

## LMAC Committee Minutes -- September 21, 2004

**Present:** Paula Wilson, Randy Bentson, Bill Barry, Geoff Proehl, Matt Murray, Matt Warning (chair), John Hanson, Michael Nanfito (ex officio), Karen Fischer (ex officio), Ron Stone, Lotus Perry, Sigrun Bodine, Norman Imamshah (visitor), Darrell Robertson (visitor)

Warning called the meeting to order at 4 pm.

The minutes from the September 7 meeting were approved.

In response to questions raised at the September 7 meeting, Barry presented a brief overview of the organizational structure for dealing with technology-related decisions on campus. The Academic Computing Group (ACG) looks at various administrative programming requests and prioritizes them, while the Library, Media, and Academic Computing (LMAC) Committee focuses on issues that involve classroom, library, and faculty use of technology. Both of these groups make recommendations to the Technology Planning Group (TPG) whose role is to prioritize major requests and make a recommendation to the Budget Task Force. All three of these groups provide mechanisms for review of various technology proposals. Imamshah noted that there is no specific forum providing student input on technology issues, but apparently the ASUPS is developing a Student Technology Council that would serve this role. Imamshah also mentioned that a variety of other groups often provided input on specific technology issues. For example the Capital Coordinating Group often looks at technology issues involved in major remodels and a web technology group works on issues surrounding the University website.

Imamshah then presented a proposal that would "offer a laptop as the standard university desk top offering to all 180 tenure track faculty". This proposal is included as an attachment to these minutes.

Bodine noted that she had received a laptop computer and noted that it was a great boon since she could take it on sabbatical and into the classroom. Warning also noted the transformative power of notebook computing on his research and teaching.

Fischer noted that when faculty desktop computers are replaced they are often used to provide other "off the books" computers around campus. She wondered what the impact of this proposed policy would be on these computers.

Warning asked about the risk of theft with laptops. Robertson replied that under this policy if a faculty member's laptop was stolen they would have to accept a recycled desktop until their next replacement cycle.

There was also some discussion about upgrading from the base system that OIS supplies. Barry clarified that normal departmental Equipment and Operating funds cannot be used for this purpose, but that other special departmental funds sometimes can be. In response

to a question by Warning he also stated that personal funds from a faculty member could be used to upgrade from the base system.

Bodine asked about whether faculty could purchase laptops outright at the end of their cycle. Robertson replied that there is a lot of paperwork associated with selling a university computer to faculty but in special cases this has been permitted. This is something that LMAC may want to discuss at a future meeting.

In response to a question from Bentson, Imamshah responded that faculty who wish to purchase a desktop system rather than a laptop system would be allocated less money, but that this would still buy a machine with greater performance than the laptop system.

Barry suggested that the proposal be amended to include all ongoing faculty, not just tenure-line faculty. This would expand the proposal by about 25 computers. There were also questions raised about whether the proposal should be expanded to include staff computers.

There was then a discussion of some of the possible implications of implementing this policy. For example, will there be demand by faculty for more technology in classrooms? Will there be a demand to expand wireless connectivity on campus? Given that this proposal requires a budget increase, what tradeoffs are involved in implementing this proposal versus some other budget items that might be competing for funding?

Barry suggested that Nanfito present the committee, preferably before the next meeting, with some of the other technology related projects that might be competing for funding so that the committee could better understand the context in which this proposal is being made.

In order to make a decision early enough to allow a recommendation to the TPG and Budget Task Force, the committee will meet in two weeks time to discuss possible amendments to the proposal and to vote on whether or not to recommend it. This will also give LMAC committee members time to consult with their colleagues regarding this proposal.

In the few seconds remaining, Fischer noted that the library will be meeting with departments to discuss the library's plan for collection development. She will then come to LMAC for discussion and endorsement of this plan.

The meeting was adjourned around 5 pm.

Submitted by: John Hanson

Next Meeting: Oct. 5.

**A Proposal for  
Laptops for Tenure Track Faculty  
September 21, 2004 OIS**

**Proposal:** To offer a laptop as the standard university desk top offering to all 180 tenure track faculty. Faculty will have the choice of a desktop system if they do not wish to have a laptop.

**Reasoning:**

1. Almost all newly appointed faculty ask about a laptop.
2. More than half of the faculty whose desk top is being replaced ask about a laptop instead of a desktop.
3. Only 19 tenure line faculty, 11% of the group, have laptops as their desktops listed on the OIS replacement cycle for tracking and funding purposes.
4. Faculty work in at least three places: at home, in their office and in the classroom.
5. Faculty do work over the summer from home, while traveling, and on sabbaticals.
6. Electronic classrooms are becoming more and more in demand. We are adding ten new electronic classrooms in the next five years. It is easier for faculty to use their office laptop when they teach in these electronic classrooms.
7. BlackBoard is becoming more and more popular for curriculum development and teaching.
8. Many faculty own their own laptop in addition to the university desktop in their offices, and (prefer to) use that laptop for their work.
9. 80% of this year's freshmen came to campus with laptops. This trend will continue. Our faculty should be as mobile, computing wise, as our students.
10. The problem of malfunctions with faculty roaming profiles would be nearly nonexistent if all faculty eventually had laptops at their disposal.

**Cost Considerations:**

One hundred and twenty (120) tenure track faculty use Windows PC computers and 60 tenure track faculty use Mac as their desktop. The budgeted amount to replace these desktops is \$1200 for a PC and \$1500 for a Mac. These are replaced on a four year cycle. Newly appointed faculty are provided with a brand new desktop, regardless of the age of the desktop they would have inherited.

