Minutes for the Meeting of the
Faculty Senate Information Technology Committee
8 April 2005

Meeting in the ITS conference room, Student Union West.

Meeting was called to order at 10:05 am.
In Attendance: Stephen Aley, Mary Duffy (for Pat Phillips), Ken Pierce, Emil Schwab, Miguel Sifuentes, John Symons, David Williams (for Bill Diong), and Jose Huerta.

1. Spam Software:
The campus is now using Brightmail. We are getting it through a UT System License. It is the leading SPAM software on the market.
Can Spam Law: If emails are in compliance with this they will get through. If we receive SPAM that isn't legitimate send it to spam.utep.edu. They will add it to the list to be blocked.
False positives are 1 in 10 million.

2. Computer replacement program.
     a. Software installation. The new computers are coming already loaded with a standard set of software. The problem is that the user doesn't have "root" access. This prevents them from loading other software. In this case the user should call the helpdesk and ask to be setup for "administrator access." To have other software loaded they should also call the helpdesk.
     b. Remote access. Each of the new computers is setup for remote access. This was done by ITS and will allow them to do some functions without having to physically touch the computer. There are restrictions on what ITS can do with this access. They can only access a computer with the user's knowledge and cooperation. There is an icon that will allow the user to disconnect the link whenever they chose. ITS can use the link to see what the user sees. This way they can coach a user through a process.
     c. Replacement Program. There is a web page regarding this program that can be accessed from the ITS web site. The program will continue this coming year. Computer eligible for replacement are January 02, 1998 through 2000. Generally computers that are part of a grant are not eligible. If they are more than three years old and have become University property they will be eligible. This year they have replaced approximately 700 computers. Next year they will replace computers based on a weighted priority of need, for example those with the largest number to be replaced. This year they may include the labs.
     d. Surplus v/s recycling. Generally any machine that is replaced through this program will not be available for further use. Surplus will smash all hard drives. There was a comment that recycling the computers might be a good thing. ITS will look at the possibilities.

3. Hubs and sub-networks.
     a. Some offices are installing hubs in order to allow one port to be shared among several people. Recently, ITS has begun severing internet connections to hubs and all

attached computers. There is a university policy prohibiting the use of hubs and requiring all network purchases go through Ken Pierce. It was suggested that offices are using hubs because they don't want to pay $150 to have a port installed and turned on (vs $10 for a four or six port hub). Ken Pierce mentioned that by September 1st, ITS hopes to not have to charge anything for new ports, eliminating this excuse.

       b. Some people are using hubs to create small specialized class or laboratory networks. They need the flexibility for setup and configurations that will support their class work or research. ITS is working with faculty members to develop a Template solution that will permit essential flexibility in research lab and course situations.

       c. ITS is implementing a network inventory to identify hubs in use. The intent is to locate all currently existing hubs. Identified users will be provided the opportunity to obtain additional ports at no or nominal cost to them. After the deadline the $150 port activation charge will kick back in, unless ITS is allowed to drop it all together. Any newly installed, unauthorized hubs and the ports to which they are attached will be shut down.

       d. There was substantial discussion on why hubs and routers are considered a problem. Computers on a hub are no more or less susceptible to virus or worm attack, however if one computer on the hub is compromised, ITS has no recourse but to cut the hub and all attached computers off the network until the problem is resolved. With ITS provided equipment, only the compromised computer is disconnected. It was suggested that offices or faculty could use hubs but with the understanding of this limitation, however ITS would rather provide better hardware to ensure a better level of service. Further discussion was tabled pending progress on Lab Template design and location of funds to lower or eliminate cost of new ports.

4. Support for UNIX/Linux. IT doesn't have anyone to support UNIX or Linux but they are hoping to hire a UNIX administrator in the near future.

5. It was brought up that changes in policy or enforcement in network communications affecting research and teaching should be brought before the FSIT committee before implementation. ITS said that the hub inventory and crackdown policy had been discussed and okayed by the Technology Implementation Managers Group. This was the first notice to the FSIT of the existence of this group. The members, people located in each area of campus, are paid in part or wholly by ITS. They have a mandate is to set priorities for network policies and implementation. It was pointed out that this does not negate the need for communication between ITS and FSIT on these issues before implementation. Moreover, some colleges did not yet have regular members on this committee and some major campus clients (e.g., Library) were omitted altogether. Discussion was terminated by time. It was requested that further discussion of this group and relative roles be placed on the agenda for the next FSIT meeting.

6. Meeting adjourned at 12:25 PM.

Minutes prepared by Mary Duffy and Stephen Aley