

Student Focus Group Report, 2009

The student focus group was held Wednesday, March 11th in the Union. Participants were recruited in two ways. First, the 8 survey participants who expressed a willingness to be contacted were sent emails; 2 agreed to come, but none showed up. Second, people in the Union were approached with fliers and invited to participate in helping "set priorities for IT at UTEP" and get a free lunch. 8 students accepted: 7 undergraduates (mostly freshmen) and 1 graduate, 3 having experience working for UTEP, and majoring in Engineering, Biology, Geology, Business, History, Math, and Computer Science.

Have you had training in anything IT-related? Should there be more training?

- I learned by myself and that was fine.
- taught myself, because I'm good with computers
- training would be good, especially WebCT and Goldmine; maybe at freshman orientation (consensus)
- would be nice to get help with WebCT, e.g. tutorials, quick references, links to help, FAQs
- mspace is tricky; maybe a session at orientation on how to upload, download, share
- want training on multimedia software, e.g. iMovie on the macs

What's the best way to disseminate information about new technology on campus?

- fliers are a waste of paper
- pop-ups/screensavers/wallpaper on computers in the labs are good (2)
- text messaging might be good if it's opt-in

Do you feel that you've become more tech-savvy having attended UTEP?

- there are some professors who really use and teach technology in their classes, but there are also professors who don't seem to know anything about tech issues such as software
- had to do e-research for a class and didn't know how
- instead of the existing Univ 1301, the class should be about all the technology on campus and how to use it, also where to find help (2)
- it should be the professors' job to teach about the technology needed for their specific class.
- some professors ought to know more about the technology that the students use
- more tech should be taught.

What's been your experience with Helpdesk and other customer service?

- once you get a person they are very helpful (consensus)
- sometimes the waits are too long on the phone (20 minutes, one hour)
- the phone message is too long (NB: there is a 25 second advertisement about payment options before the voice menu even comes up) (consensus)
- my department had some server issues that have taken years to resolve

Do you use remote access? Does it meet your needs?

- can do from home everything that I can do from campus
- have no internet at home
- don't know how to access library databases from off-campus
- can use remote services when traveling, except sometimes the remote ISP blocks VPN
- likes that I can access so much software from home
- no problems working from home
- sometimes has problems opening documents from WebCT

Should UTEP be on the cutting edge of technology?

- must be cutting edge so you are ready for the working world, so you're prepared for any job; if you're not up-to-date then you're out of the game; need to be competitive when looking for employment (consensus)
- important but difficult to achieve, in terms of the training etc.
- it makes a difference to be knowing all the software but it's hard to keep up
- new technology should be available so that students can train themselves
- knowing the new stuff is important
- must know all the tools
- often the tools we use on campus are older than what we find out in the working world, and that is bad, since we need to know the tools when we get there.
- IT needs to be more supportive
- will have a head start in the workplace if you already know the new technologies