

Minutes of Meeting
February 27, 2009

Attending: Lisa Naugle, Chair (UCI), Anthony Joseph (UCB), Felix Wu (UCD), Tony Givargis (UCI), Leonard Mueller (UCR), Martin Raubal (UCSB), Joel Primack (UCSC), Brett Stalbaum (UCSD), Donna Hudson (UCSF), David Ernst (Associate Vice President and CIO, Information Resources & Communications), Harry Powell (Academic Senate Vice Chair), Martha Winnacker (Academic Senate Executive Director), Brenda Abrams (Policy Analyst)

I. Announcements

Chair Naugle reported that David Ernst, Associate Vice President and CIO, Information Resources & Communications, will provide UCCC with an overview of the Information Technology Leadership Council (ITLC) and its activities. Chair Naugle has not been able to participate in ITLC meetings due to scheduling conflicts. ITLC interfaces with the Communications Planning Group (CPG) which looks at some of the same issues as UCCC.

II. Consent Calendar

Action: The committee approved the minutes of November 21, 2008.

III. Minimum Information Technology (IT) Guidelines

In response to UCCC's letter to Senate Chair Croughan, Senate leadership suggested that concrete information on the IT needs at the campuses should be collected as a first step. At its January meeting, Council approved a proposal for UC to implement a biennial survey to identify the issues. The results will provide a better idea of what is utilized at each campus and enable UC to make strategic decisions when funding is available to address minimum IT needs. UCCC needs to determine what the survey will include, how it will be administered, and what other committees can be involved in developing it. One way to conduct the survey could be to put it on the Academic Senate website.

Discussion: The committee discussed how a survey would be implemented and other work that could be done before a survey. UCCC needs to decide if all faculty need to be surveyed or if the survey should be targeted to those providing services or leadership in technology, such as local campus technology committees. It is important that the survey reach faculty that are not normally engaged in IT discussions and that it has questions that keep in mind how faculty use IT. Survey questions need to be designed to ensure they are useful in the long-term and the technology must be well defined since it evolves so quickly. The survey will provide information about the technology being used, the frequency of usage, and the trends over time. Questions might be framed to find out the level of support needed to teach in the classroom, for research, and for communication outside the classroom, which will help prioritize how money is spent. UCCC recognizes that minimum requirements for individual faculty vary significantly, but the survey

can help identify the priorities and where there is consensus among all faculty. In light of the different requirements, determining the minimum funding required to enable departments or disciplines to reach their goals might be a good approach.

One suggestion is to conduct small focus groups at a few campuses with faculty from diverse disciplines to help define the issues and formulate questions for a large scale survey. Input from the IT Guidance Committee (ITGC), CPG and University Committee on Research Policy (UCORP) would help. UCCC should also look for examples of IT standards at other top universities. UCOP staff with survey expertise should be invited to the next meeting.

IV. Consultation with the Office of the President

- *David Ernst, Associate Vice President and CIO, Information Resources & Communications*

AVP Ernst is interested in strengthening the lines of communication between UCCC and ITLC. Chair Naugle or a designee from UCCC is invited to join ITLC meetings, and AVP Ernst can provide updates on ITLC activities at the committee's meetings. ITLC is comprised of the campus chief information officers (CIOs) and others who are included due to their use of IT. ITLC is considered by ITGC to be the key body at UC needing to proactively take responsibility for determining the organization of IT across the campuses. ITLC has recently drafted a MOU indicating its purpose and direction, and an outreach plan. ITLC will have a strategic planning retreat and prepare a statement on the role of IT in the future. UCCC will be given an opportunity to comment on the proposed direction. AVP Ernst will be the ongoing link between ITLC and UCCC, and ITLC will elect a chair and a vice chair to serve one-year terms. ITLC subgroups established to deal with acute issues have continued, in some cases, years after the issues have been resolved. Which subgroups are still needed and whether the membership is appropriate, including if faculty should be added, will be examined during the retreat.

