised with the Provost about the practice of charging individual departments for the cost of activating network connections; this will become an increasing burden as more faculty obtain up-to-date computers capable of network access. He responded that although buildings were wired at state expense, funds were not provided for the final connection. At present, he regards budgeting of funds as a local matter, best dealt with at the college and department level.

Internet-2 Project. the Committee continued to monitor progress in this area. Last year, we recommended that UWM become a charter member of the I-2 consortium, and this has now been accomplished. In addition, the university was successful in its application to NSF for a vBNNS grant (very high speed Backbone Network Service). The I-2 program promises to be a valuable asset for research and instruction at the university.

Statewide Email Policy. The Committee communicated to the Provost the view that this policy, as it is being formulated for all state agencies, will place severe restrictions on faculty and student use of email. He replied that this is also a matter of concern at the campus and all-university level. However, modifications of the policy do not seem possible; the best that can be done is to seek the least painful way to implement it.

UWM Website. The Committee continued to monitor the development of the University Website. Concerns were expressed to the Provost about the slow development of a creditable set of pages and about the unclear line of administrative responsibility for the site. Some positive steps have been taken as discussed in a letter from the Provost to the faculty. The developing plan calls for News and Publications to be responsible for design and content and Instructional and Media Technologies for technical features. Academic Affairs will provide oversight and coordination under the direction of Vice Chancellor Andrews. In addition, a Webmaster has been appointed, and an external design group is reviewing the architecture of the site.

Faculty use of the Website for instructional purposes. The Committee recommended to the Provost that a task force be established to study issues in this area. Among the questions that need to be addressed are: the university's expectations about faculty involvement in such activities; the source and extent of technical support; protection of the intellectual property rights of faculty posting course material; and the relative success of such programs by comparison with more traditional approaches. The Provost responded that these matters are best considered by the Educational Media Policy Committee, and he referred our concerns to them.
Committee Members

Alan Baron, Psychology (Chair)
Martha Carlin, History
Joseph Douglas, Information and Media Technologies (ex officio)
Dave Edyburn, Exceptional Education
R. David Heathcote, Biological Science
Gregory Jay, English
Robert Jones, Graduate School (ex officio)
Mark Keane, Architecture
Edward Mabry, Communications
Ethan Munson, Electrical Engineering/Computer Science
Beth Rogers, Foundations of Nursing
David Schultz, Mathematical Science
Jon Welstead, Music
John Zipp, Sociology

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