The cost of laptops has been declining in recent years, the quality and configurations are improving, and the demand for laptops is increasing. OIS has configured two laptops (a PC and a Mac) from current vendor offerings as of August 17, 2004 to closely match the recommended university standards for desktops at a cost of \$1700 each. Vendors offer some laptops at much lower prices and these do not approach the recommended standards that OIS supports.

OIS believes that \$1700 is a watershed price point for laptops that will meet or continue to meet university OIS standards. Some may require upgrade to memory and disk capacity for heavy duty users. Requirements will increase as the years go by due to larger operating systems that incorporate a hefty chunk for security, multimedia applications, audio and graphic streaming, increased storage, multiple storage peripherals choices and bulging application codes. We will evaluate our needs and standards vis-à-vis pricing and features as we move forward, and make appeals to the appropriate quarters.

### **Budget Request:**

The budget increase needed to make a laptop available to every tenure track faculty (180) is \$72,000 over a four year replacement cycle, for an annual budget increase of \$18,000, as follows:

60 Macs at \$200 ( $\$1,700 - \$1,500$ ) = \$12,000  
120 PC's at \$500 ( $\$1,700 - \$1,200$ ) = \$60,000

### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

1) The actual number of tenure line positions is 185--some of the positions are unfilled, so 180 may be ok.

180 is a nice number to budget for. If ever we get to "full employment of 185" we will cross that bridge then. It will cost an additional \$500 per year to include five more tenure line faculty.

As I was mulling over this question, I wondered how to account for the TTF in Math/CS. Maybe we should budget for 180, less that number. And if they are excluded from this proposal then it would cause the Math/CS department to stretch when they fund the regular replacement of computers for their faculty. Replacement funds for desktops for Math/CS faculty are not in OIS, so if we include them here we will need to budget for the full amount of \$1700, and not the incremental costs. I believe there are 11 TTF in Math/CS.

2) The tenure line does bring up a distinction for what we give ongoing instructors of which there are about 25? Clinical positions (5-7)? If we give them desktops, how do we make that case? (This is more a question for the Academic Deans' office, not OIS, but it might be worth charting out the cost of including all ongoing faculty.)

We will continue to replace desktops for ongoing instructors and clinical positions who are on the replacement cycle. Those who are not on the replacement cycle will be given recycled computers. This is extant practice. But see item 7 below.

3) I gather from notes on the discussion that one-year visitors would get desktop. We have a few three-year visiting positions. I assume that they'd get desktops as well. This is

fine, I think, but it breaks with practice: currently, faculty don't get their computer during their sabbatical (or at least don't get to assume they get it).

One year visiting faculty will get whatever desktop is there on the desk. Three year visiting faculty will get a replacement desktop in their fourth year here, if they renew for a second consecutive three year term. I recall the discussion in earlier times about sabbatical expectations. I believe that times are changing and how we are using our computers are also changing to something more and more personal so that it becomes almost an extension of self. If we want to move away from current practice OIS will be glad to make a desktop available to all those who would be filling in for those on sabbaticals. I don't think the number is large, is it?

4) Regarding BlackBoard, I suppose that we could make an argument that Bb has driven people to use of the web and therefore it has become more important for faculty to be able to configure their own computer for use in an e-classroom.

Yes, indeed.

5) It sounds like the cost you've given is for the hardware itself. What about case? Security cable? Etc.? As I recall, some of the peripherals that Darrell has outlined for those getting laptops might go as high \$150 to \$200. Is your cost break out inclusive of these extras?

The cost for both PC and Mac includes a case, but not a security cable (\$50). Folks don't seem to use the cables. The quoted configuration includes 512 Mg memory, 40 gigs hard drive, CD read/write, DVD reader, no floppy, wireless card a/b/g, internal 56k modem, adapter, 6 cell battery, and a 3 year warranty. The laptop configuration has 512 megabytes memory compared to 1 Gigabyte on the desktop, and 40 gigabytes of hard disk compared to 80 gigabytes on the desktop. To add these options will increase the cost of each PC laptop to \$1,900 and each Mac laptop to \$2,300. In addition, we make network shares available on Alexandria for all faculty to store their information.

6) What sort of a policy do we want to set up around replacement for breakage or theft? Surely this will become an issue.

The 3 year warranty period will take care of breakage that is not willful or within due care. Otherwise, the department will be responsible for the costs associated with replacement, breakage, theft and repair outside of or not covered by the warranty period. OIS will provide a recycled computer from inventory in such cases. This is extant policy.

7) How will we use money not used to purchase laptops? E.g., your model presumes everyone will choose a laptop and for budget purposes, I think we need to assume that. the reality may be quite different. Would excess money go into a replacement fund for breakage or theft?

I do not recommend a replacement fund for theft or breakage because I think each of us has a trust in using university resources and to take reasonable precautions while those resources are entrusted to us. The first recommended use of those monies would be to upgrade the faculty desktop with a 17 inch flat panel monitor at a cost of \$400 plus tax. These are getting cheaper in price. The next priority would be to address needs like in #3 above, and the 379 computers that are in use “outside the fence”. “Outside the fence” is a euphemism for “computer creep”. And if any funds remain we could address the aging population of departmental laser printers. There are 16 of 152 networked printers on campus that are 9 to 13 years old. None of these 152 networked printers is on any replacement cycle budget. They cost about \$1500 each. If we assume that one half of 180 TTF faculty opt for a laptop, then there would be \$9000 available to address these needs. I would argue that such funds be applied to enhancing only faculty hardware use.