

Report from the



**ACADEMIC COMPUTING  
AND  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS  
COMMITTEE**

**2007-2008 Academic Year  
(FY 2008)**

**14 April 2008**

## **ACADEMIC COMPUTING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

### **Membership, 2007-2008 (FY2008)**

Chair: Joe Evans, EECS (2008)

Council Representative: Albert Sheu, Math

Holly Mercer, Libraries (2008)

Satya Mandal, Math (2008)

Eva Horn, Education (2008)

Ward Thompson, Chemistry (2008)

Allard Jongman, Linguistics (2009)

John Broholm, Journalism (2009)

Jack Shi, Physics (2009)

Mark Reaney, Theatre, (2010)

Kodi Caster, Vice Chair, Student

Quinton Cheney, Student

Jarrold Morgenstern, Student

Emily Robbins, Student

Susan Zvacek, Instructional Development & Support, US Rep. (2009)

Brian Hanabury, Libraries USS Rep. (2008)

Ex-officio - Donna Liss, Assoc. Vice-Provost, Information Services \*

\* Note: Travis Berkley, Director of IT Physical Infrastructure, and Wayne Trowbridge, Project Director for IT, participated in Committee meetings representing Information Services and contributed to this report.

**ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
ACADEMIC COMPUTING AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE  
FOR FY08**

**STANDING CHARGES**

*1. Monitor developments and work with other bodies, including the Task Force on Research Computing, to improve information technology support for instruction and research across the University, including the development of the campus network, expansion and coordination of access to and support for licensing of software, and the availability of specialist staff support. Identify particular areas and strategies for improvement. Report recommendations to SenEx by April 1, 2008.*

**Discussion:**

The Committee reviewed activities throughout the University to address the needs of the faculty, staff, and students for information technology and services. Although there is evidence that many in the University understand the vital importance of information technology to the mission of the University, there has been continuing and substantial under-investment in this part of the University. This needs to be addressed or the University will fail in the competition of ideas as well as lose faculty, staff, and students. The Committee specifically discussed the progress of the Task Force on Research Computing, and is supportive of that effort (see Specific Charge 2 below).

**Recommendations:**

- a. The Committee recommends that Governance communicate to the University administration the need for large-scale investment in information technology. This includes the need for personnel investments – both for system administrators distributed throughout campus, and for discipline-focused information technology support personnel. Attention should be paid to developing organizational structures so that the additional personnel can work effectively within a multi-organizational University support system and so that they may serve as a mechanism for improving communication between the faculty, staff, and students and University organizations such as Information Services / Information Technology.
- b. The Committee recommends that Research and Graduate Studies be represented on this Committee if that organization acquires any responsibilities for meeting the research information technology needs of the University (as appears to be the case).
- c. The Committee recommends that Governance praise the efforts of the Information Services organization to improve communication through its revitalized annual reports.

*2. Monitor current and proposed policy concerning security of information, intellectual property rights and responsibilities, and other matters relating to information technology. Identify issues for which policy should be developed or revised. Report important issues and any recommendations for action to SenEx. (ongoing)*

Issues and Discussion:

IT/IS has done an excellent job of providing information about security issues and policies related to information security (see, for example, [https://documents.ku.edu/policies/Information\\_Services/Information\\_Technology/Security\\_Policy/Security\\_Policy.htm](https://documents.ku.edu/policies/Information_Services/Information_Technology/Security_Policy/Security_Policy.htm)). Policies related to intellectual property are a bit trickier to find. The current Intellectual Property Policy was revised in 2006, making it relatively up-to-date. It could be improved, however, if the Mediated Courseware section was rewritten to clarify and take into account the trend toward blended (or hybrid) courses that are a mix of face-to-face teaching and online activities, as well as the substantial use of online tools and resources in the support of traditional classroom instruction.

Intellectual property rights related to inventions, patents, trademarks, etc., are explained thoroughly within the website of the Office of Technology Transfer and Intellectual Property (<http://www.technologytransfer.ku.edu/inventors/prot-ip.shtml>).

The one area of concern is for researchers, especially those with grant awards. Information regarding how these individuals can retain their property rights, or portions thereof, when dealing with restrictive funding conditions would be extremely helpful.

Recommendations:

- a. The Committee recommends a review, and possible rewriting, of the Mediated Courseware portion of the Intellectual Property policy.
- b. The Committee recommends consideration of the development of an informational resource (a tutorial, for example) to assist researchers with intellectual property rights.

*3. Communicate with the Planning and Resources Committee to recommend inclusion of relevant information about computing and telecommunications infrastructure needs in University planning processes. Report important issues and any recommendations for action to SenEx. (ongoing)*

Discussion:

Information Technology, part of Information Services, has developed a long-range planning document to show areas of the telecommunications infrastructure in need of upgrade over time. Currently, they are sharing this document with other planning departments across campus, such as Design and Construction Management and the Vice Provost for Scholarly Support. It is desirable to share this information with the soon-to-be-hired Director of Research IT Services and Director of Research Support.

The Information Services Planning Council is another advisory body that helps set priorities within Information Services. Research and Graduate Studies has prepared a report describing which research locations on campus need higher-speed networking and has submitted it to this group for consideration.

In addition, the Enterprise Application Resource Planning (EARP) committee is a very high-level advisory body which directs resource allocation and priority for Information Technology (IT). While EARP is generally concerned with programming resources, it also influences priorities within IT Technology Platforms and IT Physical Infrastructure.

The Committee also discussed outsourcing options for email services, and specifically those offered by Google. The consensus was that these services can be useful for student email, and the Committee was generally supportive of pursuing this further.

Recommendation:

- a. The Information Technology organization of Information Services should share planning documents widely and early, and specifically with Governance through the Academic Computing and Telecommunications Committee. This is needed to insure broad and informed input from the University user community.