The Shared Research Computing Services project is a part of the larger UC Cyberinfrastructure proposal, and work on this project began before AVP Ernst joined UC. The goal of the project is to determine how a subset of principal investigators (PIs) could be better served through a regional shared research computing facility. Activities at other universities involving shared cluster computing were examined. Current practice is for a PI to obtain a server when awarded a grant. The server is physically located nearby but there is a lack of technical support for faculty, research data is not backed up, and capacity can run out. The aim is to provide a computing capability in a shared regional data center that includes technical support, back up of data, and access to more capacity. It is proposed that excess capacity at the UCSD supercomputing facility and capacity that will be available at the National Energy Research Scientific Computing Center (NERSC) operated by the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab. The vice chancellors for research, the executive vice chancellors group and the CIOs evaluated this proposal. The proposal was presented to President Yudof and the Council of Chancellors in September 2008. The feedback was that creating this system would help UC's competitive edge, but concerns included the budget required to implement the project and the PI's comfort level with not having a local server. It will be a two-year pilot and after the first year a decision will be made about its success, and the budget was scaled down.

Specifications for the type of computing services that would be available were created by a workgroup and sent to the vice chancellors of research. The goal was to identify faculty willing to move their computing to a shared facility and provide the pilot. The pilot will be overseen by an oversight committee comprised of faculty. AVP Ernst reported that there was criticism that the call for proposals was not disseminated broadly enough. Nine projects with 24 faculty were selected based on the computing requirements. The projects are primarily in the hard sciences and not the humanities, but the types of projects can be expanded in the future. AVP Ernst has worked with the budget office to find the one-time, \$5.6 million in funding if the pilot is two years. The hardware costs are \$3.4 million and the operating costs are \$2.2 million. This funding was found by UCOP. President Yudof took the proposal back to the Council of Chancellors with the scaled down budget and the pilot was approved in January. The work being done now is on acquiring equipment and hiring the technical staff. The initial ramp up will take six to seven months, and faculty projects will begin in the Fall of 2009. The structure of a faculty/PI oversight committee is being developed to ensure representation from all of the campuses.

Discussion: It was suggested that relevant Senate committees could function as consultants to ITLC. ITLC has primary responsibility for IT issues at UC, but faculty need to be more aware of it. Better communication with faculty is something of a mandate. To date the focus has been on administrative functions and more recently research, but attention should be paid to the needs related to teaching and learning. UCCC's proposed survey may be a helpful in identifying faculty activities or initiatives which ITLC can support.

UCCC had a number of questions about the budget and the rationale for the Shared Research Computing Services pilot. Members voiced concerns about spending \$5.6 million on a project involving only 24 faculty and questioned whether this money would be better utilized if it was spread across the campuses to address more pressing computing and networking infrastructure needs. Discussions have recently focused on obtaining funding from the Federal government through the stimulus package or industry-donated equipment for this cluster. AVP Ernst indicated that costs to be incurred by UC for operations, commissioning and decommissioning versus outsourcing the project to a service like Amazon's EC2 have been discussed, but the existence of the facilities and excess capacity at UCSD and NERSCC was a key factor. It was noted that the facilities provide space, but UC will need to purchase equipment and hire operating staff. Amazon EC2 could easily be expanded to add more users and UC would not need to worry about old equipment, backup or operational staff issues. AVP Ernst indicated that this project is not being done to keep the UCSD supercomputer center active or to fund senior people at that center, but to take advantage of excess space there. One UCCC member suggested that faculty who received grants when NSF funded the supercomputer center would be a good initial group of participants in this pilot. Significant numbers of staff will be needed to provide help to the users and the staffing plan is not clear. Also unclear are the various types of storage or visualization facilities that will be available to users. AVP Ernst agreed to provide written information about the staffing plan, the types of facilities that will be available, general background information about the pilot and a list of the 24 projects.

It was noted that UCCC members and members of the local committee at one campus had not heard about the first call for proposals. The project should be expanded to include more faculty. Efforts to recruit additional users need to reach all faculty who could be interested in this project,

especially faculty not familiar with the use and benefits of a supercomputing facility. Outreach to faculty in the Arts and Humanities needs to be a focus. AVP Ernst indicated that faculty oversight of the project will include determining better ways to communicate about a second round of proposals and to communicate the project's goals to the UC community. The oversight board will be responsible for developing the criteria for the one-year benchmark and UCCC suggests looking at cost savings versus outsourcing, savings for administrative computing, and analysis on energy usage for the cluster.