*4. Communicate with the Libraries Committee about issues of coordination of planning and policy that relate to effective delivery of information, support for instruction and research, and preservation of digital information. Report important issues and any recommendations for action to SenEx. (ongoing)*

Discussion:

The University Libraries Committee viewed a presentation on the preservation and dissemination benefits of KU ScholarWorks, but did not engage in additional discussion of policy related to digital preservation of information. The Libraries Committee discussed issues affecting the use of copyrighted works in the classroom. Additionally, the Libraries Committee reviewed policies regarding selection of materials for the Library Annex, and the delivery of information resources via Tripsaver and WebRetrieve.

Recommendation:

- a. The Committee recommends that the University review policies regarding access to information resources on both the Lawrence and Medical Center campuses, such as availability for checkout of items, and access to licensed resources on both campuses. It is recommended that further action be taken as needed to ensure unhampered access to library materials for faculty, staff, and students.

## **SPECIFIC CHARGES**

*1. Monitor the implementation of the University's wireless network. Work with appropriate student government officials and/or committees to identify issues or problems. Report recommendations, if any, to SenEx by December 6, 2007.*

### **Discussion:**

The campus wireless expansion for public classrooms and labs is proceeding according to schedule. The first two phases are complete, providing coverage to Wescoe, Fraser, Mallot, Murphy, Haworth and Summerfield Halls. (Strong Hall was delayed because it is a historical building, but should be completed by mid-April.)

The buildings in Phase III are scheduled to be completed by the end of April. That will provide classroom and lab coverage in Art & Design, Blake Hall, Lindley Hall and Robinson.

Phase IV buildings will be completed by mid-June, and include Eaton, Snow, Learned, Budig, Smith, Bailey, JR Pearson, Dole Human Development Center, Military Science, Spencer Museum of Art and Stauffer-Flint.

The final round of buildings, Phase V, will be completed by the start of the fall semester. These include Marvin Studios and Hall, Green, Oldfather Studios, Burt, Dyche, Spooner, Continuing Education and Nunemaker. Additionally, there are provisions to incorporate some "common areas" adjacent to these classrooms and labs for wireless coverage as well.

Student Housing is also pursuing some wireless expansion initiatives of their own. They are working to provide wireless coverage in some of the common areas in the Daisy Hill residence halls by the start of the fall semester. Depending on how well this is received, they may expand to other halls or more coverage in the initial list.

Currently there are no other initiatives underway to systematically enhance wireless coverage in administrative or other department-specific areas. As always, if a department wishes to add JAYHAWK wireless coverage, they can request new service from Information Technology.

### **Recommendations:**

- a. Because this is foundational infrastructure for many University of Kansas constituencies, the Committee recommends that Governance continue to emphasize the need for the campus wireless network and monitor its implementation. In particular, features such as secure access to virtual private networks for research and teaching need to be available.

*2. Review the issues raised by the Task Force on Research Computing in FY07 and confer with the FY08 Task Force to prepare recommendations for the scope and focus of future governance committees. Report recommendations to SenEx by March 7, 2008.*

### Discussion:

The Committee reviewed the report of the Task Force on Research Computing, and discussed the subsequent meetings with Governance leadership and the Provost regarding the report. The Committee supports the general recommendations of the Task Force, (1) to structure University administrative leadership in such a way as to effectively address research information technology needs, (2) to improve communication with researchers within the University, and (3) to address immediate infrastructure and personnel needs.

### Recommendations:

- a. The Committee recommends that Governance support the recommendations of the Task Force on Research Computing, and the subsequent commitments the Provost has made to address the issues discussed in the report.
- b. The Committee recommends that the responsibility to monitor research information technology be assigned to a committee in consultation with Governance.

*3. Review efforts by Information Services to assess and improve access to information technology for students, faculty and staff with disabilities. Recommend any needed improvements. Report recommendations to SenEx by April 1, 2008.*

### Discussion:

Last year (2006-2007), this Committee recommended that University should “seriously consider the establishment of a position specifically to deal with assistive technologies.” While it is not clear that this task needs to be the sole duty of one full-time individual, at this point it appears that dealing with assistive technologies is no one’s job. From a cursory examination of peer institution websites, it seems that University is not alone in allowing this service to be handled in a decentralized manner. Unfortunately, by delegating this responsibility to individual departments, it is unlikely that anyone will develop the level of expertise required to provide credible advice when disabled students, staff members, or faculty members need it. A couple of exceptions among our peers are the University of Texas (<http://techaccess.edb.utexas.edu/>) and Oklahoma State University (<http://access.it.okstate.edu/>) that provide central points of contact online for those seeking information about assistive technologies.

### Recommendation:

- a. The Committee recommends that assistive technologies information and resources be provided through a central point of contact and that someone be charged with coordinating this effort.

*4. Examine issues surrounding access to online information, such as e-mail communication, payroll data, or statements of university policies, by staff and others within the university who lack a dedicated computer or other device to gain access to the campus network. Review current policies that may restrict and/or impair access*

*and consider practical means of improving access. Report recommendations to SenEx by April 1, 2008.*

Discussion:

A review of Information Services policies did not reveal any that would restrict or impair access to network services and resources. The "Acceptable Use" policy includes this statement: "The University of Kansas provides electronic information resources to faculty, staff, students, official university affiliates, and others in support of the education, research, and public service mission of the University." Although there may be staff members or others who lack dedicated computer access to online tools, it would seem that this has occurred as a result of departmental directive, lack of funding, and/or other concerns, not policy.

Recommendation:

- a. The Committee recommends that all departments facilitate, as much as possible, access to online university resources and tools for staff members. As wireless access improves, this may be more easily accomplished in areas of the campus with few wired network connections.