Since interest in the use of regional data centers to support administrative computing needs is increasing, IR&C has created and provided to the campuses the specifications, the cost structure, and the business plan. Use of the regional centers is significantly less expensive than adding facilities at individual campuses to meet general campus computing needs. UCSC is using the UCSD facility with the potential for major cost savings. Issues related to usability and the need to ensure that faculty not located near the facility receive adequate service will be monitored by the oversight committee as well. To address this, there may need to be a go-between at the campus in addition to the technical expert at the off-site location. Faculty's comfort and confidence levels are important since faculty will not have immediate access to the facility. Opportunities for partnerships with hardware manufactures to add to the size of the cluster should be explored. Graduate and undergraduate student researchers need access to clusters and this could be a main use for the facility.

AVP Ernst is not aware of a plan for UC-wide faculty email. There has been a discussion about a general UC-wide email system. Gmail is being used at UCD and may be used in the future by UCSC and possibly UCLA.

Action: Members agreed that UCCC will submit a letter to Council voicing its strong objection to the pilot.

V. APM 240 Deans

UCCC has the opportunity to opine on the proposed revisions to APM 240.

Discussion: The committee reviewed the APM and provided feedback. Members wanted explanations about why several items would be removed from the APM and that it was unclear if the issues were addressed elsewhere.

Action: Chair will draft UCCC comments on proposed revisions to APM 240.

VI. Linking UC Seminars

UCCC was asked by UCORP to review and comment on the concept paper, "Towards Greater UC Synergy." The objective of the proposal is to record and broadcast lectures which are shared across the campuses. Chair Naugle commented that the concept paper focuses heavily on the sciences and that other areas could benefit from the model. The ability of the audience to interact with the lecturer is not clear.

Discussion: One member indicated that it is surprising that the proposal does not consider using the campuses' YouTube channels for posting the videos. Posting on YouTube would be a low-cost way to support archival access in the long-term.

UCCC identified three concerns with regard to the concept. The proposal does not adequately address the budgetary requirements for the project. The proposal underestimates the work involved to ensure that the videos are useful. A good model for UCORP to examine is the Kavli Institute for Theoretical Physics (<http://online.itp.ucsb.edu/online/>) which has a system for managing the streaming audio and video, podcasts, and presentation slides. UC Berkeley's Educational Technology Services is another valuable resource for information including budgetary requirements. Finally, the concept paper does not make clear whether or not the California Digital Library has agreed to be responsible for archiving the videos and if there is a budget for CDL's work.

Action: Chair Naugle will draft a letter to UCORP's chair.

VII. Textbook Affordability

- *Harry Powell, Academic Senate Vice Chair*
- *D'Artagnan Scorza, Student Regent*

Vice Chair Powell explained that the Senate has been asked by Regent Scorza to explore the issue of textbook affordability. There are two recent pieces of state legislation that address this issue. Faculty will need to advise students about whether it is necessary to purchase new editions of textbooks. One issue is that publishers bundle other materials with the textbooks that increase the costs. Publishers are required by the laws to make information about the cost of the textbooks more available. Regent Scorza noted that the Auditor's report was the impetus behind UC's effort to address textbook affordability.

Discussion: Chair Naugle noted that, in her field, the preference would be to have more information on the DVDs and less printed material. It is important the faculty have the opportunity to assess what materials are necessary. One campus makes a pointed effort to only use the essential printed materials. Online homework systems are in use at some campuses and these systems are increasingly being used. Students are charged a fee and homework is graded electronically. Other institutions are developing their own online systems. Another expense is the clickers, and if UC could standardize across the campuses there could be a savings. A committee member indicated that students can purchase the international editions of textbooks online, with some textbooks available in paperback for as little as \$8. One member doesn't require the purchase of the new edition but instead carefully tracks the differences between the versions and puts this information on a website for the students. Students' complaints about online/web-based textbooks are that they cannot keep the material and the license is for only one year. These materials cannot be printed and students like being able to mark up the texts.

Meeting adjourned at 1:50

Minutes prepared by Brenda Abrams

Attest: Lisa Naugle